

Aromatherapy reduces the risk of car accidents

The leading causes of car accidents are distractions (such as using your mobile phone, fiddling with the radio or CD player, eating, grooming, dealing with the kids or picking up something you've dropped on the floor) and drowsiness. Have you ever felt tempted to rest your eyes for a few seconds while you're driving, when you're bored in traffic or at the end of a long trip? Ever found yourself racing to a meeting, battling traffic and feeling stressed and frustrated?

Dr Charles Spence, an experimental psychologist at the University of Oxford in England, says scientists are studying how our senses of smell and touch can be used to make driving safer – and he and his colleagues have shown that aromas such as citrus and Peppermint can improve concentration and help drowsy drivers to stay alert.

Using essential oils such as Orange, Lime, Lemon, Grapefruit (or even oils with a citrus-like aroma such as May Chang) can not only elevate the senses, mood and emotions, they can also assist in keeping you in a relaxed but alert state. May Chang has a delicious lemon sherbet aroma that helps to keep you feeling 'up', but calm, and when it's used in combination with citrus essential oils such as Grapefruit, Ginger and Orange, you can create an environment that helps you to lighten-up and stop taking yourself too seriously – it helps you to regain that 'cruisey' feeling that you are really living and not just existing. And they can be easily used in the car. A car diffuser plugs into your car's 'power source' (which used to be called the cigarette lighter). The car diffuser has a pressed paper pad that absorbs the oils. You simply add two or three drops of essential oil and the aromas begin to do their work. The car diffuser releases the oils slowly, and the scent can last up to a few days before it needs refreshing. Whether you commute to and from work or spend most of your day in the car, a car diffuser can help you to stay focused, prevent frustration and avoid fatigue. The only essential oil that I don't recommend being diffused in the car is Lavender; its strong relaxing properties may prevent you from concentrating on driving.

As much as we all know the dangers of driving when we're tired or bored, we also know that there are going to be times when we find ourselves in that situation, so why not be prepared and use essential oils to provide an aromatic, sensory experience that increases your alertness, lifts your mood, and prevents stress, fatigue, boredom and drowsiness from settling in.