

WHERE CLASSICAL WISDOM MEETS INTELLIGENT LEARNING

18. Use of Kizhi (bolus), lepa (paste), and steam in conjunction

Integrating Kizhi (bolus), Lepa (paste) & Steam (Svedana) in Kalari Healing

How three classic heat-modulation tools are layered around an Uzhichil session to deepen tissue release, clear channels and lock-in metabolic change.

1. Therapeutic Logic Behind the Trio

Kalari practice views musculoskeletal pain, sluggish circulation and post-combat swelling as multi-layer problems.

- **Uzhichil** mellows superficial fascia and primes marmas.
- **Kizhi** drives *controlled heat* + *herbal actives* several millimetres deeper, milking stagnation from joints and tendinous sheaths.
- **Lepa** keeps phyto-chemicals in long contact with the target site, extending anti-inflammatory or cooling action after the heat phase subsides.
- Steam dilates sweat-glands and lymphatics, completing toxin mobilisation and preventing rebound stiffness.

Applied in sequence, the modalities move tissue from **rigid** \rightarrow **pliable** \rightarrow **permeable** \rightarrow **detoxified** within a single sitting.

2. Kizhi (Bolus) - Mobile Herb Furnace

A kizhi is a fist-sized bundle of powdered or whole herbs tied into cotton. Common variants:

Variant (Malayalam)	Core Contents	Primary Action	Dosha Bias
Podi-kizhi	Dry powders of lemon, rock salt, zedoary	Friction + mild heat for myalgia	Kapha ↓, Vāta ↓
Ela-kizhi	Fresh leaves of castor, tamarind, moringa sautéed in sesame oil	Sweating & decongestion around large joints	Kapha ↓
Njavara-kizhi	Cooked red rice, milk, bala decoction	Nourishing heat for muscle wasting or nerve palsy	Vāta ↓, Pitta ↔

Technique Bundles are dipped in medicated oil maintained at 47-50 °C, blotted, then **dab-press-glide** along the oiled tissue until heat fades. Each bolus is reheated for 40 s before the next pass.

3. Lepa (Paste) - Stationary Phytochemical Patch

A **lepa** is a semi-solid mash spread 3-5 mm thick over the treated zone.

- Suvatā Lepa (warming): ginger, mustard, ajowan—re-ignites sluggish periferal circulation after Podi-kizhi.
- **Śītala Lepa** (cooling): sandalwood, vetiver, fuller's earth—quells post-traumatic Pitta flare when heat work risks aggravation.
- Shāka-Lepa (nutritive): black gram, milk, sesame—feeds atrophied calves or forearms after Njavara-kizhi.

Paste stays 20-30 min under light gauze, then is wiped with lukewarm water; oil film remains to seal pores.

4. Steam (Svedana) —Final Channel Opener

Gentle nadi-svedana (steam jet) or bashpa-svedana (steam chamber) follows lepa removal.

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- Temperature kept **40-44** °C to avoid protein denaturation.
- Exposure 5-8 min limbs / 3-5 min torso; shorter for Pitta constitutions.

 Steam synergises by **re-dilating pores**, amplifying sweat-mediated toxin exit, and preventing late-onset soreness.

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5. Session Flow Model

Oil Uzhichil (20 min) → Kizhi (15 min) → Lepa (25 min rest) → Steam (6 min) → Light Oil Reapplication & Rest

- 1. **Oil primes**: joints glide, skin receptive.
- 2. **Kizhi mobilises**: targeted heat pumps stagnation.
- 3. Lepa modulates: cools or nourishes depending on need.
- 4. Steam completes: opens śrotas, fixes pliability.
- 5. Final rest lets heart-rate normalise and herbs settle.

6. Safety & Practical Notes

- Temperature checks every 2 min; therapist's forearm is the thermometer.
- Avoid Kizhi over acute sprain < 48 h, active dermatitis, varicose zones.
- Use hypo-allergenic cloth; coloured cotton may leach dye under heat.
- In asthmatics, restrict chest steam to diffuse room vapour, not jet.
- Brief pulse and BP reading before steam; abort if systolic > 160 mm Hg.
- Pregnant clients: no abdominal kizhi, lepa or steam; limb-only lukewarm oil permissible.

Summary Tables

Combination Quick-Guide

Muscle spasm + cold limbs → Sesame oil Uzhichil → Podi-kizhi → Suvatā lepa → 6 min nadi-steam

Post-sprain edema (sub-acute) → Coconut-Murivenna Uzhichil → Ela-kizhi → Śītala lepa → 4 min chamber steam

Neuro-muscular wasting → Bala-Ashwagandha oil Uzhichil → Njavara-kizhi → Shāka lepa → Gentle warm towel (no steam if Pitta high)

	Phase	Tool	Heat Range	Contact Time	Key Effect
	1	Oil Uzhichil	38-42 °C	15-25 min	Lubrication, marma priming
	2	Kizhi	47-50 °C at cloth	12-18 min	Deep vasodilation, lymph mobilisation
	3	Lepa	Skin temp + 2 °C	20-30 min rest	Sustained anti-inflam or nutritive delivery
	4	Steam	40-44 °C ambient	5-8 min	Śrotas opening, toxin exit
Risk Flag			Flag		Contra-Measure

Excess redness / burning during Kizhi Switch to alternate bundle, lower oil temp, cool compress 1 min

Dizziness during steam Seat client, sip warm jaggery water, postpone further heat work

Paste itching Remove lepa, wash with rice-water; next time add sandal or aloe base

Key Take-aways

- 1. **Heat layering**—oil → bolus → paste → steam—moves therapy from surface to core without tissue shock.
- 2. Herbal intelligence—choose bolus herbs for mobilisation, paste herbs for modulation.
- 3. Dosha precision—adjust oil base, kizhi variant, paste nature and steam duration to constitution and season.
- 4. Safety hinges on temperature control and vigilant observation; efficacy on seamless sequencing.

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Employ this tri-modality wisely and Kalari Uzhichil transcends a single-tool massage, becoming a fully orchestrated program for rapid recovery, high-performance conditioning and long-term constitutional balance.



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