

Managing Fatigue with Essential Oils



Key point

Each clinical environment is different. The following steps are generalizations to help you think through an assessment to use the appropriate delivery method and essential oil. Always follow the policy and procedures of your organization if any are in place.

Step 1: Assess patient / client for signs and causes of fatigue

Fatigue may be related to physical, cognitive, or emotional causes. Find out what is going on with your patient. Your scope of practice will guide your assessments.

Step 2: Select the essential oil and delivery method

Both inhalation and topical methods are useful for fatigue. Consider that inhalation is the fastest method for therapeutic effects. It is also convenient for people to keep an inhaler or other container handy to use intermittently throughout the day.

Inhalation

Direct inhalation is more effective for fatigue than indirect inhalation from a diffuser. Place 1–2 drops of your chosen essential oil on a cotton ball or similar material. You may choose more than one essential oil to create a blend. In this case, use one drop of each oil on the same cotton ball: for example, one drop spearmint and one drop sweet orange. If using aromasticks, use a total of 15–20 drops on the wick (e.g., 8 drops spearmint and 12 drops sweet orange).

Topical

Use the selected, pre-diluted (2–5%) essential oil on an area of the body that can easily be smelled by the patient or client, such as wrists.

Examples of essential oils with stimulating therapeutic properties

- Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus or radiata*)
- Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)
- Peppermint (*Mentha x piperita*)
- Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)
- Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
- Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)

Examples of essential oils with uplifting therapeutic properties

- Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia*)
- Grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi*)
- Lemon (*Citrus limon*)
- Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)
- Sweet orange (*Citrus sinensis*)



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Step 3: Provide education to the patient and/or family prior to delivery

Identify the oil(s) you have selected, and explain how they may help. Provide alternatives if you have them and the patient has preferences. Demonstrate techniques for the patient and/or family and have them practice with you. Make sure to provide any necessary safety information.

Step 4: Evaluate effectiveness

Reassessment is imperative, just as it is with other patient treatments. Patient needs may change as their condition changes. A patient may also want to try a different essential oil, blend, or different delivery method as time goes on. Document in accordance with your profession and organization standards.



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