



The *Essential*
Homestead

*Successfully Using
Essential Oils in your
Home, Barnyard, and Beyond*

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Introduction

I am somewhat of a skeptic... That may be hard for my friends and family to believe, since I do all sorts of “bizarre” things like drink raw milk, shun flu shots, and make all my own skincare items, but it generally takes some work to convince me of anything...

I initially started hearing about essential oils at the beginning of my transformation from Ramen-noodle-eating-Walmart-shopper, to crazy-cloth-diapering-raw-milk-drinking-homesteader-girl.

At first, I completely ignored them and passed them off as some sort of voodoo New Age stuff that I wasn't interested in... But, after seeing them mentioned again and again in books, websites, and blogs, my curiosity was finally sparked.

I decided to take the plunge and give them a try in some of my homemade cleaning products. After all, I do like things that smell pretty, and mopping my floors with lavender-scented cleaner sounded somewhat appealing. I purchased a few of the cheap oils at my local health food store and used them occasionally, but they spent most of the time pushed to the back of my kitchen cupboard collecting dust.

Several months later, a local friend of mine discovered essential oils and began singing their praises. She enthusiastically shared her successes with them and my interest was piqued once again. She invited me to attend an essential oil get-together, so I decided to go and see what all the fuss was about, once and for all.

As I sat and listened to the scientific explanations of how and why essential oils work, as well as the real-life testimonials, I decided that maybe the whole idea of essential oils wasn't as far-fetched as I had originally thought.

I purchased a few bottles and got a few samples. But when I got home, I tossed the bottles in the cupboard and promptly forgot about them. Several months later, my husband was experiencing tightness in chest (something which is common for him.) I remember the oils that I had tossed in the back of the cupboard, and promptly applied them.

And what do you know... It worked! I was immediately impressed and set out on a mission to find out how I could use these oils to help my family in other ways. So far, we have successfully used essential oils in our home to:

- Provide digestive support
- Provide seasonal support
- Provide respiratory support
- Support healthy skin
- Repel insects
- Support quality sleep
- Boost our immune systems
- And a whole lot more!

I am excited to put together this little guide to help you experience the benefits of essential oils for you and your family. You won't be sorry that you did. Let's get started!

Why Essential Oils are Effective

Plain and simple, essential oils come from plants. Most of us are aware of the benefits of herbs, but did you know that many of our modern-day pharmaceuticals were originally derived from plants as well? For example, aspirin originally came from the bark of the willow tree, while morphine came from poppy plants.

It's not a far-fetched idea to think that plants can provide us with incredible benefits. I strongly believe that God placed certain "tools" in nature to support our bodies. And keep in mind that essential oils are not a new concept. They have been used for thousands of years and were highly prized in the ancient world.

How to Use Essential Oils

So how do you get these oils from the bottle to your body? There are **three main methods of use:**

Aromatically

This is one of the easiest and most popular ways to benefit from essential oils. Enjoying the aromatic benefits of oils can be as simple as removing the lid from the bottle and inhaling.

Other options are using diffusers (*I have two diffusers in my home and they are rapidly taking the place of my beloved candle collection*) or placing a drop or two of the oil in the palm of your hand and cupping it over your mouth and nose.

Topically

Our skin is the largest organ in our body and it readily absorbs what we put on it. This makes it an excellent choice for applying essential oils.

You can place the oils anywhere on your body, just be sure to avoid your eyes and the inside of your ears.

Some of the hotter oils like oregano, marjoram, or cinnamon must be diluted in a carrier oil before using them on the skin. Ideal carrier oils include fractionated coconut oil, sweet almond oil, or avocado oil. Dilution is also very important if you are prone to sensitive skin or using the oils on children.

Internally

There is some controversy surrounding the internal use of essential oils, but I personally have no problem ingesting very small amounts of certain oils (1-2 drops at a time). I usually place them in an empty gelatin capsule or in a small

amount of liquid. The key here is to use common sense and do your research first.

A Word of Warning

For the most part, essential oils are safe. However, I encourage you to do your own research and keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Never place essential oils in your eyes, nose, or inner ear.
- Become familiar with what oils should never be ingested, regardless of the company that manufactures them (such as wintergreen).
- Exercise caution when applying the oils to infants or children and dilute when necessary.
- Remember that these oils are very potent and **less is often more.**

Oils in the Cleaning Cabinet

Because of their cleansing properties, essential oils are a fabulous solution to many cleaning issues around the house. I love knowing that my children can be in the same room with me while I'm using the oils to clean, since I don't have to worry about toxic fumes. Plus, they make my house smell lovely when I'm finished!

