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Aromatic Wisdom Podcast Episode #011 **Essential Oils For A Good Night's Sleep**

This is the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast, Episode 11.

In today's show I'm going to talk about Essential Oils that can help you beat insomnia and get a good night's sleep.

You're listening to the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast with your host, Liz Fulcher.

If you're interested in learning about Essential Oils, hearing interviews with industry experts, and discovering ways to grow your own Aromatherapy business, this is the podcast for you.

For more information and show notes, visit the website at www.AromaticWisdomInstitute.com. Now sit back. Relax. Take a deep breath and enjoy as Liz shares a dose of Aromatic Wisdom.

Hi, Everyone and thank you so much for being here today. My name is Liz Fulcher and I am a clinical aromatherapist and an Essential Oil educator as well as a 24-year veteran of using Essential Oils in aromatherapy and I am your host for this podcast.

Today I am so excited to share that the Aromatic Wisdom podcast is officially on iTunes (Yay!). I would so love for you to pop over and leave a review on iTunes. The link is:

www.AromaticWisdomInstitute.com/iTunes.

Thank you, thank you, thank you! I would really appreciate that.

So, today we're going to talk about sleep. Or lack of it I guess would be more appropriate. My first experience or true sleep deprivation came with motherhood. I had my first child in 1986 when I lived in Rome, Italy. My son Davide was born. He was a terrific kid, but he was not a sleeper and his days and nights were mixed up and it was the first time I experienced



sleep deprivation. Night after night of interrupted sleep; you know having to function with just a few hours of poor rest, I really understood how, when you don't have good quality sleep, how it can affect every area of your life. If any of you out there listening, do suffer from insomnia or broken sleep, you know what I am talking about.

Sleep is so fundamental that if you are not getting enough rest it will affect your mental faculties, it can affect your body; your stress levels will actually rise just from your lack of sleep and ultimately it's going to hurt your immune system. And when your immune system is compromised, you're going to get sick. So, it's really important to get a good night's sleep and I'm sure that the people around you will appreciate it because one of the first things that happens to people when they don't get enough rest is they become, well, "cranky-pants".

How much sleep should you actually have each night? Eight hours is the number usually quoted as the appropriate number. A lot of people feel like if they don't have the eight hours they aren't having enough. But look at your own sleep patterns, look at what makes you feel well. Some people are fine with six or seven hours, other people need nine to ten solid hours to feel well. The number of hours is not as important as the quality of sleep. If you've gotten six hours of really deep sleep where you are in REM and you're dreaming and you wake up feeling refreshed, it's a lot better to do that than to lay there for ten hours tossing and turning and having really poor, restless sleep.

Let's talk about how Essential Oils can help you sleep better. If our goal is to have unbroken, deep, restful sleep, then we want to look at Essential Oils that are going to be sedative for the Central Nervous System (CNS). Not only are they helping us to slow down and calm down by relaxing our nerves and starting to put us in a place where we are ready for sleep, they can also help you relax your muscles. Perhaps you've drawn up your shoulders all day in stress. Or you have some pain or discomfort. Essential Oils can start to help loosen those tight muscles; help you to just let go.

Essential Oils can also help to ground you and still your over-active mind. I think a lot of us today have an over-active mind because we're too busy, we're burning the candle at both ends. Our to-do lists get longer and longer and I think once we're in a quiet place, we lie in bed, then BOOM! All of the sudden a zillion ideas start popping through our head of things we have to do; our to-do list is suddenly right in front of us and very often that is when we most need to shut that off and get some rest so we can then get up the next day and do those things.



