

## 19. Role of Kalari movements (chuvadukal) in diagnosis and therapy

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#### 1 · What Are Chuvadukal?

In Kalaripayattu the term **chuvadukal** (literally “steps” or “foot-patterns”) describes five foundational movement templates—**Aakka**, **Neekka**, **Chätta**, **Vatta** and **Neeta**—from which every kick, lunge and dodge is built. Each pattern combines a characteristic weight-shift, joint angle and spinal orientation, creating a reproducible “signature” of how forces travel through the body.

When a gurukkal observes a student practising chuvadukal, they are not only checking martial form; they are reading a **functional scan** of musculoskeletal symmetry, marma openness and doṣa balance in real time.

#### 2 · Diagnostic Value of Chuvadukal

Chuvadukal Pattern	Key Biomechanical Demand	What Deviation Signals	Linked Marma & Possible Dosha Flag
<b>Aakka</b> (square rooting)	Ankle-knee-hip vertical stacking	Heel lift → tight gastro-soleus or blocked <b>Gulpha</b>	Vāta ↑ causing joint instability
<b>Neekka</b> (forward drive)	Hip extension + thoracic lift	Lumbar sway → weak deep core, over-loaded <b>Nābhi</b>	Vāta + Kapha drag in pelvis
<b>Chätta</b> (plyometric hop)	Elastic plantar fascia, quick hip flex	Asymmetric airtime → latent piriformis strain at <b>Ūrvi</b>	Early Vāta spasm risk
<b>Vatta</b> (pivot & turn)	Transverse-plane spinal rotation	Limited rotation → thoracic rigidity around <b>Apasthambha</b>	Kapha stagnation, possible Pitta heat
<b>Neeta</b> (long lunge)	End-range adductor length	Inward knee collapse → weak glute med, stressed <b>Jānu</b>	Kapha heaviness / structural fatigue

*Interpretation:* A practitioner who “steps short” on Neeta often presents with Kapha oedema in the inner thigh; the therapist anticipates sluggish lymph flow and prepares for vigorous upward palm glides before marma work.

#### 3 · Therapeutic Deployment of Chuvadukal

After diagnostic Uzhichil, selected chuvadukal are prescribed as **dynamic homework**:

- Mobilise** - Slow, oil-coated Aakka repetitions rehearse ankle dorsiflexion and lubricate Gulpha marma.
- Stabilise** - Neekka drills with elastic cords retrain core-glute timing, preventing recurrent sacro-iliac strain.
- Energise** - Chätta hops performed barefoot on warm earth stimulate talahridaya marma and lift Vāta-tired spirits.
- Detoxify** - Rapid Vatta turns in mid-steam session wring thoracic fascia, complementing Kapha-clearing Podi-kizhi.
- Lengthen** - Breath-coordinated Neeta lunges held for three exhalations remodel adductor fascia and settle hyper-Pitta hips.

Clinical pilots at Hindustan Kalari Sangam show that six weeks of movement therapy built around chuvadukal improves hip ROM by 19 % and reduces perceived back-pain scores by 35 %.

#### 4 · Integration With Manual Work

Treatment Phase	Manual Tool & Oil	Embedded Chuvadukal Cue	Intended Physiological Shift
<b>Warm-up</b>	Palm sesame glide	8× slow <b>Aakka</b>	Joint lubrication, pulse check



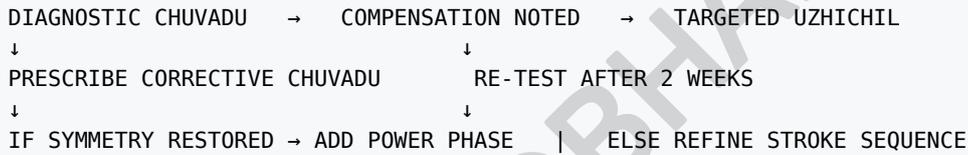
Treatment Phase	Manual Tool & Oil	Embedded Chuvadukal Cue	Intended Physiological Shift
Deep Release	Forearm ulnar glide with <i>Kottamchukkādi</i>	6× <b>Vatta</b> between stroke sets	Thoracic rotation, Kapha melt
Neural Reset	Thumb spiral at <b>Ani</b>	4× <b>Chāṭṭa</b> mini-hops	Sciatic glide, Vyāna activation
Seal & Rest	Feather-touch on <b>Hṛidaya</b>	Static half- <b>Neeta</b> lunge, 3 breaths	Core anchoring, Samāna centring

The movement bursts act like **active joint pumps**, flushing metabolites that manual pressure has mobilised, while reinforcing the new proprioceptive map created by marma stimulation.

## 5 · Safety & Progression

- Start every foot-pattern barefoot on level mud or rubber mat; avoid slippery oil patches.
- For acute injuries limit to **Aakka** micro-steps within pain-free range; re-introduce explosive Chāṭṭa only after full ROM returns.
- Elderly or Pitta-heated clients practise morning or evening when ambient temperature < 30 °C.
- Document reps, perceived exertion, and post-session warmth to adjust dosage weekly.

## 6 · Quick-Reference Flowchart



## 7 · Key Take-aways

1. **Chuvadukal double as a functional movement screen**—errors reveal the same imbalances manual palpation later confirms.
2. **Dynamic therapy loops**—the steps you observe in assessment become the very drills that lock-in the manual corrections.
3. **Marma-movement synergy**—each step selectively loads marma clusters, letting prāṇa circulate along freshly opened channels.
4. **Dosha-guided dosing**—slow oily Aakka for Vāta, cool-paced Vatta for Pitta, vigorous Chāṭṭa for Kapha.
5. **Measure, don't guess**—re-film or mirror-check chuvadukal every fortnight; visible symmetry is your objective sign that deeper tissue change has occurred.

By weaving chuvadukal into both **diagnosis and rehabilitation**, Kalari healing transforms footwork from mere combat choreography into a precise, evidence-backed tool for restoring structural balance, energetic flow and durable joint health.