

Stretching yourself

I was at a leadership training meeting and we were nearing the end, it was time for the last speaker. She approached the mike and looked out at all of us. She asked us to set down our notebooks and stand up and stretch. We all gladly took this opportunity to stretch and refresh. She watched us stretch and then told us to put our arms up over our heads and stretch as tall as we could. Then she encouraged us to do it again and reach just a little bit higher. After we sat down, the point of the exercise was not just the release it gave to all of us, but she encouraged us to remember that we could always reach or stretch ourselves just a little bit more. There is something to that. Notice that we took the time to refresh ourselves and stretch before we were encouraged to reach further. Sometimes we really need to take a few moments for ourselves, to just forget all the worry and stress and things that need to be done. Just take a moment and set it all aside and stretch.

Stretching takes place in many forms. Some people perform yoga exercises, others stretch out before going on a run or working out, still others perform stretching exercises in a gymnasium. The other day at church I was watching a small child. She was a cute little thing that was just learning to crawl. As I watched her she stretched numerous times, she would stretch out her hands before trying to crawl forward, she stretched toward her destination. Later I would see her stretch up onto her toes so her behind was up in the air and her hands were flat on the floor as she stretched her body into a V shape. Then I watched her flop down onto her belly and she just stretched out in all directions. She was delighting in the movements, in the ability to stretch.

Why do we stretch? It doesn't matter if it's an emotional or physical stretch, either way it seems to refresh our whole system. Physically, as we stretch, we move the lymph in our bodies. The lymph is what cleans our bodies, it scours out the toxins. It also helps move the toxins and acid build up in our muscles and tendons. Emotionally, as we stretch, we do much the same thing, we move out old ideas and provide room for new thoughts and ideas; we refresh ourselves mentally.

There are many essential oils that can help us as we strive to stretch ourselves, either physically or mentally, and make it easier to refresh our bodies and our psyches, which in turn makes it so we can stretch even further.

Let's start with physical stretching. You need to stretch your body. It is said that when Native Americans felt they had filled their lives they went to the burial grounds or other sacred place and then just sat down and went still, not moving. I'm sure many of them went into a deep meditative state. The end thereof though, was that their bodies quit functioning as they stayed still and ceased all movement. They passed quietly into the next life. This teaches us that we need to be moving in order to be alive, we need to stretch and move and be active. Stop and stretch right now as you read this article. Perhaps you're someplace where it would not be appropriate for you to stand and enjoy a full body stretch, just stretch something. Maybe stretch your toes out as far as they will go, perhaps you'll choose to just stretch your shoulders forward, maybe your stretch will be a yawn (that's a good stretch, hopefully not an indicator of my writing ability, though). Mmm, stop and notice what the stretch you chose did for your body. Can't you just feel that it was refreshing? Even if all you did was stretch your toes, there's a little bit of freedom that went through your whole body and electrified you, renewing you and strengthening you.

How can you intensify that experience? How can you make it easier? How can you increase the benefits of that stretch? The answer to all of these questions is, by adding essential oils to your stretch.

Essential oils that help with physical stretching:

- Bay Laurel is probably the first one you should think of. It helps move the lymph through your system. It will also make your workout easier and improves your ability to breathe deeply.
- Lemongrass will help if you have overstressed your tendons.

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- Spearmint can be used to help your muscles cool down after a workout.
- Marjoram can be used to help release muscle tension after too hard of a workout or to help prepare them for stretching.
- Basil will get rid of a muscle cramp and that after cramping tenderness.
- Peppermint will soothe a bruise.
- Physical Touch Blend was designed for the complete workout, apply it beforehand to prepare yourself for stretching and working out and/or apply it afterwards to soothe the tired (or overworked) body.
- Cypress improves circulation.
- Birch will decrease swelling and also assist a bone in healing.
- Breathe blend or Eucalyptus will help you stretch out those lungs and make breathing easier.
- Cairo Touch blend helps align the whole body, emotional and physical, so that you can stretch completely. It is often referred to as “Chiropractor in a bottle,” but it also works on an emotional level. It is used to bring the body into balance both physically and emotionally.
- Fennel helps tone the body as you stretch, taking the slack out of loose skin.
- Lavender is often referred to as the universal oil; it can be used to ease yourself into stretching and to soothe your body afterwards. It makes the whole process more calming and relaxing. It also works on an emotional level. Perhaps it is the perfect oil to use before an exercise such as yoga as it helps you center yourself.
- Thyme is amazing for muscle fatigue.