Just as an aside, mental overload is one of my personal reasons why I can't sleep. My brain just doesn't want to rest. Sometimes when I'm lying in bed and I can't stop thinking about all the things I have to do, I personally find that jumping out of bed (well, I don't jump anywhere really). I get out of bed and just do a brain-dump where I get a piece of paper and literally just start listing everything that is in my head. Not even so much a to-do list, but whatever things are in there that I'm afraid I'll forget or maybe just an idea I have or a creative moment or inspiration or letters I have to write. Whatever is clogging my brain, I unplug my brain and, boom, just let it all out on the paper. That way, first of all, I've processed it; second of all, I don't have to worry about remembering it because it's on a piece of paper; and there it is, I can deal with it tomorrow. I get back in bed—I might take a whiff of Lavender Essential Oil and start to bring myself back into a quiet place. Often when I've done that, it's a release from my brain so I can go to sleep. For someone with a really busy mind, just doing a brain dump, getting it out will help.

Insomnia can haunt us in two different ways. One is where you just can't get in to sleep. You just can't seem to relax enough, relax your body and relax your mind to even fall asleep. Or you may easily fall asleep but then you'll wake up at 2 o'clock in the morning with your mind alert and wide-awake. I'm going to give you five different Essential Oils and some methods to use them both for helping you go to sleep and helping you get back to sleep.

The first Essential Oil that I'm going to recommend is (surprise, surprise!), Lavender. The Lavender plant (*Lavendula angustifolia*) produces a molecule called linalyl acetate. Linalyl acetate is a natural CNS (Central Nervous System) sedative. Lavender also smells really good. It smells clean and people like it and associate it with relaxation. It has tons of healing properties, but above all it's calming. Lavender is the perfect essential to use at the end of the day. You can add it to a warm bath. If you have any kind of bath salts whether they are Pink Himalayan salts or Dead Sea salts, or even Epsom salts, just put some Lavender in the salts, mix it together and throw it in the tub. Have a nice, warm, calming bath at the end of the day. And if you really want to go all out add candles and soft music. Lock the doors so the kids don't come in and visit you (or cats, as in my case), and have that be your special time if you find especially that getting to sleep is an issue.

Another thing you can do with Lavender is add it to a spray bottle and just mist across the sheets. In other words, spray it over your pillow, over the sheets, so that when you get in, it smells amazing. Also, those molecules are wafting up into your nose and helping your central nervous system to relax.



You can also keep a bottle of Lavender Essential Oil next to the bed, so if you do wake up, let's say at 2 o'clock in the morning, with your brain suddenly alert and awake, then you can grab the bottle, take off the cap, sniff it right from the bottle; if you find you don't want to get too active. Because some people, if they get up and start doing lists, or start moving around to get a glass of milk, or whatever, are too awake. Some people need to do the minimum to get back to sleep and that's when a bottle is nice to grab. Or, even better, is to get yourself a nasal inhaler, put Essential Oil of Lavender in that, and then just breathe from the inhaler.

The second Essential Oil that is my go-to for sleep is Marjoram. The Latin binomial is *Origanum marjorana*. This has always made me sleepy. It smells herbal, it's not flowery/sweet-smelling like Lavender is. It smells like the herb Marjoram. What I like to do is get a diffuser, fill it with water, put it next to my bed, and I will add just a couple of drops, maybe three drops, of Marjoram and three drops of Lavender. I get that diffuser going over my bed and while I'm lying there I like to read before I go to sleep or I might watch a TV show on my iPad—something light, something fun. I never watch heavy stuff before I go to sleep because I don't want those images in my brain as I'm resting. And I find, while I have the Lavender and Marjoram sort of wafting over my face, I start feeling really sleepy. I can feel myself slowing down and I can feel my eyelids starting to get really heavy. Next thing I know I am asleep. It really is effective. Sometimes, I'll get that cranked out while I'm brushing my teeth so by the time I come back to bed to start to read, the room already is pretty full of the molecules and also smells great.

My husband likes the smell of Marjoram so that's important. If you have a partner you are sleeping with or sharing the room with, know that they are breathing it is well. If they don't like it, that is certainly something to take into consideration.

The third essential oil that I love to use at night is Bergamot, which is a citrus and this may seem like an unusual choice, but citrus oils are not necessarily stimulating, but rather they are cheering and uplifting. So you can be uplifted and still be sleepy. Does that make sense? The Bergamot Latin binomial is *Citrus bergamia*. Or *bergamia*, I've heard it spoken both ways. Because I learned it in this modality, in the Italian language, I often say my Latin binomials like that. It is not a put on, I promise. I also have a Fragrant Friday post which I will put in the show notes so you can read all about Bergamot and all of its wonderful qualities.

