

In this newsletter we will try to help you further your knowledge and use of essential oils.

Physical Ailment & Emotional Concern

Are you SAD because it's the Holidays or is it Seasonal Affective Disorder?

by Penny Keay

The Holidays and the end of the year are coming closer. It is not unusual for folks to feel sad or have the blues for a day or two. Just about everyone does especially when we think of Christmas and New Years Celebrations in the past where people and relatives that used to be with us are now gone. Times change, people change and sometimes it makes us sad to remember the past. But that is not what this article is about. The sadness here is caused by the changing of the seasons.

Every body in the northern hemisphere is experiencing shorter hours of natural daylight. With this comes one of the fairly common health concern known as SAD or Seasonal Affective Disorder. This is especially noticeable in the northern half of the USA and Canada from November to February.

Although the specific cause may not be actually known, it is known that not getting enough sunlight at the correct time of the day will affect everything in your life. This includes both your physical and mental states because of the disruption in your normal or natural circadian rhythm (your daily internal clock).

Not everyone will have a problem with the seasonal changes. Many factors can play into why some folks suffer and others never do. Remember everyone has different genetics and your age will also play a role. And of course your bodies own chemistry will all contribute to how you are affected by the changing of the seasons.

Please know that just because you live in an area of the country where you have plenty of sunshine you can still suffer from SAD. And for you it may not be during the winter months. If you live in a hot or extremely warm climate you may experience this in the hot summer months. Why? Too often you will become a 'cave' dweller in your own home. You don't go outdoors because of the heat or pollution. You never really see the sun.

Al has seen this phenomenon while visiting his Dad in Arizona. Everyone stays inside during the day with their drapes and curtains shut. They go outside in the evenings when it is cooler. Some NEVER see the sunshine except when they have to go out to work or run errands. Then they wonder why they can't sleep at night, but doze or sleep all day. They have their days and nights mixed up because they see the sun in the evening hours. (There is more about this problem later in this article.)

Recently we attended and participated in a local Health Fair at a nearby University. During this Health fair they had several booths related to stress. One such presentation had information provided by the Mayo Clinic about Seasonal Affective Disorder aka SAD (SAD will be used throughout this article). This is why I'm writing today about SAD as we are asked often about how Aroma therapy can help along with the other suggestions they made.

We have had several consultations where folks from the south and the desert southwestern part of the USA experience poor sleeping and sleep habits, feel depressed, anxious and very fatigued and frustrated. They are suffering from SAD also, just that it is a little different than what we experience here in the northern parts. Of course we do many consultations about depression and sleep problems. And we get them from the northern half of the USA but folks up north seem to realize that SAD is more common and know what is happening.

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If you have unexplained lethargy, fatigue and your sleep patterns have been disrupted or changed. (Are you awake late into the night and then fall asleep just before your alarm goes off?). Your eating habits may have changed. You feel depressed and sad or just don't feel right. You may be suffering from a form of depression caused by Seasonal Affective Disorder.

You may feel anxiety and loss of energy and want to hide from everyone and all activities. You can't concentrate and you just don't enjoy doing the things you used to do. You eat more so gain weight, or you eat less and so have no energy.

So what can you do? First if you are not sure that you are affected by SAD and you are feeling depressed for more than a day or two and it just doesn't seem to be getting better, you should seek counsel from a medical professional.

Some folks already know they are being affected seasonally, others may not be sure. So check first to make sure there isn't some underlying health problem whether it is physical or mental that needs to be addressed first.

If you prefer not to use medications, should you be offered, (which most folks using essential oils prefer not to use prescription drug) please let your health care provider know you would like to try an alternative and complimentary approach first or in conjunction with their prescribed treatment.

You can try a few of the following if you KNOW you have SAD. All of these can be used now, but in the future you may want to use them as preventative measures so you don't have to feel SAD. (Please note that if you are diagnosed with depression the suggestion made below may help you too but use with the guidance of your health care provider.)

First is right away in the morning open up your curtains or better yet go outside for 15-30 minutes without your glasses or sunglasses on. You are not going to be looking into the sun, just getting some nice bright light. Try to make your home as bright and light as possible the rest of the day, letting in natural light as much as you can.

