

Longing for Dreamland? Lavender could help you relax and unwind enough to get a peaceful night's sleep.



A heady, purple flower that blooms at its best in sunny and open environments and valued for its gentle and enchanting aroma, there are 47 known species of lavender (or *lavandula*) which have been used in healing and relaxation treatments for centuries across the world.

Lavender has a long and diverse history in the healing arts. The Ancient Egyptians, for example used the flowering plant in many of their cosmetics (especially in massage oils), the Greek philosopher Diognes recommended covering the feet with lavender oil to allow its soothing aroma to slowly rise up the body throughout the day creating a cloud of floral serenity, whilst the Ancient Romans used Lavender for healing wounds, headaches and even in their washing!

Researchers have now shown how potent lavender is when used as a natural remedy to help aid sleep and today, this is one of the more common uses with lavender turning up in night-time beauty products, pillow mists and home fragrances.

Sleep specialists suggest that: "Rather than directly affecting the quality of sleep itself, research has shown the key effects of herbal fragrances like lavender to help reduce stress levels thereby relaxing people enough for them to sleep much better."