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8 Frankincense Essential Oil Uses and Benefits for Healing

By Dr. Josh Axe, DC, DMN, CNS

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Frankincense Oil Side Effects

Essential oils have been used for thousands of years for their therapeutic and healing properties as part of the practice of aromatherapy. They're

sourced from leaves, stems or roots of plants that are known for their health properties. So then, what is frankincense essential oil?

Frankincense, sometimes referred to as olibanum, is a common type of essential oil used in aromatherapy that can offer a variety of health benefits, including helping relieve chronic stress and anxiety, reducing pain and inflammation, and boosting immunity. Frankincense uses even potentially apply to fighting cancer.

What Is Frankincense Essential Oil?

Frankincense oil is from the genus Boswellia and sourced from the resin of the *Boswellia carterii*, *Boswellia ferreana* or *Boswellia serrata* trees that's commonly grown in Somalia and regions of Pakistan. This tree is different from many others in that it can grow with very little soil in dry and desolate conditions.

The word frankincense comes from the term "franc encens," which means quality incense in old French. Frankincense has been associated with many different religions over the years, especially the Christian religion, as it was one of the first gifts given to Jesus by the wise men. What does frankincense smell like? It smells like a combination of pine, lemon and woody scents.

Boswellia serrata is a tree native to India that produces special compounds that have been found to have strong anti-inflammatory, and potentially anti-cancer, effects. Among the valuable boswellia tree extracts that researchers have identified, several stand out as being most beneficial, including terpenes and boswellic acids, which are strongly anti-inflammatory and protective over healthy cells. [1]

How to use frankincense oil? Frankincense oil is used by either inhaling the oil or absorbing it through the skin, usually mixed with a carrier oil, such as

coconut oil or jojoba oil. It's believed that the oil transmits messages to the limbic system of the brain, which is known to influence the nervous system. A little bit of oil goes a long way, and it should not be ingested in large quantities as it can be toxic.

If you're purchasing essential oils, avoid oils that say "fragrance oil" or "perfume oil" as these can be synthetic and don't provide the desired health benefits. Instead, look for oils that say "pure essential oil" or "100% essential oil" for the highest quality essential oils. I like to take advantage of the best frankincense oils, which should feature a combination of multiple varieties of oils from boswellia trees.

10 Benefits of Frankincense Oil

1. Helps Reduce Stress Reactions and Negative Emotions

When inhaled, frankincense oil been shown to reduce heart rate and high blood pressure. It has anti-anxiety and depression-reducing abilities, but unlike prescription medications, it does not have negative side effects or cause unwanted drowsiness.

For example, in mice, burning Boswellia resin as incense had antidepressive effects. "Incensole acetate, an incense component, elicits psychoactivity by activating TRPV3 channels in the brain." This channel in the brain is implicated in the perception of warmth in the skin. (2)

2. Helps Boost Immune System Function and Prevents Illness

Studies have demonstrated that frankincense benefits extend to immune-enhancing abilities that may help destroy dangerous bacteria, viruses and even cancers. Researchers at Mansoura University in Egypt conducted a lab study and found that frankincense oil exhibits strong immunostimulant activity. (3, 4)

It can be used to prevent germs from forming on the skin, mouth or in your home. This is the reason many people choose to use frankincense to naturally relieve oral health problems; the antiseptic qualities of this oil may help prevent gingivitis, <u>bad breath</u>, cavities, toothaches, mouth sores and other infections from occurring. (<u>5</u>)

3. May Help Fight Cancer or Deal with Chemotherapy Side Effects

Several research groups have found that frankincense has promising anti-inflammatory and anti-tumor effects when tested in lab studies and on animals. Frankincense oil has been shown to help fight cells of specific types of cancer. Researchers in China investigated the anticancer effects of frankincense and <u>myrrh oils</u> on five tumor cells lines in a lab study. The results showed that human breast and skin cancer cell lines showed increased sensitivity to the combination of myrrh and frankincense essential oils. (<u>6</u>)

A 2012 study even found that a chemical compound found in frankincense called AKBA is successful at killing cancer cells that have become resistant to chemotherapy, which may make it a potential <u>natural cancer treatment</u>. (<u>7</u>)

4. Astringent and Can Kill Harmful Germs and Bacteria

Frankincense is an antiseptic and disinfectant agent that has antimicrobial effects. It has the ability to eliminate cold and flu germs from the home and the body naturally, and it can be used in place of chemical household cleaners.

A lab study published in *Letters in Applied Microbiology* found that the combination of frankincense oil and myrrh oil is particularly effective when used against pathogens. These two oils, which have been used in combination since 1500 BC, have synergistic and additive properties when exposed to microorganisms like *Cryptococcus neoformans* and

Pseudomonas aeruginosa. ([8](#))

5. Heals Skin and Prevents Signs of Aging

Frankincense benefits include the ability to strengthen skin and improve its tone, elasticity, defense mechanisms against bacteria or blemishes, and appearance as someone ages. It may help tone and lift skin, reduce the appearance of scars and acne, and heals wounds. It may also be beneficial for fading of underlined stretch marks, surgery scars or marks associated with pregnancy, and for healing dry or cracked skin.