Ideal Cleaning Oils

- ✓ Any of the citrus oils (lemon, lime, wild orange, grapefruit, etc)
- ✓ Lavender
- ✓ Melaleuca
- ✓ Thyme
- ✓ Rosemary

Some tips for using oils in your cleaning regime:

- Add a drop or two of lemon to your dishwasher cycle to freshen things up.
- Put several drops of oil in your favorite homemade laundry detergent recipe. Not only will it boost the cleaning power, it will also add a fresh, natural scent. *(Lavender or lemon are ideal for this.)*
- Use straight lemon oil to remove stickers or label residue from glass jars or bottles.
- To scent your laundry without the use of chemical-laden dry sheets, place several drops of oil on a wool dryer ball. Or, simply sprinkle them on a small rag and toss it in the dryer. *(Lemon oil is especially excellent for stinky laundry loads...)*

- Add the oils to a variety of homemade cleaning products. I use a simple vinegar/water mixture to clean my counters and bathroom. Lavender, melaleuca (tea tree oil), thyme, lemon, and wild orange are a few of my favorite cleaner add-ins. (*Add a pinch of Epsom salt to the mixture to keep the oil and water from separating. Or, frequently shake the mixture while using.*)
- Place several drops of oil inside the cardboard tube of a toilet paper roll for a little burst of freshness every time paper is pulled off.
- Use lemon oil to remove crayon or pencil marks from painted surfaces.
- Use lemon oil to remove gum from hair or clothing.
- Mix lemon oil with a small amount of olive oil for a quick furniture/wood polish.
- Add several drops of oil to your mop water. (*My favorites for this are lavender, melaleuca, or wild orange.*)
- To deter mice, place several drops of peppermint oil on a cotton ball and stuff into areas where mice might travel or enter your home.
- Diffuse any of the citrus oils, (*lemon, grapefruit, lime, wild orange*) to freshen up a stale or smelly room.
- Place one drop of your favorite oil on a light bulb and enjoy a burst of fragrance when you turn on the light.

Recipes:

Carpet Deodorizer

- 3-4 drops lemon essential oil
- ¼ cup baking soda

Mix these two ingredients together and place in an airtight container. (Canning jars work great for this.) Allow the mixture to sit for one week to allow the oil to permeate the baking soda.

Sprinkle the mixture over carpet. Allow to sit for at least 12 hours (overnight is great) and vacuum up the next morning.

Homemade Citrus Cleaner

- 1 or 2 quart sized mason jars
- A spray bottle (*a repurposed one is just fine*)
- White vinegar (*around 1-2 quarts*)
- Orange, grapefruit, lemon, or lime peels (*any combination of these will work, too*)
- 3 -4 drops of lemon, grapefruit, lime, or orange essential oil

Fill your quart jars about half full of citrus peels. Feel free to pack them in there if you need to.

Fill the jars the rest of the way up with white vinegar. Cover tightly with a lid, give it a good shake, and then write the date on the top so you don't forget when you started.

Allow the peels and vinegar to steep for 2-3 weeks. (*The longer it sits, the more potent it will get.*)

After time has elapsed, remove the peels from the mixture and strain through a fine strainer to remove any bits of citrus that might be floating in your vinegar. Dilute 1:1 with water (*one part citrus vinegar to one part water*) and place in a spray bottle.

Add the essential oils of your choice. Use this cleaner to wipe down counters, toilets, tubs, sinks, and more!

Linen or Room Spray

- 1 cup water
- 4-6 drops of your favorite essential oils
- 1 teaspoon rubbing alcohol or vodka (optional)

Mix all ingredients together and place in a small spray bottle. Shake well, then spray into the air, or spritz on freshly washed sheets and pillowcases. (*The addition of alcohol can help prevent the oils from clogging up the nozzle, although it's not completely necessary.*)

My favorite combination of oils for this spray is lavender and frankincense. Lemon, geranium, or grapefruit would also make great choices.

If you'd rather not spray your sheets, then place a drop or two of oil on the pillowcases instead.

Simple All Purpose Cleaner

- 2 cups white vinegar
- 2 cups water

- 5-10 drops of essential oils (*any of the citrus oils, rosemary, or melaleuca would be good choices*)
- A drop of liquid dish soap (*optional*)

Mix all the ingredients together, adding the dish soap to keep the oils from staying on the top of the water. (*If you'd rather not add the soap, just remember to shake the bottle frequently while you are using it.*)

This cleaner is simple to mix up and perfect for wiping down floors, walls, countertops, bathrooms, and more.

Essential Oils for Health

As stated above, it is very important to only use high-quality, pure oils on your skin or inside your body.

