

23. Preventive health: Enhancing immunity and vitality

Preventive Health in Kalari Tradition

Strategies for Immunity (*Vyādhikṣamatva*) and Vitality (*Ojas*)

1 • Ayurvedic View of Immunity

In classical texts the body's resistance to disease is called **Vyādhikṣamatva** and rests on the quality of **Ojas**—a subtle essence distilled from perfectly digested food, balanced doṣas, clear channels (*srotas*), and a calm mind. Declining Ojas shows as fatigue, dull complexion, repeated colds; abundant Ojas reveals itself in bright eyes, stable moods, and quick healing.

2 • How Kalari Methods Build Ojas

1. Daily Oil Application (Self-Abhyanga & Uzhichil)

- Warm sesame-bala taila nourishes the skin barrier, a first-line immune screen, while rhythmic palm glides stimulate lymph flow—shuttling immune cells from gut to periphery.

2. Marma Pulsing for Neuro-Immune Harmony

- Gentle holds on **Hṛidaya** and **Nābhi** synchronise vagal tone and enteric immunity; light spirals on **Talahridaya** (sole) ground anxiety that otherwise saps Ojas.

3. Kizhi & Steam for Detoxifying Sweat Pathways

- Leaf-based **Ela-kizhi** followed by brief steam opens sweat glands, flushing metabolic wastes that clog *srotas* and burden the immune system.

4. Chuvadukal Movement Drills

- Dynamic **Vatta** pivots and **Neeta** lunges pump interstitial fluid back to central circulation, preventing lymph stagnation and lowering systemic inflammation.

5. Seasonal "Karkidaka" Rejuvenation

- During Kerala's monsoon the body's agni dips. A 14-day protocol—light diet, dashamūla steam, njavara-kizhi nourish—restores digestive fire and rebuilds marrow-level Ojas before winter pathogens surge.

3 • Herbal Oils & Diet Synergy

Aim	Key Oil Ingredients	Companion Dietary Tips
Baseline immunity	Sesame + Āśvagandhā, Bala (<i>Dhanvantaram taila</i>)	Morning glass of lukewarm water with ½ tsp chawanprash
Respiratory defence	Coconut-tulasi oil for chest glides	Warm tulasi-ginger decoction after session
Anti-inflammatory reserve	Dashamūla-sahacharādi blend for joints	Golden milk with turmeric & black pepper at bedtime
Post-illness rebuild	Ghee-amla-bala drizzle applied to spine	Moong-rice khichdi with ghee, cumin, fresh amla

4 • Breath & Mind Practices to Seal Gains

- **Nāḍī-śodhana (5 min)**: balances ida-piṅgalā channels, harmonising cortisol and melatonin cycles.
- **Bhrāmārī (9 humming exhales)**: vibration enhances nitric-oxide release in nasal epithelium—an innate antiviral.
- **Gratitude pause**: therapist and client rest palms over sternum for three slow breaths, anchoring Sattva that protects Ojas.



5 • Weekly Immune-Vitality Routine (Self-Care Template)

Day	Morning	Mid-day	Evening
Mon	Self-abhyanga + 8 Aakka steps	Warm water, small lunch	20-min Uzhichil focus on back
Tue	5-min Nāḍī-śodhana	Ginger-lemon drink	Slow Neeta lunges, foot oiling
Wed	Leaf Ela-kizhi on knees	Light khichdi	10-min belly clockwise glide
Thu	Dashamūla steam (5 min)	Tulasi decoction	Head-neck oil with Sthapani hold
Fri	Plyo Chatta hops (20 reps)	Seasonal fruit bowl	Feather palm on sternum, gratitude journal
Sat	Long forest walk	Coconut water	Gentle ankle mobilisations
Sun	Rest, mild stretching	—	Warm sesame bath & early sleep

Quick-Reference Benefits Matrix

Modality	Direct Physiological Effect	Immunity Outcome
Warm oil glide	↑ skin lipid barrier, ↓ sympathetic tone	Fewer dermal infections, better sleep
Marma thumb hold	Vagal stimulation	Balanced cytokine profile
Kizhi heat	Micro-circulation boost	Faster antibody transport
Steam exit	Opens <i>srotas</i> , raises core temp	Pathogen die-off, clearer sinuses
Movement drills	Lymph pump, myokine release	Enhanced NK-cell activity
Breath/meditation	Cortisol regulation	Reduced viral susceptibility

Key Points to Remember

- Immunity is multi-layered;** Kalari addresses skin, lymph, gut, nerves and mind in one integrated arc.
- Ojas flourishes where digestion is clean, joints are free, breath is smooth, and thought is bright.**
- Consistency outranks intensity;** a daily 15-minute self-oil and breath ritual protects better than occasional spa marathons.
- Seasonal resets are essential;** leverage monsoon or spring for short rejuvenation programs before stress seasons hit.

Practised as a lifestyle, Kalari's blend of medicinal oils, precise touch, and intelligent movement keeps defence mechanisms vigilant while feeding the deep reservoir of vitality that Ayurveda calls **Ojas**.