According to a review published in the *Journal of Traditional and Complementary Medicine*, frankincense oil reduces redness and skin irritation, while also producing a more even skin tone. Studies suggest that it's the pentacyclic triterpene (steroid-like) structure of frankincense oil that contributes to its soothing effect on irritated skin. ([9](#))

6. Improves Memory

Research suggests that frankincense oil can be used to improve memory and learning functions. And some animal studies even show that using frankincense during pregnancy may increase the memory of a mother's offspring.

In one such study, when pregnant rats received frankincense orally during their gestation period, there was a significant increase in the power of learning, short-term memory and long-term memory of their offspring. ([10](#))

7. May Help Balance Hormones and Improve Fertility

Frankincense oil benefits may include reducing symptoms associated with menstruation and menopause by balancing hormone levels, although the research on this topic is limited. It has been used to help relieve pain, cramps, constipation, headaches, anxiety, nausea, fatigue and mood swings. Frankincense oil may also help with regulating estrogen production

and may reduce the risk of tumor or cyst development in premenopausal women.

Animal studies have shown that frankincense oil can be used as a fertility promoting agent, which may be due to the oil's chemical structure acting similarly to that of steroids. When frankincense was used on rats internally, it increased fertility, and the number of implantations and viable fetuses, which suggests that the oil may possibly increase sperm motility and density. (11)

8. Eases Digestion

Frankincense helps the digestive system to properly detox and produce bowel movements. It may also help to reduce pain and cramping in the stomach, relieve nausea, flush out excess water from the abdomen that can cause bloating and even relieve PMS-related stomach pains. (12)

It does this by speeding up the secretion of digestive enzymes, increasing urination production, relaxing the muscles of the digestive tract and also helps improve circulation, which is needed for proper digestive health. It's been shown to be beneficial in reducing symptoms of leaky gut syndrome, chronic colitis, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease and IBS. (13)

9. Acts as a Sleep Aid

Frankincense uses include lowering levels of anxiety or chronic stress that can keep you up at night. It has a calming, grounding scent that can naturally help you to fall asleep. This natural sleep aid helps open breathing passages, allows your body to reach an ideal sleeping temperature and can eliminate pain that keeps you up. (14)

10. Helps Decrease Inflammation and Pain

Frankincense can inhibit the production of key inflammatory molecules associated with conditions like arthritis, asthma, painful bowel disorders like IBS and many more conditions. (15)

It can be useful in helping prevent the breakdown of the cartilage tissue and has been shown to significantly reduce levels of dangerous and painful <u>inflammation</u>, making it a natural treatment option for pain-related conditions that affect the muscles, joints and tendons.

Top 8 Frankincense Uses

1. Stress-Relieving Bath Soak

Frankincense oil immediately induces the feeling of peace, relaxation and satisfaction. Want to know how to use frankincense oil for stress relief? Simply add a few drops of frankincense oil to a hot bath. You can also add frankincense to an oil diffuser or vaporizer to help <u>fight anxiety</u> and for experiencing relaxation in your home all the time. Some people believe that the fragrance of frankincense can increase your intuition and spiritual connection.

2. Natural Household Cleaner

Frankincense oil is an antiseptic, meaning it helps eliminate bacteria and viruses from your home and clean indoor spaces. The plant has been commonly burned to help disinfect an area and is used as a <u>natural deodorizer</u>. Use it in an essential oil diffuser to help reduce indoor pollution and deodorize and disinfect any room or surface in your home.

3. Natural Hygiene Product

Due to its antiseptic properties, frankincense oil is a great addition to any oral hygiene regimen. Look for natural oral care products that contain frankincense oil, especially if you enjoy the aroma. It can help prevent dental health issues like tooth decay, bad breath, <u>cavities</u> or oral infections. You can also consider making your own toothpaste by mixing frankincense oil with baking soda.

4. Anti-Aging and Wrinkle Fighter

Frankincense essential oil is a powerful astringent, meaning it helps protect skin cells. It can be used to help <u>reduce acne</u> blemishes, the appearance of large pores, prevent wrinkles, and it even helps lift and tighten skin to naturally slow signs of aging.

The oil can be used anywhere where the skin becomes saggy, such as the abdomen, jowls or under the eyes. Mix six drops of oil to one ounce of unscented oil and apply it directly to the skin. Be sure to always do a small patch area test first to test for possible allergic reactions.

5. Relieves Symptoms of Indigestion

If you have any digestive distress, such as gas, <u>constipation</u>, stomach aches, irritable bowel syndrome, <u>PMS</u> or cramps, frankincense oil can help relieve gastrointestinal discomfort. It helps speed up the digestion of food, similar to digestive enzymes. Add one to two drops of oil to eight ounces of water or to a tablespoon of honey for GI relief. If you're going to ingest it orally, make sure it's 100 percent pure oil; do not ingest fragrance or perfume oils.

