

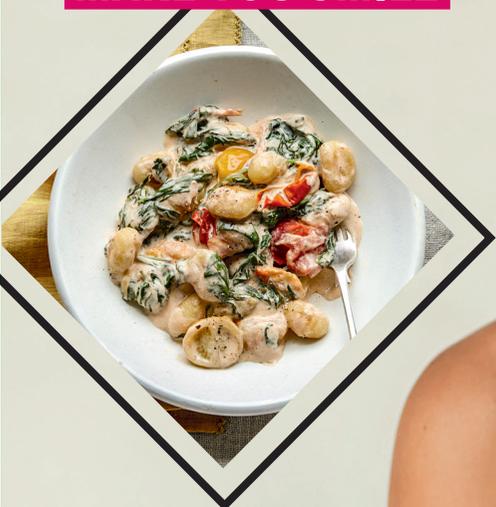
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mood-boosting beauty

WORDS BY HATTIE PARISH

No longer merely the domain of New Age spas and your hippie friend, aromatherapy is having a modern beauty makeover – and it couldn't come at a better time

THE EXPERTS



JESSICA SMITH is a creative consultant who focuses on beauty and wellness.



SOPHIE ANDREWS is a massage therapist, facialist and yoga teacher, and head therapist at ilapotheary.



HOPE GILLERMAN is an aromatherapist, founder of H. Gillerman Organics and author of *Essential Oils Every Day: Rituals And Remedies For Healing, Happiness And Beauty* (Harper Collins).

Formulas boasting feel-good fragrances are surging in popularity right now – partly as we turn to them for a mid-pandemic boost – but the makeover of aromatherapy has actually been a few years coming.

'Since 2016, the beauty industry has transformed into a broader wellness category,' says Jessica Smith, a consultant specialising in beauty. 'It broke free from the confines of cosmetics and skincare, and took its place in the modern wellness pantheon. The industry shifted from being about image to being more functional and holistic.' Trend-setting online store Cult Beauty reports a 240 per cent rise in aromatherapy searches in the last 18 months; Space NK saw triple-digit growth in the category last year. Beauty companies are taking note, incorporating mood-boosting ingredients. But it's essential oils that are really hogging the limelight.

A market set to surpass £10 billion by 2024, essential oils don't just smell nice, but can enhance our moods at a neurological level. 'Since 2017, I've seen brands launching more products that incorporate aromachology, the study of how smell affects human behaviour,' says Smith. 'Historically, essential oils were used as medicine. Now we're revisiting that connection.'

How does it work?

You may have heard about the link between scent and memory – the olfactory system (or sense of smell) is connected to the limbic system, the brain area dealing in memory. 'Certain scents are linked with memories, and the limbic system stores memory in relation to aromas,' says Sophie Andrews, head therapist at natural beauty brand ilapotheary. 'What's different about essential oils is they don't stop at the memory part of your brain,' says aromatherapist Hope Gillerman. 'When oils are absorbed into the body, through the respiratory system or skin (entering the bloodstream), they work with the chemistry of the body and influence the balance

of our internal systems,' says Andrews. Included is the emotional part of the brain, says Gillerman, and the autonomic nervous system – 'so your anxiety response, cortisol level, heart rate and breathing rate can be affected simply by inhaling an essential oil.'

A good example is lavender – we don't all have soothing memories linked to its scent, yet studies continually find a calming effect. 'The effects of its active compounds, linalool and linalyl acetate, are similar to those of the sedative diazepam, calming anxiety and enhancing sleep. Linalyl acetate is also shown to have tranquillising effects, and lavender helps to decrease cortisol (the stress hormone), and can therefore lower blood pressure and anxiety levels,' says Andrews.

It's not just your mood that benefits. When diluted in topical products, essential oils earn serious beauty kudos. 'They're helpful for healing and soothing skin, can be anti-inflammatory, and provide antioxidants,' says Gillerman. Plus research shows routines, even those as simple as moisturising, can create a sense of calm. All of which makes aromatherapy-based beauty a force to be reckoned with. Here's how to nail it.

STRESS AND ANXIETY

To soothe frazzled nerves and calm your mind, look for: **Petitgrain** 'This plant is believed to protect against mental anguish, help release anger, and heal emotional wounds,' says Andrews.

Lavender 'Healing, and known to calm and balance,' says Andrews.

Chamomile 'An anti-inflammatory for body, mind and skin, chamomile helps to ease tension and let go. An oil of peace and acceptance,' says Andrews.

HOW? For any essential oils, you can use a diffuser, inhale directly or add a couple of drops to unscented products or carrier oils. 'Product-wise, look for a body or facial oil,' says Gillerman. 'You want high concentrations of it around your neck, chest or jawline so you can smell the oils as they evaporate.'

TRY: *Andalou CannaCell Beauty Oil* (£17.99, 30ml) with petitgrain and chamomile, for a facial massage. *AromaWorks Lavender & Petitgrain Room & Linen Mist* (£11.99, 100ml) to create a relaxing ambience. ➔



LOW SPIRITS



Try these uplifting scents for an instant pick-me-up:

Geranium ‘Hormone balancing, known to stimulate happiness, nourish creativity, and ease frustration,’ says Andrews.
Clary sage ‘Strengthening yet relaxing, this boosts self-esteem, and hope,’ says Andrews.

