

# The magic basket

## Sensory

Up to 20 minutes

### You will need:

A wicker shopping basket, attractive, medium-sized

Essential oil of lavender (this is the only oil that is safe to use on the skin)

Bunch of lavender and/or lemon verbena (fresh if possible)

Fresh herbs from the garden, such as mint or chives

A couple of small organza bags, in different colours

Kitchen roll or small pieces of fabric

One-to-one  
Dementia-friendly



Sensory  
Stimulating  
Nurturing

A basket of sensory items can easily become an instant way of connecting with the people. People are naturally curious about what's in the basket and it can become a source of curiosity opening up delight, memory and stories.

### To prepare:

Gather a selection of sensory items in your basket to use. Here we are using Spring themed items, but the basket could easily be changed to suit other seasons or seasonal events. The Magic Basket can be used in a number of different ways one-to-one and can also be explored with a small group.

### To begin:

Reveal the basket to the person or small group that you are working with. Invite the participants to have a look in the basket with you. *What can they see in there? Is there anything that catches their eye or sparks their interest?*

Get out the bottle of lavender oil and hold it to your nose and express how you feel about the smell. Offer your participants a smell – the easiest way to do this is to give each person a pad of fabric or kitchen roll with a drop of oil on. *Does anybody recognise the smell? Does it come from any of the plants in the basket? How does the smell make them feel? Do they like the smell? What do they like about it?*

Then invite the group to take items out of the basket and explore them in a similar way. *Which do they like? Which do they recognise? Which are not familiar?* If there is a particular item that people like, you could put a small amount of it in an organza bag for them to keep after the activity, such as a couple of mint leaves.

### Next:

Explain that you are going to take some time to pamper yourselves. Put a drop of lavender oil on the palm of your hand then rub your hands together. Next, inhale, cupping your hands over your nose. Ask if anybody in the group would like to give this a go. Focus upon rubbing the oil in slowly and really enjoying the sensation.

Then give yourselves a loving hug by wrapping your arms around your body and giving yourselves a squeeze. It will help if you do this first, then invite your group to copy you. Take time to notice how nice it feels.

### Credit:

Maria Harvey-Lavin /  
Roaming Aroma. Developed  
in partnership with C&C  
Care Homes.





Move back to your hands and give them a quick sniff, and then rub them together as if applying a scented hand cream. Next, place one hand over the other and glide upwards around the elbow and up and around the shoulder and back down to hand three times slowly and rhythmically. On the fourth time, glide up round the shoulder into the nape of your neck and give yourself a gentle hug. Again, it helps if you demonstrate the movements and then encourage people to give it a go.

Repeat on the other arm and enjoy together.

You could also try rolling your fingers over the top of your head, gently and rhythmically, from the middle of your forehead to the back of your neck. Follow this with a gentle squeeze to the neck.

#### **To finish:**

Cup your hands under your chin and enjoy the feeling – some people may like to shut their eyes whilst they are doing this. Then let the magic moments happen and dream on.

#### **Things to consider:**

The only oil that can be used directly on the skin safely is lavender. When not in use, the oil should be kept in a safe and secure place. Any irritation through contact with the oil can be eased by applying cold water.



#### **Materials for other seasons:**

##### **Summer**

Lavender oil, summer flowers, summer herbs like basil and oregano, sun cream, summer fruit like strawberries.

##### **Autumn**

Cinnamon sticks, pine cones, crispy apples, dry autumn leaves, seasonal candle, e.g. pumpkin spice, vanilla oil.

##### **Winter**

Christmas tree branch, gingerbread, cloves, oranges, dried fruit, bergamot, mulled wine.

