

Best Essential Oils for Autism and ADHD

The Ultimate Guide

A photograph of several amber-colored glass bottles of essential oils with white caps, arranged on a surface. In the foreground, there are white carnations and a pink flower. The background is softly blurred.

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Best Essential Oils for Autism and ADHD - The Ultimate Guide

When you hear the words “essential oils,” one image that might pop into your mind is going to the spa for some much-needed relaxation. Essentials oils are sometimes associated with spas because they are often used by a massage therapist or masseuse during a therapy session. But did you know essential oils can be beneficial for children on the autism spectrum and kids with *attention deficit hyperactivity disorder* (ADHD), as well? Before we discuss the **best essential oils for autism** and ADHD, first let’s explore what they are and what they can do for our bodies.

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Best Essential Oils FOR AUTISM



FRANKINCENSE

Helps children with autism or ADHD stay focused. It is also known to help reduce stress reactions and negative emotions.

VETIVER

The oil's relaxing and calming properties are said to help children combat symptoms of ADHD and ADD symptoms such as difficulty in concentrating, being easily distracted, and impatience.



SANDALWOOD

Promotes mental clarity, has a relaxing and calming effect that can be helpful for children with autism spectrum disorders. It is also known to have anti-inflammatory, anti-aging, and anti-viral properties.

CEDARWOOD

Has calming and relaxing properties. Promotes the release of serotonin, which is then converted into melatonin in the brain. This helps the children enjoy peaceful and restorative sleep.



LAVENDER

Helps heal burns and wounds, alleviates headaches, and useful in the treatment of diabetes. It has a calming effect on children on the autism spectrum and can help improve sleep quality and reduce anxiety and emotional stress.

MANDARIN

Particularly useful for children because many kids are fond of sweet, citrusy scent. It can also help reduce their anxiety levels.



PEPPERMINT

Freshens bad breath and heals digestive issues. Helps relieve headache, clear the respiratory tract, and soothe tight and tired muscles.

YLANG YLANG

Positive effect on human emotions and improves the blood flow to certain parts of the body. Relieves inflammation and improves the function of cardiovascular and digestive systems.



BERGAMOT

Helps create a feeling of joy, freshness, and energy by helping improve the circulation of blood to different parts of the body. Great oil for autism.

CHAMOMILE

Relaxing and has a calming effect on people. Has strong anti-inflammatory and pain reducing abilities. Helps relieve congestion, strengthen the heart, improve digestion, and fight cancer.



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Essential Oils for Autism
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What is an Essential Oil?

An essential oil is basically a liquid distilled from the leaves, stems, flowers, bark, roots, and other parts of a plant. The term “essential oil” itself is a contraction of the original “quintessential oil” which originated from the Aristotelian idea that matter is composed of four elements: fire, air, earth, and water. The fifth element, quintessence, is considered the spirit or life force of matter.

The chemical composition and aroma of essential oils are known to provide many psychological and physical therapeutic benefits. These benefits can be obtained by either inhaling their scent or by applying their diluted versions directly to the skin.

Essential oils are obtained from plants through distillation, usually by using steam. Manufacturers also utilize other processes such as expression, solvent extraction, absolute oil extraction, resin tapping, and cold pressing. Despite the use of the word “oil,” most essential oils don’t have that oily feeling. These oils are mostly clear, but some, such as patchouli, orange, and lemongrass, are amber or yellow in color.

Contrary to what some people may believe, essential oils are not the same as perfume or fragrance oils. Essential oils are derived from true plants, and they contain the true essence of the plant they came from. Fragrance oils, on the other hand, contain artificial ingredients and substances. In addition, they do not have the therapeutic benefits that essential oils can provide.

General Benefits of Essential Oils for Kids

Throughout history, essential oils have been used for medicinal purposes by people all over the world. Some known benefits of these oils are their ability to:

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- Support healthy body functions and help boost the immune system.
- Relieve discomfort and sore muscles after exercising or spending time at the gym.
- Soothe the digestive system. Peppermint, for example, is known to support the healthy function of your stomach and digestive organs.
- Enhance a massage.
- Boost your ability to focus and concentrate.
- Help you relax and reduce your stress levels. This is perhaps one of the reasons essential oils for ADHD and autism are gaining in popularity these days. Essential oils can penetrate the skin and cross the brain-blood barrier to reach the amygdala and other limbic parts of the brain that control our mood and emotions.
- Promote wellness.
- Provide safer and non-toxic ways to clean and purify both home and work spaces.
- Help you achieve healthier skin and great-looking hair.

