

Can Essential Oils Reverse Hair Loss? Ask the Experts/Massage Magazine

If you lose significantly more than 100 hair strands per day, which is considered normal, than you are among the growing population to experience hair loss or alopecia. And it's not just a male issue – 22% of the women of the world experience this embarrassing problem.

Essential oils can remedy certain types of hair loss because they nourish deep in the dermal layers of the skin and tiny blood vessels of the scalp, where the hair follicles are located. For this reason, scalp treatments are most effective since they focus on the hair follicles and microcirculatory system, rather than the hair itself. In addition, warming the scalp oil will increase the absorption of the essential oils considerably. Aromatic scalp treatment oil blends made with pure essential oils mixed with nutritive carrier oils such as calendula, borage, evening primrose, jojoba and carrot seed, can be very effective when used over a few months time, which will allow several hair growth cycles to take place and when you can expect to see an improvement in new hair growth.

Traditionally, aromatic oils have been used with vast success such as the simple, yet famous, hair tonic from India which consists of sesame oil, rosemary and lemongrass essential oil. Exercise and massage enhance circulation to the scalp as well as go far to alleviating chronic stress, both frequently found as underlying factors in hair loss. Massage your scalp with a blend of aromatic oils to improve circulation on a regular basis – at least three to four times weekly by mixing 20 drops total of essential oils to 1 ounce carrier oil. Bend over, hanging the head lower than your heart, and brush your hair and massage your scalp with your fingers. Better yet, ask a friend to give you a scalp

massage which will be a stress-relieving treatment as well as an effective and pleasurable way to prevent hair loss.

Other beneficial essential oils known to be useful in counteracting hair loss are those that relax the scalp and muscles, improve circulation, gently cleanse, stimulate new hair growth, clarify, tone, alkalize, and protect the skin and hair: Atlas cedarwood, bay, birch, chamomile, clary sage, cypress, juniper, lavender, lavandin, lemon, lemongrass, niaouli, patchouli, rose, rosemary, thyme, and ylang ylang. In fact, a randomized study using essential oils of lavender, Atlas cedarwood, thyme and rosemary in a jojoba and grapeseed oil base were massaged into the scalp for two minutes every night and compared to the control group using jojoba/grapeseed oil only. The aromatherapy group showed a significant improvement (44%) compared to the non-essential oil treatment. (Hay *et al.*, 1998).

Essential oils can easily be added to natural shampoos and hair conditioners to add therapeutic benefits to them by adding 80 drops to 8 ounces. I recommend using non-toxic hair care options (low detergent, low phosphate, unscented, and alkalizing) and to avoid harsh chemicals like hair coloring treatments (or over use of them); wearing a head cap when swimming in chlorinated pools, and being mindful not to over shampoo.

- *Valerie Cooksley, RN, OCN, FAAIM is a holistic nurse aromatherapist, Director of the Institute of Integrative Aromatherapy in Houston, Texas and author of several natural healing books including Aromatherapy and her newest book Seaweed (Stewart, Tabori and Chang 2007).*