Take thyme for respiratory health

And eucalyptus, hyssop, and fir

Bev Gray, RA, CH

Using genuine and authentic essential oils can help support respiratory health. For bronchitis the essential oils of eucalyptus, hyssop, lemon, and fir are beneficial. Coughs benefit from the use of juniper and rosemary. Sore throats are soothed by steaming with thyme, tea tree, and cedarwood oils.

The essential oil diffusor is the most common way of using and enjoying essential oils. This method involves gently heating oils so that they are vaporized (diffused) into the air. The diffusor method makes your space smell great, while influencing your mental state and energy in positive ways. Most essential oils are antimicrobial, so they can kill germs that cause colds and flu.

Inhalation and steams are therapeutic, powerful ways to get the essential oils into the respiratory system. Pour hot water into a large bowl, add two to three drops of essential oil, place the bowl on a table, and sit comfortably in front of it. Using a large towel, make a tent over the bowl and place your head in the tent. Steam for up to five minutes.

Inhalation can also be achieved by smelling the oil from the bottle or placing a few drops on a tissue and wafting it under your nose through-
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out the day. The inhalation method should be avoided by people with asthma or epilepsy.

Breathe deeply
The following essential oils are used in the respiratory health formulas found in the sidebar.

Eucalyptus (Eucalyptus globulus) has a familiar medicinal aroma and is a very powerful bactericidal with antiviral properties. While it is best known as a decongestant and expectorant (expels phlegm from the lungs), eucalyptus is also an excellent immune stimulant and is good for people who are run down and prone to frequent colds. Eucalyptus can be used in a bath or massage for sore muscles.

Thyme (Thymus vulgaris) essential oil is a powerful antiseptic that can help to keep your respiratory system healthy. It is a stimulating, protecting oil that has a strengthening effect on the nerves. Thyme is ideal for the treatment of exhaustion, both physical and mental, and is helpful to the immune system. Thyme warms with its pungent herbal aroma.

Cedarwood (Cedrus atlantica) oil has a sweet, slightly camphorous, woody-balsamic scent. The oil is a powerful antiseptic, used particularly for respiratory health. It helps to break down mucus, which makes it an excellent treatment for catarrhal conditions, especially chronic bronchitis. Avoid using cedarwood during pregnancy.

Hyssop (Hyssopus officinalis) smells sweet, warm, and herbaceous. Hyssop is astringent, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiviral, and bactericidal. It is also an expectorant, which makes it good for bronchitis, coughs, flu, sore throats, tonsillitis, and whooping cough.

Fir (Abies balsamea) scent is reminiscent of a walk through the forest and creates an uplifting, cheery, and fresh atmosphere. Also known as Canadian balsam, the essential oil is derived from a clear resin found on the bark of the tree and coniferous needles. It is colourless, with a sweet balsamic, pine-like scent. The resin has been used extensively by First Nations people as an external treatment for burns, cuts, and sores. It is also used to help relieve coughs and a variety of infections, bronchitis, excess mucus, and sore throat.

During cold and flu season, remember that the right combination of essential oils can help clear up a congested respiratory system.

Respiratory rescue diffusor blend
30 drops eucalyptus
20 drops tea tree
10 drops thyme linalol
20 drops hyssop
20 drops cedarwood

Makes a 5 mL bottle. Use 5 to 8 drops in a room diffusor. Respiratory rescue can also be added to a steam, bath, or used as an oil to rub on the chest. For a steam add 2 drops, for a bath add up to 5 drops, and for a chest rub add 15 to 21 drops per 30 mL of carrier oil.

Congested chest rub
30 mL olive leaf
7 drops fir
7 drops thyme linalol
7 drops eucalyptus

Bev Gray, RA, CH, is a skilled herbalist, registered aromatherapist, and educator who loves to share her passion for medicinal aromatic plants. She owns Aroma Borealis Herb Shop.