This is the one I will use at the end of the day, especially if it is wintertime or there's a lot of rain and a lot of greyness or I might be anxious or worried about something. Bergamot is a great choice for the end of the day. It gives me a lighter heart before bed and so I can drift



off to sleep. Bergamot is nice to use in your bath, again with your bath salts, or just put a couple of drops in the water. It is also nice in a linen spray. This is not one I tend to sprinkle on my sheets, although I'm not sure why. I just tend to use it more in a spray, bath or again, in a diffuser. So Bergamot is a nice one before you go to sleep.

It's not really the one I would grab if I wake up. Lavender and Marjoram are my go-tos for that, in particular Lavender.

The next Essential Oil I like at bedtime is Roman Chamomile. The Latin binomial is *Chamaemelum nobile*. This is the Essential Oil they used on my little boy when he was born to help him stay calm; a powerful, powerful central nervous system sedative. Roman Chamomile is high in molecules from the chemical family called Esters, which are very calming.

The thing to know about Roman Chamomile is that although it is a sedative, it is also aromatically powerful. You don't need much and if you put too much in your diffuser or in your inhaler, it will be too strong. So you really don't need much, which is good, because it's an expensive Essential Oil—it's called a precious oil—so you only need a drop in the diffuser. This is a nice one to put in the bath before bed.

Another nice thing you can do with Roman Chamomile is you can make a nice little blend in an oil or lotion (unscented). Add a drop of Roman Chamomile and one or two drops of Lavender, then rub it in to your chest and your arms, so that as you are lying there, you are smelling this beautiful aroma coming from your skin. And, once again, keep in mind other people who are close to you in the bedroom who will be smelling your skin. If it's offensive to them you are going to need to change oils.

Finally, the last of my personal favorite Essential Oils to use at bedtime is a grounding, earthy oil called Vetiver. The Latin binomial is *Vetiveria zizanioides* and it's really earthy and it comes from a root and it does smell like dirt. It's gorgeous when you mix it with any of the oils that I have mentioned so far. This is, again, the one, when my brain is going crazy. It helps stop the mental overload, helps the wheels slow down a little bit so your brain can start to get a bit of a rest and restore itself.

Now Vetiver is a little tricky to work with. It is a very thick Essential Oil and because of its viscous nature I tend not to use in the diffuser. You certainly can, but I find that, for me, it's much easier to work with if I add it to an oil or a lotion and mix it with a little bit of Lavender and one drop of Roman Chamomile and rub it into my skin. Or I will sometimes



just put it in the bath or add to an inhaler. I do find that a diffuser is not my favorite way to use it.

So, those are my recommendations for Essential Oils that are really helpful to put you to sleep or put you back to sleep if you wake up. Again, they were Lavender, Marjoram, Bergamot, Roman Chamomile and Vetiver. You can use any of these oils by themselves or in combination with each other to help support a restful night and help you wake up feeling refreshed and ready to start your day!

I'd like to throw in here one non-aromatherapy recommendation for sleep that has helped me personally. It was recommended to me by someone, and I tried it and found it really, really works. You can buy magnesium citrate by itself in powder form and just add to water and drink it before bed, but I found it was a little too strong. If you take too much magnesium you will know it because you will get diarrhea.

I really didn't care for the taste of it so I bought a product called *Natural Calm*, "a relaxing magnesium supplement", the anti-stress drink, it's vegan, non-GMO and restores healthy magnesium levels. You can get it in different flavors like lemon or orange (which is my favorite). I will go ahead and put a link to this product in the show notes. The way I like to use *Natural Calm* is to drink it about twenty minutes before I go to sleep. Just before bed I'll get about two ounces of warm water and add a little bit of this *Natural Calm* to it and drink it down and then proceed to do the protocol with my Essential Oils. I find that between the magnesium and the Essential Oils and bedtime rituals, going to sleep is not really a problem. I really hope you have the same experience!

