10 Benefits and Uses of Frankincense Oil

Boost your mood and your immune system with this ancient incense.



Frankincense is best known for its Biblical connections, which is why the oil remains so popular around the festive season.

But **frankincense oil** has also been used as a traditional medicine for thousands of years in communities across the world, with people in Africa, Asia and the Middle East using it as a natural remedy to treat a whole host of ailments.

The natural, woody, pine-like scent is a popular choice with many people who incorporate aromatherapeutic practices into their lives, with the oil helping them to find calm and a sense of inner peace.

There are lots of frankincense oil benefits you can enjoy and a growing number that

What is frankincense oil?

Frankincense oil is extracted from the Boswellia tree (which is also its botanical name) which is native to Yemen, Oman, Somalia and other nearby countries in the region.

There are few different varieties of frankincense, although it is most commonly either smooth and woody or gently spicy. The oil is extracted from the tree using a steam distillation process.

Frankincense takes its name from an old French phrase “franc enscens” which means “quality incense”.

The oil also has a very close association with Jewish and Christian faiths, and is mentioned in the book of Exodus as a sacred article.

How does frankincense oil work?

You can enjoy the benefits of frankincense oil by applying it topically, inhaling it from the bottle or through diffusion.

In aromatherapy circles it has become a very popular massage oil that can help to relax the muscles and offer some level of pain relief. People also add some of the oil to diffusers to treat colds and clear up respiratory blockages.

Other ways to experience the health properties of frankincense oil include adding a few diluted drops to warm bath water or sprinkling a few drops onto a handkerchief or tissue to inhale.





Benefits of frankincense oil

Some of the most notable benefits of **frankincense essential oil** include its ability to:

1. Boost immunity protection

According to a 2003 study, frankincense can help to boost immune system activity, improving its response when fighting off germs and bugs.

Although more research is needed, this proves useful in improving energy levels, bad body odour, oral health and our general physical wellbeing.

Another example of its possible health benefits was highlighted in a 2011 study that showed how frankincense was able to help the body tackle gingivitis.

2. Improve the condition of your skin

Various studies have found that frankincense essential oil can do wonders for your skin. For example, in 2013 researchers found that the oil was able to reduce irritation and redness, whilst also helping to produce a more even skin tone.

Frankincense oil is also an astringent, helping to improve the elasticity of the skin whilst reducing the appearance of wrinkles.

There have been some suggestions that this is due to the oil's pentacyclic triterpene

In an animal study conducted in 2008, researchers found that the effects of **frankincense oil** were similar to common medications used to boost low feelings and moods.

The TRPV3 channels in the brain were activated by the oil, which are parts of the brain associated with our perception of warmth in the skin.

They are also recognised as promoting psychoactivity that can lead to us experiencing a more positive mood.

These findings suggest that frankincense oil could play a role in boosting mental positivity and decreasing negative emotions.

4. Support better digestion

The Boswellic acids present in frankincense were found to be useful in the treatment of a chronic inflammatory disease, whilst also helping to soothe the gut.

And there are other ways in which frankincense oil may be able to aid effective and gentle digestion.

For example, it has been suggested that it could speed up the secretion of digestive enzymes, improve circulation, relax the muscles and increase urination production of the digestive tract.

This could mean that adding a small amount of diluted frankincense essential oil to the stomach may be able to reduce gastric distress and promote gut health.

5. Reduce arthritic symptoms

It has also been suggested that frankincense oil benefits could extend to reducing joint inflammation caused by arthritis thanks to its anti-inflammatory properties.

that the oil may be able to prevent the release of leukotrienes – compounds that can be responsible for causing inflammation.

lining inflammation were reduced through use of topical and oral boswellic acid. And a review in 2018 highlighted that compared to a placebo, frankincense was able to reduce osteoarthritis pain and improve mobility.



6. Ease respiratory issues

Traditional medicine practitioners have used frankincense to treat asthma and bronchitis for centuries.

compounds may play a key role in preventing the production of leukotrienes. These chemicals are the reason why bronchial muscles constrict in asthma sufferers.

boswellic extract as a complementary treatment alongside their existing asthma medication.

Researchers found that fewer uses of traditional inhalers were needed throughout the duration of the 4-week study.

7. Maintain oral health

Studies have also looked into the effectiveness of **frankincense essential oil** for oral health. One 2017 study suggested that the boswellic acids could contain antibacterial properties that may help to prevent and treat oral infections.

A test-tube study produced results that showed how frankincense extract was able to combat Aggregatibacter actinomycetemcomitans, a bacteria that is responsible for causing an aggressive form of gum disease.

The authors of a much smaller study suggested that frankincense could decrease the source of infection in the mouth.

It required participants to chew gum containing frankincense for 5 hours, and when saliva samples were taken, it showed that the amount of microbes present actually reduced with every passing hour.

8. Offer anticancer properties

Although much more research is needed before any solid conclusions can be reached, early studies have suggested that frankincense could contain anticancer properties.

To date, various test-tube studies have produced results that say it could prove useful in fighting prostate, breast, skin, colon and pancreatic cancer cells.

Other studies have also investigated the effectiveness of frankincense in reducing the side effects of cancer treatment.

One study involved a group of people being treated from brain tumours, who were given 4,500mg of boswellic acid extract every day. By the end of the study, brain edema (a build-up of fluid in the brain) was reduced, whilst the patient's regular medication dose was also lowered.

9. Enhance cognitive performance

Researchers have also been looking at whether frankincense oil benefits the brain in terms of boosting learning functions and memory retention.

There have even been some animal studies that demonstrate how using the oil during pregnancy could play a role in enhancing the baby's memory.

For example, researchers involved in an animal study found that when pregnant rats were given oral doses of frankincense during their gestation period, the learning power, short-term memory and long-term memory of their offspring increased significantly.

10. Work as a sleep aid

Whilst some **essential oils** are very well-known for their ability to support a better night's sleep, there are suggestions that frankincense essential oil could also have something to offer.

Many people use the oil to manage high stress and anxiety levels that prevent them from getting a good night's rest. The grounding, calming fragrance helps to ease the mind, allowing them to naturally drift off and sleep as normal.

As we mentioned above, **frankincense oil** could possess the ability to open breathing passages, which can help the body to reach an ideal sleeping temperature, whilst also removing pain that can disturb sleep.





How to use frankincense oil

Frankincense oil uses vary depending on what you want to achieve. Two of the most common practises include applying it:

As an aromatherapeutic oil

Diffusing the smooth, woody aroma of frankincense essential oil in your home can help to lift low moods and brighten the atmosphere.

To try this method, add 5-7 drops of the oil to water in an oil burner or **electric diffuser** and allow the scent to fill the room, supporting your mental health and giving strength to ideas of calm and relaxation.

As a skincare lotion

The benefits of frankincense oil extend to the cleansing of the skin, and it may also be able to remove wrinkles and fine lines due to its astringent properties.

To see if it can help your skin, simply add a couple of drops of frankincense essential oil to your preferred **carrier oil** (such as **jojoba oil**) or directly to your favourite skin cream or lotion and apply as normal.