



Linden Leaves Aromatherapy Synergy Body Oil in Love Again (\$39.80)

Bath & Body Works Aromatherapy Sleep Body Lotion in Lavender Vanilla (\$13)



This Works Deep Calm Bath and Shower Oil (\$62)



Herbal Essences Hydralicious Reconditioning Shampoo and Conditioner (\$4 each)



Biotherm Flash Recharge Radiance Concentrate Flash Energizer (\$49)



Crabtree & Evelyn Aromatherapy Distillations Conditioning Body Lotion (\$19.50)



The Body Shop Divine Calm Relaxing Massage Oil (\$16). For details, see Shopping Guide.

Phillips' line isn't the only offering products that double as sleep aids. Arizona-based doctor and clinical psychologist Michael Breus helped develop Bath & Body Works' Aromatherapy Sleep Collection, which includes products that contain lavender, chamomile and vanilla essential oils. (Other offerings in their aromatherapy collection impart relaxation, relief, energy and "sensuality." Breus calls it the "first line of defence" against insomnia, especially for people looking for natural alternatives to medications like Ambien. "Aromatherapy is part of a routine that helps you relax enough to fall asleep," says Breus, citing a 2007 study from Connecticut's Wesleyan University that demonstrated the mild sedative effects of lavender. Other evidence of aromatherapy's benefits includes a study conducted at Eulji University in South Korea, which found that lavender, clary sage and rose oils can diminish the pain caused by menstrual cramps, and research from the Meikai University School of Dentistry in Japan, where scientists discovered that inhaling lavender or rosemary oil increases free-radical scavenging activity and decreases levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

PURE AND SIMPLE Yet for every study that presents proof of aromatherapy's medicinal properties, there's another that refutes them—such as the latest research from Ohio State University, which says that aromatherapy is no better than distilled water in relieving pain, boosting immune function or reducing stress levels. What gives? "Quality is a major issue," says Sade. "For example, what you think is pure lavender oil may be a diluted product or an oil called lavandin, which is not even



HUNDREDS OF DIFFERENT OILS.

need to see a certified aromatherapist who knows about metabolism and the absorption of essential oils." Using the correct amount and in the right manner is also important. "If you're working on muscle tissue, the oil has to be applied topically, whereas the inhalation aspect works on the nervous system," says Sade. Though aromatherapy's pharmacological influence is still up for debate, its impact on mood is less disputed. The same Ohio State University study that dismissed claims of aromatherapy-induced pain relief and immune-boosting power found that lemon has mood-enhancing properties, while research from the University of Miami reported mood improvements from rosemary and lavender. According to Rachel Herz, a sensory psychologist and the author of *The Scent of Desire: Discovering Our Enigmatic Sense of Smell*, these feel-good effects aren't from the scents themselves—they're a direct result of our past experiences. "We all come to the world of smell with a blank slate, so what aromatherapy is doing is a function of the previous association we have with the scent," explains Herz. Take musk, for >