Mental stretching can be a challenging Sudoku puzzle, a heavy duty study session, a lecture, a session of meditation, or even talking with a friend. There are many oils that can help you mentally.

- Basil is a two-edged sword. It calms the body down while helping keep the mind alert.
- Bergamot is a soothing oil that helps clear the mind of anger and negative emotions.
- Each of the seasonal blends (Bliss, Blossom, Harvest, and Holiday Gift) help attune the emotions to the season. Bliss helps you relax through hectic summer days. Blossom helps prepare you for changes and new things that spring brings. Harvest helps you find closure as you go through Autumn. Holiday Gift helps you open yourself to the gratitude of the winter holidays.
- Cairo Touch blend helps you align your mental and your physical body, bringing your whole into one.
- Chamomile helps bring on deep relaxation, soothing the mental, emotional, and physical.
- Frankincense relaxes and revitalizes at the same time. It is said to increase spiritual awareness and promote meditation.
- Geranium helps suture emotions back together when you feel as if you’re falling apart at the seams.
- Lavender soothes the mental and the physical on all levels.
- Lemongrass stimulates the mind.
- Lemon helps the left-brain function.
- Orange helps the right-brain function.
- Peppermint perks the mind up when it’s feeling tired and drowsy.
- Quiet Scent blend helps stop the mind when it’s on overload and won’t slow down. It is the perfect oil to use to begin meditation when you need to stop all the mind chatter.
- Rosemary assists in memory retention and recall.
- Cedarwood has the ability to calm frazzled nerves.
- Sandalwood seems to rejuvenate the mental abilities.
- Rose is incredible at renewing and opening the mental and emotional aspects.
- Brain Gem blend has been specifically designed to assist the brain in increasing or renewing function. It helps neurons connect and aids in the creation of new connections.

We have found when working with people that you can only go so far physically. You can work with someone and be making wonderful progress and you will suddenly hit a brick wall and they plateau. It is then we know that the emotions are affecting the physical and must be addressed. The world we live in

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seems to think that we only need to address the physical, that if we change something on a physical level the emotional just seems to follow. I think that it's really the other way around. We have a set of essential oils that have been developed specifically for addressing our emotional needs, for helping us stretch and work out the kinks in our emotions. The Emotional Aromatic Touch (EAT) program is a class in and of itself, but you can benefit from it in a simple daily fashion by applying the essential oils used in the program to your toes to help you get a little emotional stretch every day.

EAT for the toes.

Apply Lavender to the big toes. (Always do the right foot first.)

Apply Charity blend to the second toes.

Apply Emotion blend to the third toes.

Apply Geranium to the fourth toes.

Apply Quiet Scent blend to the fifth toes.

Apply Eye Vision blend to the center of your forehead (careful, some people find it to be a little strong, you may want to dilute it in a little bit of carrier oil so you don't leave a red spot)

Apply Gratitude blend to the crown of your head.

Now, you've finished reading this article. Hopefully it has provided a stretch for your mind, take a moment and stretch your body, then reach and stretch a little bit further. Refuse to allow yourself to be caught up in the rut that is daily life—take back your independence, reach a little further every day physically and emotionally, stretch yourself and you will be amazed and the results. You will find greater confidence, increased stamina (both mentally and physically) and an overall feeling of well-being.

To order, for class information, or if you have questions contact:

Debby or Penny Swann

208-852-2295

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