I am not a doctor and none of these suggestions are to be taken as medical advice. They are simply to give you some ideas—I encourage you to then *study and do your own research*.

Please exercise common sense when using the oils- do not put them in your eyes or inner ears, and use a carrier if you are using them on children or on someone with sensitive skin.

Some tips for using oils for your health:

- For digestive support/relief: Try rubbing a drop of diluted peppermint on your stomach, or smelling it from the bottle. This is a favorite remedy at our house!
- For seasonal support: Use lemon, lavender, and peppermint combined. Diluted and rub them on your feet or the back of your neck, or place in a diffuser.
- For supporting clear breathing: Use diluted lemon—I often rub a drop on the sides of my nose.
- To support healthy, clear skin, use diluted melaleuca.
- To soothe hot skin: Use diluted lavender and/or peppermint
- For respiratory support: Rub diluted peppermint, eucalyptus, lemon, or lime on your feet/chest, or diffuse these oils.
- To boost immune systems: Try combinations of thyme, lemon, orange, frankincense, or cinnamon.

- To aid joints and muscles: Rub diluted peppermint or marjoram on the area as needed.
- Add your favorite oils to homemade lip balms, lotions, soap, scrubs, conditioners, toothpaste, and more. Homemade skincare items also make wonderful gifts.
- To calm nerves, diffuse lavender, patchouli, or vetiver. Or, try rubbing these oils on the bottoms of your feet.
- For occasional tension: Rub diluted peppermint and lavender on the back of your neck.
- Add several drops of lavender or melaleuca to homemade diaper cream recipes.
- Use myrrh to soothe skin
- Make a **simple sugar scrub** to provide exfoliating benefits and support healthy skin:
 - 1 cup white sugar
 - ¼- ½ cup liquid oil (*fractionated coconut oil, sweet almond, or olive will work*)
 - 10-15 drops of essential oils (*Use whatever combination you like. My personal favorite is peppermint and wild orange.*)

Instructions: Combine all ingredients. Apply to skin in the shower or bathtub and rinse off.

Essential Oils in the Kitchen

As long as you are using a high-quality grade of essential oil, then many varieties can be enjoyed in the kitchen as well as other parts of your home. Keep in mind that because of their potency, **just a little bit of oil can go a long way in a recipe**. Start off with a very small amount (one drop or less!), and then increase as needed.

Again, there are many schools of thought on the topic of using oils internally. After reading, research, and personal experience, I am comfortable using very small amounts of essential oils in my cooking. However, if you aren't comfortable with the idea, simply skip this section.

Many of the beneficial properties of essential oils are destroyed when they are heated. So try to add them at the end of the cooking process when possible.

Some tips and recipes for using oils in your kitchen:

- Use peppermint or wild orange to flavor brownies or fudge.
- Add cilantro and lime oil to pico de gallo or other fresh salsas.
- Add peppermint, wild orange, or tangerine oil to melted chocolate. Dip pretzels, crackers, fruit, or cookies for an essential oil-style fondue.
- Use essential oils to season homemade salad dressing recipes.
- Add any of the citrus oils or even peppermint to your favorite smoothie or milkshake.
- Use essential oils to flavor homemade ice creams.
- Add clove, marjoram, thyme, ginger, oregano, or basil to marinades.
- This year I added several drops of lemon and wild orange oil to the basting liquid of my Thanksgiving turkey.

- Add oils to jellies, jams, or syrups. (*Add them after the boiling/cooking process is complete.*)

Chocolate Peppermint Smoothie

- 1 cup milk (preferably raw)
- 2 cups ice cubes
- 2 Tablespoons pure vanilla extract
- 10 drops stevia extract
- 1/8-1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1-2 drops of peppermint oil
- 1-2 Tablespoons of cocoa or carob powder

(Note on the sweeteners: I wanted to avoid white sugar in this recipe. If you don't have Stevia, use more syrup. Also, you may want to add a bit more if your family likes their drinks sweeter. As written, it is not overwhelmingly sweet.)

Place all the ingredients in a blender. Blend until the ice is completely crushed and the drink is thick and creamy.

Peppermint Hot Cocoa

- 2-3 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder OR carob powder
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1/4 teaspoon real vanilla extract
- Your choice of sweetener: I prefer to use 15-20 drops of liquid stevia in my cocoa. You can also use a tablespoon or so of regular sugar. Another option is 1-2 tablespoons of honey, although honey tends to change the flavor just a bit.
- 1 drop wild orange or peppermint essential oil

Whisk the water and cocoa powder together in a small saucepan until the cocoa dissolves into the water. Add the milk and stir over medium heat until the milk is thoroughly heated and steamy, but not boiling.