6. Scar, Wound, Stretch Mark or Acne Remedy

Frankincense oil can help with wound healing and may <u>decrease the appearance of scars</u>. It may also help reduce the appearance of dark spots caused from acne blemishes, stretch marks, <u>eczema</u> and help with healing of surgical wounds. Mix two to three drops of oil with an unscented base oil or lotion and apply directly to skin. Be careful not to apply it to broken skin, but it's fine for skin that's in the process of healing.

7. Natural Cold or Flu Medicine

Next time you have a respiratory infection from a <u>cold or flu</u>, use frankincense essential oil to help provide relief from coughing. It can help eliminate phlegm in the lungs. It also acts as an anti-inflammatory in the

nasal passages, making breathing easier, even for those with allergies or asthma. Add a few drops to a cloth and inhale for the respiratory benefits or use an oil diffuser.

8. Helps Relieve Inflammation and Pain

To improve circulation and lower underline symptoms of joint pain or muscle pain related to conditions like arthritis, digestive disorders and asthma, try massaging frankincense oil to the painful area or diffusing it in your home.

You can add a drop of oil to steaming water and soak a towel in it, then place the towel on your body or over your face to inhale it to decrease muscle aches. Also diffuse several drops in your home, or combine several drops with a carrier oil to massage into your muscles, joints, feet or neck.

Frankincense Oil DIY Recipes

Frankincense oil blends well with carrier oils like jojoba oil, coconut oil or shea butter. It can be combined with other essential oils depending on the benefits you're seeking. For example, it blends well with citrus oils (such as lemon and frankincense oils) as a "pick-me-up"; meanwhile, lavender and frankincense oils blend well and work as a relaxant. This makes it a versatile and popular oil that lends itself well to many combinations and practical uses. Try one of these recipes to start experiencing the benefits of frankincense oil:

Scar Reducing Body Butter

Total Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 oounces shea butter or coconut oil

- 10 drops of jasmine oil
- 10 drops frankincense oil
- Small container or jar to mix the ingredients

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a double boiler, melt the shea butter until it's liquid.
2. Make sure the oil is not so hot that it will burn you, then add the other oils and stir together to combine. Having the shea butter be room temperature or a little warmer is best.
3. You can either smear it on your scar right away, or if you'd like to make it into a shelf-stable cream texture, place the mixture in the fridge until it's cool for a few minutes, then use a hand mixer on high speed to whip the oils into a white cream.
4. Pour into a glass jar or containers, and keep it at room temperature to use whenever you want.

Sleep-Inducing Facial Cream or Body Rub

Total Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 1

This all-natural night cream is great to help you fall asleep. It also doubles as a skin health-booster if you apply it to your face and may be able to help clear up blemishes or breakouts.

INGREDIENTS:

- 5 drops frankincense essential oil
- 5 drops lavender essential oil
- 1/4 tablespoon organic coconut oil
- 1/2 teaspoon olive oil
- Small container or jar to mix the ingredients

DIRECTIONS:

1. Use coconut oil that's not solid but rather soft. If need be, heat it first in a double broiler.
2. Add the other oils and stir together to combine. Spread over your face and body. You may want to pat yourself off after to not allow the oil to seep into your bed sheets. You can also store this to use at another time.

Here are a couple of more frankincense recipes to try:

- Homemade Frankincense Soap Bar
- Homemade Frankincense and Myrrh Lotion

Frankincense Oil Side Effects

For oil safety concerns, you should know that frankincense essential oil is extremely well-tolerated, especially compared to prescription medications. To date, there are no reported serious side effects of using frankincense oil. However, it's always a good idea to follow essential oil safety and ingest just a few drops of any essential oil at a time in water or other beverage.

Rarely frankincense oil can cause certain reactions for some people, including minor skin rashes and digestive problems like nausea or stomach pains. Frankincense is also known to have blood-thinning effects, so anyone who has problems related to blood clotting should not use frankincense oil or should speak with a doctor first. Otherwise, the oil may have potential to negatively react with certain anticoagulant medications.

Final Thoughts on Frankincense Oil

- Frankincense, in the genus Boswellia and from the *Boswellia sacra* tree and sometimes referred to as olibanum, is a common type of essential oil used in aromatherapy that can offer a variety of health benefits, including helping relieve chronic stress and anxiety, reducing pain and

inflammation, boosting immunity and even potentially helping to fight cancer.

- Frankincense oil uses include stress-relieving bath soak; natural household cleaner; natural hygiene product; anti-aging and wrinkle fighter; relieving the symptoms of indigestion; scar, wound, stretch mark or acne remedy; natural cold or flu medicine; and relieving inflammation and pain.
- With oil safety concerns low, it's a versatile oil that can be combined with several other essential oils and carrier oils that are not known to create any adverse side effects.

Read Next: 10 Benefits of Lavender Oil