This is very important. Try to get the first natural light within the first hour or so of your awakening. This triggers a natural production of melatonin to be released about 14-18 hours later. This helps you to fall asleep and so you can get a good night's sleep. If it is not possible (because the sun isn't up yet) when you first get up try to get it within the first hour or two that the sun is up. Even if it is a cloudy day - go outside and let in some natural light. It too can make a difference. Avoid the sun late in the afternoon if you did not get the morning dose of sunshine as it will trigger the melatonin too late and you may not be able to fall asleep til the wee hours of the morning.

The natural sunshine will also help raise your levels of Serotonin, another hormone your body needs to help you feel happy. Using natural sunshine, sunlight and natural light is a good starting point to resetting your Circadian Rhythm.

Your Circadian Rhythm can easily get disrupted due to less daylight hours and the daylight saving clock changes that occur around the world.

What essential oils might help you with SAD? First you need to have energy throughout the day, so you can be ready to go to bed later on and fall asleep. Re-establishing good sleep habits will be of utmost importance to help you combat SAD.

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So in the morning upon rising, not only do the Sunshine thing, but smell light and refreshing energizing essential oils.

Any light oils and especially citrus like orange, lemon and lime may get you going. Peppermint and Spearmint are energizers too. If your concentrating for tasks at hand are wreaking havoc with your mind, try a blend of Basil, Lemon and Rosemary (our Concentration blend) to help you stay focused and mentally aware. Using a terra cotta disc with essential oils added then placed on your shower floor where the water can splash against it is a great way to start your day with refreshing and invigorating scents.

You may need to use other energizing essential oils in the afternoon, especially after lunch. This is a very common time of the day for folks to become sleepy but if you are having problems sleeping at night we don't want you to take a nap now. Get up, walk around and get excited about something! If it's after 3:30 don't drink any more beverages with caffeine in them. Even de-caffeinated beverages often times have a little caffeine in them so drink plain water or herbal teas.

About an hour before bedtime diffuse one of these essential oils in the bedroom. Lavender, Bergamot, Ylang- ylang Mandarin, Neroli, or Roman Chamomile. These are very soothing and relaxing oils that we often suggest. Using one or more of these oils for folks having problems falling asleep will normally reset their sleep patterns. Only diffuse for the hour before you are going to enter the room for the night, then stop diffusing. There will be plenty of essential oil molecules in the air for you to drift off to sleep.

Be sure to set up a new bedtime routine and try to stick to it. A relaxing bath or foot bath can start off your bedtime routine. Reading a book for 15 minutes prior to sleep can help too. Try to avoid the watching the news especially if that is upsetting to you and be careful what other programs you might be watching. Oh and shut off the television in your bedroom. Bedrooms are for sleeping and sex. Not for watching television! Watch it out in another room.

One other thing and it may be contrary to what you have been taught but about 30 minutes before heading off to bed eat 1/2oz of natural cheese (not processed)(measure the cheese!!) and half of a small apple. No more, no less. Drink some water or brush your teeth as usual before heading to bed. I don't understand the exact process this little bite of food does nor why this combination works, but I do know it will help you to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Okay, now that you are sleeping better and you are getting the rest you need, you are getting some extra sunshine, exercising, eating better, using a few of your favorite essential oils you will soon be feeling better and soon the feeling of SAD and its associated problems will never appear again, right? Well, it can next season change. So practice these suggestions year round.

Just remember to follow the above suggestions and get out and have some fun with family or friends too. All of it is important to help you feel better faster. One added note: be careful about staying out past your normal bedtime as it can once again cause problems with your internal clock and make things worse once again.

You may want to check out any of these previous newsletters and articles for help with any of the following problems that are also associated with SAD and may have more specific essential oils to try.:

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/v1092008.htm> - Article Winking Blinking and the land of nod

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/v662004.htm> - Article Insomnia

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/v722005.htm> - Article Fatigue - or "When your Get up and Go Got up and Went!"

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/v892006.htm> -Article - Staying Alert

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<http://birchhillhappenings.com/v872006.htm> -Article Sadness

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/v852006.htm> -Article previously written about SAD

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/anxiety.htm> -Anxiety

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/fatigue.htm> -Fatigue

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/alert.htm> -Alertness

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/think.htm> -Concentration

There may be more too but this is a starting point to get you headed in the right direction.

Skin and Hair Care

The Sauna or Steam Room

by Penny Keay

In Northern Minnesota there are a lot of Scandinavian descended folks and they all enjoy Saunas.

What a great way to warm up and stimulate your circulation! But there are special warnings about using Essential oils in the Sauna or Steam bath.

