

H e r b a l h e a v e n



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAN LUEDERT/DN

Aromatherapy can energize, relax

BY REBECCA HYDE
Staff Reporter

Imagine easing into a nice hot bathtub filled with sudsy bubbles that reach your ears after a long day of class and work. Your entire body melts in the hot water while the relaxing scents of lavender and mint linger in the air. It's a nice dream, but who has time to relax with all this studying to do?

A quicker, easier way to relieve stress that doesn't involve scrubbing the brown ring out of the bathtub may be aromatherapy or anti-stress lotions and products.

Gary Morse, an aromatherapist with Creative Solutions, said certain scents affect one's body and mood.

"The smells or the aromas go to the mid-brain within two or three seconds," he said. "Smell is the only sense that can reach the mid-brain and it triggers different emotional and memory centers very directly."

Soothing scents, especially lavender, mint and eucalyptus, are said to relieve headaches, ease tension, treat insomnia and cure depression, according to literature provided by Bath & Body Works, Garden Botanika and Wicks 'n' Sticks.

Norma Selk, a sales associate at Bath & Body Works at Oak View Mall in Omaha, said the effect was psychological.

"The scents in these products bring back memories like when you smell cinnamon or ginger and remember gingerbread or apple crisp at Christmas. The anti-stress products make you remember a calmer time."

The stress-relieving scents are produced by essential oils derived from plants and mixed with base oils for application to the skin, according

to a pamphlet published by Bath & Body Works.

Essential oils also are mixed into stress-relieving products such as shower gels, lotions and massage oils. Such products are available at Bath & Body Works, The Body Shop and Garden Botanika. All three stores offer a refund if the products do not help relieve stress.

Lavender and peppermint, the relaxing ingredients in most products, work to pamper one's body inside and out. Bath & Body Works has two different scents: tranquil sleep and anti-stress. The store has other products including linen sprays, home fragrance sprays, mineral bath salts and candles.

Garden Botanika offers an aromatherapy eye pillow to relieve tension and eyestrain. Sydney Greensheep is a soft cotton sheep stuffed with organically grown herbs, seeds and grains, such as lavender and peppermint. The pillow lays across the forehead during sleep while its fragrances are inhaled.

Aromatherapy candles also can help people relax. Scented candles can last five to 40 hours.

Wicks 'n' Sticks at Oak View Mall in Omaha offers a variety of relaxing, anti-stress and stimulating fragrances to choose from, Nicole Banks, an employee, said.

"I like the anti-stress best because the lavender and chamomile give off a fragrance that relaxes you," Banks said. "I can just feel it working."

Aromatherapy has been used for thousands of years and involves using the essential oils in botanicals, said Jenny Flenniken, of The Body Shop at Westroads Mall in Omaha.

"They have not proven why essential oils relax, but historically, it has been working since the time of

Cleopatra," Flenniken said.

Bath & Body Works, also located in Lincoln's Gateway Mall, sells vials of essential oils mixed with grape seed oil for use on skin or to inhale. The oils are supposed to be rubbed into the temples and pulse points.

However, Morse does not recommend oils manufactured by major

companies.

"The problem is to make a pure oil in the distillation process is very precise," he said. "A lot of the nutrients are destroyed when you try to product huge vats at a time to sell. Although they have a nice fragrance, the therapeutic value has been lost."

Morse said Young Living Essential Oils are the best he's found, and prices vary from \$10 to \$100 for rare oils.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln student Juliet Trnka said she uses a massage oil that is supposed to provide energy.

"It's relaxing physically and when you breathe in the scent it relaxes you internally," she said. "I like it a lot. It doesn't give you the energy that a big pot of coffee would, but it's super relaxing."

Product Prices:

Bath & Body Works has two scents: tranquil sleep and anti-stress

Bath and shower gel	\$8.50
Lotion	\$10.00
Massage lotion	\$9.00
Pulse point lotion	\$10.00
Linen spray	\$5.00
Home fragrance spray	\$5.00
Mineral bath salts	\$10.00
Essential oils	\$8.50

Garden Botanika has lavender scents or a custom scent bar

Custom made scents	\$8.00
Bath and shower gel	\$6.00
Lotion	\$6.00
Body mist	\$6.00
Bubble bath	\$6.00
Massage oil	\$7.50
Massage lotion	\$7.50
Sydney Greensheep- aromatherapy eye pillow	\$18.00

The Body Shop-Lavender scents and relaxing formulas

Bath and shower gel	\$8.00
Lotion	\$11.00
Body oil	\$9.00/no lavender
Soap	\$5.00
Essential oils	\$4.00-\$10.00

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