Using Essential Oils on Children with Autism, ADHD, and ADD

Transition periods are particularly challenging for many children with autism spectrum disorder, such as when a child goes from dinner to bedtime. According to studies, more than half of children on the spectrum have a problem falling asleep or staying asleep.

Over the past few years, parents across the United States and around the world have been sharing stories about how essential oils have helped their children stay calm during transition periods. Some of these essential oils even helped children sleep more soundly, according to parents.

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In fact, you can find a number of online blogs and articles brimming with testimonials on the use of essential and **calming oils for ADHD** and autism spectrum disorders (ASD). But is there scientific proof they work? Researchers at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center set out to find the answer to this question. In April of this year, a team headed by Dr. Jill Hollway started a study on the growing trend of using essential oils to help children with autism stay calm and sleep. Results have not been released, as the study is still underway. But if you want to try essential oils on your child with autism spectrum disorder, it's important that you educate yourself first to prevent any accidents or problems.

As previously mentioned, some essential oils can be applied directly on the skin. In the case of children with ASD, ADHD, and attention deficit disorder (ADD), the oils should be applied to the soles of the feet, the neck, the top of the head, the chest, the forehead, the abdomen, the arms, and the legs. According to parents who have found success with essential oils, the oils work almost immediately, as they can be absorbed into the bloodstream within 30 seconds. Then, they can be circulated through the entire body within 30 minutes. It's important to note some oils need to be diluted with carrier oils for safety, which will be explained later in this article.

To ensure efficiency, it is recommended that essential oils are used two to three times a day at the start. Then, the frequency should be gradually reduced to once a day.

Apart from directly applying essential oils to the skin, parents can also use an aromatic diffuser so children can inhale the oils. A diffuser is basically an air vaporizer that allows you to disperse your essential oil of choice by adding it to distilled water.

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In addition to helping the children sleep or stay calm, adding essential oil to a diffuser also helps purify rooms and eliminate bacteria and viruses in the air. It can help you create a better living environment for the entire family. You can also use it at the office to help you stay focused and reduce stress levels.

A word of caution, though. Always make sure to keep essential oils in glass containers. According to experts, they might become contaminated with toxins and other harmful substances if you put them in a plastic container or diffuser.

The 10 Best Essential Oils for Autism, ADHD & ADD

1. Frankincense Oil

Sometimes referred to as olibanum, **frankincense oil** is taken from the resin of the *Boswellia carterri* or *Boswellia sacara* tree that commonly grows in Somalia. It has anti-bacterial, anti-tumor and anti-viral properties that can aid in the recovery from various illnesses such as respiratory infections, indigestion, arthritis, and joint pain. Research has shown that it can also help boost the immune system.

For children with autism or ADHD, **frankincense oil benefits** include helping them stay focused. It is also known to help reduce stress reactions and negative emotions.

2. Vetiver Oil

Vetiver oil is obtained through the steam distillation of the roots of the vetiver plant (*Chrysopogon zizanioides*), a perennial grass that is native to India. It has antiseptic and antispasmodic properties that aid in the healing of wounds and scars and provide relief from all types of inflammation.

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In 2001, a study conducted by Dr. Terry Friedman revealed that **vetiver essential oil benefits** children with ADHD. The oil's relaxing and calming properties are said to help children combat symptoms of ADHD and ADD symptoms such as difficulty in concentrating, being easily distracted, and impatience.

3. Sandalwood Oil

Known for its woody and sweet smell, **sandalwood oil** is derived from the mature roots of the sandalwood tree through steam distillation. The more mature the tree is, the more potent the extracted essential oil would be.

One of the major **sandalwood oil benefits** is that it promotes mental clarity, especially when used with a diffuser. It also has a relaxing and calming effect that can be helpful for children with autism spectrum disorders. Apart from that, sandalwood is known to have anti-inflammatory, anti-aging, and anti-viral properties.