These types of baths can be great and using essential oils can make them even better, especially if you are feeling a little under the weather with a cold and upper respiratory congestion.

Several folks like to take a sauna after a good work out or a day where they have over used their muscles and have a few aches they want to relieve. Athlete's and others that work out at the gym enjoy steam room essential oils too.

Not every essential oil is safe to use in the sauna or steam room and the amounts you use needs to be limited too. Typically you can use any of the Eucalyptus species, Lavender, Juniper berry, Cypress, Cedarwood, Tea Tree, Niaouli, Cajeput, or Pine, Spruce and Fir needle essential oils but only a small amount of these will be needed.

Steam and heat excite the molecules and the sauna or steam room is a very confined area so only a drop or two will usually be needed.

Only these oils should be used in saunas as they enter the body by inhalation and exit by perspiration, all the while detoxifying and cleansing the body.

The proper way to use these oils is to add 2 drops to 2 1/2 cups of water - shake well and add to the heat source as needed. Typically in Minnesota they add the drops of essential oils to a big bucket of water and scoop it and pour it over the heat source. Again, they are warned to ONLY add a few drops to their BIG bucket of water.

If you choose to use other essentials oils please read to make sure they can be used in such situations. Because of all the steam, some essentials oils can cause lung/airway irritations or skin irritations. Peppermint is one such oil. You might be able to use a tiny amount of Spearmint, but use it near the end of your sauna to see if you have any reactions. There are many others that can irritate too. To be on the safe side and if you are unsure about an oil you might want to use do some reading or asking otherwise use only those oils listed above.

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Oh and before I forget - your shower can be a mini steam room too! Before you enter the shower - run a few minutes of very hot water to warm the area. Then place a terra cotta disc with any essential oil listed from above and let it sit in the shower for a few minutes - then you can take a nice hot shower and enjoy a little mini steam room too.

Steam Room or Sauna Blend

Douglas Fir 20 drops
Spruce Needle - 15 drops
Juniper berry - 10 drops
Cypress - 5 drops
Spearmint - 2 drops

Blend all in an amber bottle. Then add 5 drops to 2 cups of water and use to apply small amounts to the heat source of your sauna or steam room as desired. If at any time irritation or breathing is affected leave the area and get fresh air.

Around the House

Holiday are Upon us!

by Penny Keay

Here it is mid December and I have not even barely thought of the next few weeks. I do know that we will be putting up our artificial tree this weekend and maybe then I'll think more about the holidays!

Since we use a 'fake' tree for many reasons, we still want the house to smell like the trees we were used to from our youth. The trees that make it smell like Christmas. We use Douglas Fir needle on our tree because that's the one I like the best, but other folks like Siberian Fir or Pine or Spruce needle too. Then of course we have our Conifer blend that is very popular too.

Here is a new blend to try. I love all these scents and mixing them together is wonderful.

Christmas Time Blend

Pine Needle - 3 drops
Juniper berry - 3 drops
Orange - 3 drops
Cinnamon - 1 drop

Blend all together and diffuse into the air using any style diffuser. You can easily make more of this blend should you enjoy it too, but mix just a small amount to begin with!

The scents common to this time of the year varies from custom and country. Al and I were raised with a lot of Scandinavian, English and Protestant customs so scents like the Pines, Fir and Spruce along with Orange, Cinnamon, Cardamom, Nutmeg, Anise and Cloves were and are very common. They trigger our memories of past holidays and our childhood. (We also eat Lutefisk and cook it too - and Yes, it smells and triggers those same memories!)

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But where you are and your nationality may trigger other lovely scents. Next year, if you are from other countries and are willing to share your customs and Scents of the season I'll be more than happy to include them here.

Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanza are all celebrated within the same few weeks of the year and all these different holidays have scents unique and special to everyone's celebration. Please if you are willing to share let me know!
Thanks.

For this year - Happy Holidays to Everyone! We hope you all have wonderful times with family and friends.
Happy New Year too!

Recipes to try

by Penny Keay (unless otherwise noted)

For a really sad S.A.D Day

Bergamot – 10 drops
Grapefruit – 10 drops
Spearmint – 5 drops

Blend essential oils in an glass amber bottle. Diffuse in any room diffuser or Place several drops in a personal inhaler, or a drop or two on an aromatherapy necklace or aromatherapy bracelet and smell as needed.

