

7 Healthy Ways to Lose the Blues Dec/Jan 2005

By TOM WEEDE as published in *Natural Health Magazine*

"Follow your nose"

Aromatherapy practitioners use essential oils to enhance body and spirit, but can a scent really give your mood a boost? Yes, says aromatherapist Kelly Holland Azzaro, vice president of the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy and co-owner of Ashi Therapy holistic healing center in Banner Elk, NC.

"You'll experience the benefits immediately," Azzaro declares. "When you inhale a scent, the properties of an essential oil go beyond the blood-brain barrier, helping to produce an effect on your mood."

Try citrus oils first, Azzaro suggests. "These are a reminder of warm climates with lots of sunshine, so they're definitely a blues picker-upper." Her choice is confirmed by science: A small non-randomized study published in the journal *Neuroimmunomodulation* found that depressed subjects who were exposed to citrus aromas needed less anti-depressants to feel better than those who weren't exposed.

Azzaro's list of feel-good aromas includes:

- Orange (*citrus reticulato*)
- Lemon (*citrus limon*)
- Tangerine (*citrus reticulata var blanco*)
- Clary sage (*salvia sclarea*)
- Geranium (*pelargonium graveolens*)
- Ylang-ylang (*cananga odorata*)
- Peppermint (*mentha piperita*)
- Exotic rose oils

In addition to simply inhaling a scent, you can incorporate an aroma into body or foot baths, compresses, or massage. "By adding essential oils with the massage oil, you can achieve a state of relaxation while experiencing the healing properties of aromatherapy," says Azzaro. Consult your doctor if you're pregnant or trying to conceive, breast-feeding, epileptic, or have any specific health concerns.