4. Cedarwood Oil

Like sandalwood and vetiver essential oils, **cedar oil** is extracted by steam-distilling pieces of the cedar wood tree. Major components of this essential oil include alpha-cedrene, beta-cedrene, cedrol, widdrol, and thujopsene. It can be used for treating eczema, hair loss, dry scalp, and the inflammation of the joints and tissues.

Cedarwood essential oil can also help children with autism and ADHD. It has calming and relaxing properties. Its scent promotes the release of serotonin, which is then converted into melatonin in the brain. This can help children enjoy peaceful and restorative sleep.

5. Lavender Oil

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Throughout the centuries, **lavender oil** has been used by different civilizations for its medicinal properties. For instance, the Egyptians used it for mummification, while the Romans used it for bathing and cooking. Perhaps the most famous usage of all is when Mary Magdalene used it to anoint Jesus.

There are many **lavender oil benefits**. For starters, it has antioxidants that protect your body from illnesses. It also helps heal burns and wounds, alleviates headaches, and may be useful in the treatment of diabetes. It has a calming effect on children on the autism spectrum and can help improve sleep quality and reduce anxiety and emotional stress.

6. Mandarin Oil

Mandarin essential oil has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for thousands of years. Known to be the sweetest and most calming of all citrus essential oils, it is very mild and contains many healing properties.

It is useful for treating acne, reducing insomnia, managing gut issues like leaky gut syndrome, and may even help with the treatment of certain types of cancer, thanks to its anti-microbial anti-tumor properties. It is particularly useful for children because many kids are fond of its sweet, citrusy scent. It can also help reduce anxiety levels.

7. Peppermint Oil

Aside from lavender, peppermint is perhaps one of the most versatile of all essential oils in the world. It is perfect for children with autism, ADHD, and ADD because it gives a cooling sensation and has a calming effect on the body. It is also known to help improve mental focus.

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Peppermint essential oil also has anti-microbial properties that help freshen bad breath and heal digestive issues. It can also help relieve headaches, clear the respiratory tract, and soothe tight and tired muscles.

8. Ylang Ylang Oil

Ylang ylang essential oil is derived from the flower petals of the large ylang ylang tree (*Cananga odorata*), which are often found in tropical countries. This essential oil is quite popular for its sweet, floral scent. In fact, it is one of the key ingredients of Chanel No. 5.

As for its benefits, ylang ylang oil has effective sedative, anti-septic, anti-spasmodic, and anti-depressant properties. It has a positive effect on human emotions and can help increase the blood flow to certain parts of the body. It can relieve inflammation and help the function of cardiovascular and digestive systems.

9. Bergamot Oil

Bergamot essential oil is extracted from the peel of the fruit of the bergamot plant through cold compression. It is often used to reduce pain caused by headaches and muscle tension. It has anti-bacterial properties that can help heal wounds and minimize marks on the skin.

Known as an excellent mood enhancer, bergamot is considered great essential oil for autism. It helps create a feeling of joy, freshness, and energy by helping improve the circulation of blood to different parts of the body. And at the same time, bergamot oil is considered a relaxant as it has a calming effect and can reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.

10. Chamomile Oil

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For nearly 5,000 years, chamomile has been used to treat various ailments. Whether in tea or in oil form, this ancient and versatile medicinal herb is rich in disease-fighting antioxidants such as terpenoids and flavonoids.

Chamomile essential oil is one of the best when it comes to fighting stress and anxiety. According to a study published on *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine and Pharmacognosy Review*, inhaling chamomile vapors promotes relaxation and has a calming effect on people. Chamomile oil also has strong anti-inflammatory and pain reducing abilities and can help relieve congestion, strengthen the heart, improve digestion, and even fight cancer.

A Few Important Reminders on Using Essential Oils

Essential oils are extremely potent. Whether you're using **essential oils for autism spectrum disorders** or the more common varieties, it's essential you be as careful as possible. Also, you should use as little as needed. Always remember that more is not always the best. When a few drops of essential oil will do, you should neither use more, nor consume it internally. Otherwise, it may put your health at risk.

Also, know that essential oils must be used carefully and in the correct manner. If this is your first time using essential oils for your child with ASD, it would be wise to check with a qualified professional to determine whether you want to use it topically or aromatically.