A Bright and Cheerful Blend

Grapefruit – 10 drops
Melissa – 5 drops
Lemon – 5 drops

Blend the above essential oils in an Amber glass bottle. Diffuse in any room diffuser. or Place several drops in a personal inhaler, or a drop or two on an aromatherapy necklace or aromatherapy bracelet and smell as needed.

The Steam Room Bath for Congestion

Eucalyptus – 10 drops
Lavender – 10 drops
Cajeput – 5 drops
Pine – 5 drops

Blend all in an amber bottle. Then add 5 drops to 2 cups of water and use to apply small amounts to the heat source of your sauna or steam room as desired. If at any time irritation or breathing is affected leave the area and get fresh air.

Another Christmas Tree Blend

Siberian Fir Needle – 10 drops
Pine Needle – 10 drops
Juniper Berry – 5 drops
Cypress – 5 drops
Cedarwood – 5 drops

Blend all in an amber bottle then place several drops on a terra cotta disc or pendant and hang from a tree branch. You can also place on a cotton ball or small pine cone and hang from your tree too.

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BIRCH HILL HAPPENINGS NEWS

Hello Everyone,

SEASON'S GREETINGS!!

Hope this finds everyone happy, healthy and having fun!

Finally the new Recipe Book "Aromatherapy Recipes using Pure Essential oils Volume 1" by Penny Keay is finished and available.

It has over 200 recipes, some are new, most are from previous newsletters and the recipes files, some have been updated and edited, and others are from sources such as consultations we have done over the past several years.

There is an Introduction to Aromatherapy section, the Recipes Section, plenty of tips and hints throughout the book and an Index to help you find just the right aromatherapy recipe quickly.

You can find out more information, details and how to order by going to <http://birchhillhappenings.com/recipebook.htm>

We have even created an Aromatherapy Recipe Book Kit for a great start to using the Aromatherapy Recipes using Pure Essential oils Book. Thank you for your patience while I got it finished and printed.

We have already had several folks purchase it and hope they send us some feedback too.

Also new is a couple of Synergy Blends. One is the replication of a certain MLM's R.C. TM blend We call ours "Respiratory Blend" for now. It has the same essential oils as the R.C. but is my own recipe and formulation as only my nose is used to replicate other blends. Al and I both feel I have 'nailed this one on the head' too!

Because we blend this blend ourselves and are not a part of any 'group', we are able to make this blend be very affordable at just a fraction of the cost of the other company.

The other new blend is one I developed that incorporates Valerian Essential oil. As many of you are aware Valerian EO is not a very pleasant smelling EO but it has wonderful sleep inducing properties that many folks would like to take advantage of but can't or won't due to the unpleasant, overpowering odor of the valerian.

Anyway over the past several weeks I started to add other essential oils that have a much sweeter smell and can override the potent odor of the Valerian. I have come up with a very Sweet smelling blend. Yes you can kind of smell the Valerian but the Mandarin, Ylang-ylang extra, Lavender and Neroli are there to help tone it down.

Yes, we have been using it too, but only occasionally as we don't typically have trouble sleeping. Now getting to bed at a reasonable time yes, but not sleeping. Falling asleep though is where this blend comes in the handiest, at least for us. You only need 1 drop on a cotton ball or tissue. That will most likely last you a couple of days.

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Next new are the Aromatherapy Bracelets. So far I have several designs. If you want another way to wear and use essential oils and love to wear simple complimentary bracelets give these a try. Some are simply made with a stretch nylon cord and aroma beads. Others are more elaborate and incorporate the Dainty Sterling Silver Locket and Memory Wire instead of a clasp. Both styles will fit 6-8 inch wrists with the memory wire version made for even larger wrists.

We are now offering the All Purpose Cleaner with No Essential oils added. It can be used plain as a surface cleaner or you can add your own essential oils. You may want to mix the essential oils with either Polysorbate 20 or the Coconut Emulsifier before adding to the cleaner so your essential oils will blend better with the Cleaner. Click on the Unscented Base products page to purchase the All Purpose Cleaner base.

Don't forget our Holiday Sale is on through the end of the Year for Complete details Click on any of the "Sale Graphics" at the top each of our pages.

That's about it for this time. Stay, safe, snug and warm and have a wonderful Holiday Season.

Happy New Year too!!

As always, if you have suggestions, questions or comments please feel free to send us an e-mail to bhinfo@birchhillhappenings.com and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Yours in Aromatherapy,

Penny & Al

Be sure to visit us on line at

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/aroma1.htm>

for all your Essential oils and Aromatherapy Supplies needs.

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