Remove from the heat and add the vanilla extra and a drop of your favorite essential oil (*remember that a little goes a long ways!*) Garnish with a dollop of real whipped cream and enjoy.

Christmas Wassail

- 2 cups apple juice
- 1 cup cranberry juice
- 3 drops wild orange essential oil
- 1 drop lemon essential oil
- 2 toothpicks of clove essential oil
- 2 toothpicks of cinnamon essential oil
- 1 toothpick ginger essential oil

Bring the juices to a boil, and remove from the heat. Add the essential oils, stir well, and enjoy! (*For the “toothpick” oils, simply push a toothpick down into the oil bottle, then swirl the toothpick into the drink mixture. These oils are strong and a full drop would be too much for this drink.*)

Essential Oils in the Barnyard

Not only can essential oils be beneficial to your family and household, they can also be useful on your four-legged friends. I've used oils numerous times on my dogs and horses, and they seem to enjoy them as much as I do.

When using oils on animals, it is important to **always dilute them and follow the “less is more” rule**. Remember that an animal's sense of smell is much stronger and more sensitive than ours.

I really like the advice that Kristen Leigh Bell gives in her book, *Holistic Aromatherapy for Animals*. She suggests allowing the animal to smell the oil from your hand or the bottle before applying it to their skin. Watch for their reaction to tell you whether or not they like it. If they respond favorably, you can proceed. Just like humans, animals might have preferences and aversions to different smells.

****A Word of Warning**** Certain essential oils (*especially melaleuca*) can be extremely toxic to cats and birds. There is some debate on this topic, but please use extreme caution when using oils in the presence of these animals. Since I don't have cats or birds (*other than chickens*), I don't have a lot of personal experience on this topic, but please be very cautious.

Tips for using oils in your barnyard:

- I like to mix 20-30 drops of insect repellent oils (such as lemongrass, citronella, peppermint, rosemary, lavender, and melaleuca) with water in a quart-sized spray bottle to spritz on my horses and milk cow for non-toxic fly relief. (*Shake well before spraying*)
- Add lavender (*for its soothing properties*) or melaleuca (*for its cleansing properties*) to your homemade animal salves and balms.
- Use lemon, peppermint, citronella, and clary sage to fight fleas.
- When disinfecting pens or sheds, add melaleuca to the wash water.
- Use diluted lavender and/or frankincense for occasional skin irritations.
- Add 10-15 drops of peppermint oil to a small spray bottle filled with water. Spritz on plants, shrubs, and trees for a non-toxic bug repellent.

Homemade Udder Balm

This is a very all-purpose recipe. Use it on your cow or goat's udder, or even as a hand lotion for yourself!

- 1/2 ounce beeswax
- 1 ounce shea butter
- 1 ounce coconut oil
- 3 ounces olive oil
- 2 drops lavender essential oil
- 2 drops melaleuca essential oil

Combine the beeswax, shea butter, and coconut oil in a double boiler. Stir over medium heat until all ingredients are melted. Add the olive oil and essential oils. Pour into a container.

If you plan to use this on your animals, I wouldn't recommend leaving it in the barn when it's cold outside—it turns rock hard when chilled.

If you prefer a softer salve, reduce the amount of beeswax or add more olive oil.

Conclusion

Essential oils are a wonderful way to take charge of your own health and learn about natural solutions and remedies to everyday problems. I hope you found this eBook useful and inspiring on your journey to a more natural lifestyle. May you be empowered and inspired on your essential oil journey!

Happy Oiling!

~Jill

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About the Author



I'm Jill Winger- a former Idaho girl who came to Wyoming to ride horses, and hasn't looked back since. I didn't grow up on a ranch, or farm, or even on acreage, but I've always had a deep-rooted passion for the rural way of life. My handy hubby and I purchased our 67 acre homestead in 2008 and we currently share it with horses, dogs, cats, chickens, geese, pigs, dairy goats, a milk cow, and an assortment of grass fed beef cattle. I'm a stay-at-home mom to our daughters (2010, 2015) and son (2012), and I adore being a homemaker, homesteader, and business owner.

I'm not the perfect homesteader— my barn gets messy, my garden is full of weeds, and sometimes the goats eat out and eat the tree row. But, I still love inspiring others to start a homesteading journey of their very own. When I'm not writing articles for [The Prairie Homestead](#), you'll find me riding horses, mowing the lawn, researching natural remedies, making cheese, building fence, doing chores, repurposing old furniture, and just trying to keep my head above water in this crazy thing I call homestead life.

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