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When using essential oils topically, consider diluting them with safe carrier oil. Carrier oil is basically fractionated coconut oil or grapeseed oil. It helps prevent the skin from getting burned when it comes into contact with certain types of essential oil. For adults, one drop of essential oil with every three drops of carrier oil is the recommended ratio. For children, it should be three times more, depending on the size and weight of the child. If you don't have carrier oil, high quality olive oil can be a good alternative.

Essential oils that are known for being "hot" and therefore require dilution are: birch, cassia, cinnamon, clove, eucalyptus, ginger, lemongrass, oregano, peppermint, thyme, and wintergreen. Before using any of these essential oils, it's recommended that you test them first by applying them on the wrist or on the bottom of the feet. Also, make sure that you keep them away from your eyes.

It is also advisable that you consult a qualified aromatherapist or a doctor before applying any type of essential oil on the skin, especially on children. Apart from applying essential oils on your skin, you can also inhale it by using a diffuser. Certain research has shown that aromatic use is more effective and much safer than ingesting the oils.

When they are not in use, essential oils should be kept in a bottle with a tightly closed lid. Otherwise, they could go bad. Also, you should keep them away from extreme temperatures so they will last longer.

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What to Consider When Buying Essential Oils For Your Child With Autism

Quality is a key consideration to make when buying and determining **which essential oils are best for autism**. If the oils are of low quality, you may not be able to get optimum results. Manufacturers may say they are offering quality products by stamping the word “pure” on their labels. However, this doesn’t necessarily mean that the oils themselves are of good quality. Also, since essential oils are usually not regulated, some manufacturers go as far as claiming that their products are “organic” even when they are not.

Some manufacturers use chemicals when extracting essential oil from plants, thus making the oils neither pure nor organic. As such, before buying and using a particular brand and type of essential oils, it’s important that you take a closer look at how it is extracted. This will help you determine if the manufacturers’ claims are true. In addition, you should avoid anything that says “fragrance” or “perfume.”

Essential oils that are considered 100% pure and therapeutic-grade are those extracted from plants, flowers, trees, roots, and seeds among others using low, slow steam distillation (for non-citrus essential oils) or cold pressed (for citrus oils to retain their quality). Depending on the product and company, pure essential oil extracts can be 50 to 200 times more concentrated than their original source.

Single oils can be blended together to create another type of essential oil or to enhance their effects. However, they should be blended together properly to ensure that they are effective, safer, and easier to use.

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Certified Pure Therapeutic Grade Essential Oils

Purity is one of the most important characteristics of essential oils. Among the things that can affect purity are poor production processes and the development of synthetic essential oil variations. If you want to get the best results possible, you'd want to opt for Certified Pure Therapeutic Grade (CPTG) essential oils. These oils, like **doTerra essential oils for autism** , undergo rigorous testing to ensure purity and quality.

CPTG quality testing is done to ensure that essential oils are made by using proper methods of growing, harvesting, and distilling their plant source. It is done through a series of processes that include:

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1. **Microbial Testing**

Under microbial testing, a batch of essential oils is analyzed and tested for the presence of micro-organisms like fungi, bacteria, viruses, and mold that can be detrimental to your health. Samples are taken before and after the essential oils are packed to ensure they haven't been contaminated during the packaging process.

2. **Gas Chromatography and Mass Spectrometry Analysis (GC/MS)** In this process, essential oils are vaporized and passed through a long column to separate them into individual components. This is to determine the exact chemical composition of a particular essential oil.

3. **Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy**

Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) is designed to ensure that each batch of essential oil is potent and consistent. As part of this test, structural components of essential oil compounds are analyzed by passing them through infrared light.

4. **Heavy-Metal Testing**

Heavy metal testing determines the heavy metal content in the essential oil. Ideally, pure essential oils do not contain heavy metals when distilled.

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Health Benefits of Essential Oils

The health benefits of essential oils are indeed numerous and undeniable. But as with anything that can directly affect your health and well-being, it's vital to educate yourself first before using any essential oil, especially on your children. You should conduct some research and seek expert advice on the subject to avoid allergies and other harmful side effects.

It's also very important to ensure the quality of the essential oils you want to use. Essential oils that contain chemicals or artificial ingredients may not be as potent and effective as pure and organic essential oils. They may even cause problems. Therefore, you should be vigilant and stay informed. Also, you should always obtain essential oils from trusted and reputable sources to get results that will meet your expectations.

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