Jasmine Research suggests that jasmine fosters positivity. ‘It helps to create a feeling of peace and dispels anger, irritability and nervous tension,’ says Andrews.

Ylang-ylang ‘Paired with jasmine, ylang-ylang is stimulating and uplifting, so can be perfect for low mood,’ says Gillerman.

HOW? Gillerman suggests ‘anything that works as a personal fragrance, so it’s around you all the time and you’re constantly reminded how beautiful the day is.’

TRY: *Ilapothecary Beat the Blues Pulse Point* (£27, 10ml) with geranium and clary sage.
Ethique Jasmine & Ylang-Ylang Butter Block (£11.99, 100g) for soft skin with a heady scent.

LETHARGY AND FATIGUE

Energise and revitalise with these invigorating oils:
Orange ‘Helps to unblock stagnant energy, ease tension, and energise the body and mind,’ says Andrews
Basil ‘This can help fight sluggishness, as well as adrenal and chronic fatigue. This oil promotes mental alertness, improves mood, and helps you think more clearly,’ says Andrews.

Bergamot ‘Known as a “happy” oil, bergamot carries a warming energy,’ says Andrews.
Rosemary ‘This is stimulating, so good for depression and low energy,’ says Gillerman.



HOW? Gillerman recommends using a rosemary shampoo, or try a zesty body scrub to boost blood flow and help wake up your skin.

TRY: *UpCircle Coffee Body Scrub with Tangerine* (£14.99, 200ml) as well as stimulating rosemary and citrus.
Fushi Stimulator Herbal Shampoo (£11, 230ml), containing bergamot, rosemary and citrus oils for a natural energy boost.

SLEEP AND RELAXATION

Find rest with these tranquil fragrances:

Vetiver ‘A soothing sedative, this earthy oil promotes sleep by relieving anxiety and anger,’ says Andrews.
Sandalwood ‘Balances the pituitary gland (the body’s “master gland”), and instils inner peace,’ says Andrews.
Lavender A classic for a reason, lavender has been proven to improve sleep quality.



Rose Shown to ease anxiety, rose is a sensual and soothing oil, ideal for unwinding.

Sweet orange This decreases anxiety and is another key sleep oil, according to Gillerman.

HOW? ‘A bath soak helps you sleep – the heat of the bath stimulates your autonomic nervous system, which triggers melatonin,’ says Gillerman.

TRY: *Dead Sea Spa Magik Organiks Deep Sleep Lavender Bath Salts* (£12.50, 550g) with sandalwood and vetiver.
Tisserand The Bath Soak Rose & Geranium Leaf (£10.95, 200ml) for a lingering, orange-infused aroma.

Sharpen your mind with these stimulating scents:

Peppermint ‘Can wake up all the senses, stimulating the mind and allowing better focus,’ says Andrews.
Frankincense ‘The “focus” oil helps relax the diaphragm and encourages deep breathing,’ says Andrews.
Clary sage ‘Proven to help with enhancing memory and brain function,’ says Andrews.
Eucalyptus ‘A great way to pick up your mood in the morning and sharpen your focus,’ says Gillerman.

HOW? Gillerman recommends using them in your morning shower. Also look for room mists, temple balms and rollerballs.

TRY: *Amoorra Breathe Shower Bomb* (£2.99, 30g) for a refreshing burst of eucalyptus, peppermint and rosemary.
Urban Veda Purifying Body Wash (£7.99, 200ml) with clary sage, peppermint and eucalyptus.



DIY FACIAL MASSAGE

From Sophie Andrews, facialist and head therapist at ilapothecary.

‘For your base, choose a natural, nourishing facial oil like rosehip, argan, sweet almond or jojoba. Blend 5ml with 2-3 drops of your chosen essential oils – I’d recommend rose geranium, lavender, tuberose, sandalwood or petitgrain.’ Try Miaroma (from £3.79) or Tisserand (from £4.60).

- 1 Warm the oil between your fingers, and apply in stroking movements all over the face, neck and chest.
- 2 To stimulate the lymphatic system, sweep the hands in big downward circles down the sides of the neck, then use small pumping movements just above the collarbone.
- 3 Place your thumbs under the centre of your chin with palms over the centre of the face, and with the thumbs and palms push outwards, lifting towards the ear.
- 4 Massage the cheeks in upwards circles from the centre of the face outwards.
- 5 Massage in circles around the mouth with fingers and knuckles.
- 6 Use knuckles to push up the cheeks, hold under cheekbones then push out towards the ears.
- 7 Sweep cheeks upwards with the palms using alternate hands.
- 8 Circle around the eyes with the fingertips in both directions.
- 9 Use criss-cross and zig-zag massage movements across the forehead with the fingertips.
- 10 Finish with firm sweeping movements from centre of face outwards, over forehead, cheeks, chin, neck and over the chest. 6

Photographs Stockley