Now, we've reached that portion of the show that I like to call: **Smell My Life**

In the Smell My Life segment, I always share with you some authentic moment using Essential Oils or hydrosols or aromatics in my life from the previous week. This week was a pretty simple one and it's kind of funny because it relates to today's episode, although I don't always do that on purpose.

A couple of days ago I put fresh sheets, I changed to the linens on my bed and I did what I always do when I put new linens on the bed. I sprinkled Lavender all over the sheets, sometimes I'll even do it on the mattress. When the bed is bare, I take a bottle of Lavender Essential Oil, I take the lid off, and I literally just throw it across the bed. In other words, I stand on one side of the bed and anoint the bed; I give it a shake and the oil goes shooting across the mattress and I do that three or four times. It's very *non ortodosso*, very unorthodox. There is no ritual to it, it's just a way to get the Essential Oils on the mattress



quickly. I'll sprinkle a whole mess of Essential Oils across the mattress, put the sheets on, and I do it again. So I've really infused the mattress and the sheets with the smell of Lavender. Honestly, the fragrance of Lavender will last at least a week and it's so great because when I go to bed at night, pull back the blankets and the sheets, this gorgeous smell of Lavender wafts out, welcoming me into the bed at night. That's something you might want to try and definitely recommend it with your sedating oils, not stimulating oils.

And now we have reached the final segment of the podcast, called **Ask Liz**. In the Ask Liz segment, this is where you guys get a voice. You write to me and ask a question about Essential Oils or the practice of aromatherapy and I answer it.

So this week's question came from a woman that I met about a year ago at a business event. Her name is Shelley Hitz and you can even check out her website at ShelleyHitz.com and I'll add this link to the show notes. Shelly helps authors get their books written; her passion is helping people get their words out of them and published into books. I just love what she does. I have a book in me that needs to be born and so I am hoping Shelley will get that out of me. By the same token, she has developed an interest in Essential Oils through me. She wrote to me this week and said, "I have a question for your Ask Liz segment: Talk to me about allergies. What Essential Oils would be good for helping with the uncomfortable symptoms of allergies? I get asked this a lot, Shelley, so I'm glad you brought it up. Of course allergies is a huge conversation and we could talk for a long time about what causes them, but basically, I'm going to talk about the uncomfortable symptoms of environmental allergies around your sinuses. People get congested, they get itchy eyes, they get a runny nose, and so the Essential Oils that I have had the best luck with in addressing those kinds of symptoms of allergies are Laurel Leaf for congestion and also for helping to reduce the sneezing. German Chamomile, and Cornflower Hydrosol, which is really good to help stop the itching in the eye.

So, what I would do with the Laurel Leaf and Geranium and even Peppermint, because Peppermint helps to open up the nose, I would take:

5-6 drops of Laurel Leaf
2 drops of German Chamomile
2 drops of Peppermint

and I would add those Essential Oils to a nasal inhaler and whenever you start feeling some of those uncomfortable symptoms like congestion and so forth, take a whiff from the inhaler. If you are too congested, that you can't even inhale the inhaler, do a steam inhalation with one drop of Peppermint and put your head over the bowl, taking deep



breaths of steam. Soon you should be able to blow your nose and that should help clear things up a little bit.

Finally, the Cornflower Hydrosol is one of the few hydrosols you can use in your eyes. I put it in a little dropper bottle and use one or two drops in my eyes when they are starting to get that itchy, burning feeling, especially when there is a lot of pollen in the air.

So that's my recommendation: Essential Oils of Laurel Leaf, German Chamomile, and Peppermint, and Cornflower Hydrosol for the eyes.

And that does it for Episode #11 for the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast! Thank you so much for listening. Don't forget, if you want to send me a question, write to Liz@aromaticwisdom.com. In the subject line put Ask Liz and go ahead and give me your question and I might read it on the air.

Until next time, be happy. Be well.

Bye, bye.

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