



## Lesson 6: Ayurvedic Oils & Their Properties (Part 1)

Excellent. I will now prepare the in-depth Day 6 lesson on Ayurvedic Oils & Their Properties (Part 1) for the Kalari Uzhichil certification course.

This will include:

- Overview of the significance of medicated oils (thailams) in Kalari Uzhichil.
- Detailed profile of Dhanwantharam Thailam including traditional ingredients, classical references, dosha actions, and clinical uses.
- Best practices for heating oils safely using both traditional and modern methods.
- A structured table comparing various Ayurvedic oils based on properties such as therapeutic use (e.g., joint care, nerve support, muscle rejuvenation), dosha balance (Vata/Pitta/Kapha), and typical application areas.

I'll also reference relevant classical Ayurvedic texts where applicable (e.g., Sahasrayogam) and include diagrams or flowcharts if useful. The full lesson will be ready shortly.

## Day 6: Ayurvedic Oils & Their Properties (Part 1)

### Importance of Thailams in Kalari Uzhichil

In Kalari Uzhichil (the Kalari tradition of therapeutic massage), medicated oils (*thailams*) are **indispensable**. They serve as more than just lubricants – they nourish the body's tissues (*dhatu*s) at a deep level and help balance the doshas. Warm herbal oils applied in massage penetrate the skin and reach deeper tissue layers, **providing lubrication and nourishment to all seven dhatus**, relieving stiffness, and calming the nervous system. By countering dryness and friction (which are hallmarks of *Vata*), oil massage keeps muscles and joints supple and “well-oiled,” literally lubricating connective tissues and cell membranes. This is especially crucial for Kalari practitioners who undergo intensive physical training – the oils prevent injuries and wear-and-tear by keeping the body flexible.

Thailams also play a key role in **muscle preparation and recovery** for Kalari fighters. Gurukkals (teachers) traditionally give oil massages to students to **increase physical flexibility and treat muscular injuries**. Daily massage with medicated oils softens the muscles before training and soothes soreness afterwards, speeding up recovery. The oils are often applied in a 7-14 day regimen (e.g. the classic 14-day Kalari Uzhichil during the monsoon season) for full rejuvenation. Post-training, the oil's herbal nutrients help **replenish the dhatus** and remove fatigue, acting as a *rasayana* (rejuvenative).

Equally important is the **marma activation** and subtle energy aspect. Kalari massage targets vital energy points (*marmas*) using oil as the medium. According to Ayurveda, *marmas* are junctions of life-force (*prana*); applying warm oil with specific pressure on these points can unblock energy stagnation and promote healing. In *Marma Abhyanga* (marma oil massage), **gentle pressure on marma points infuses prana (vital energy) into the body and mind**, amplifying the healing effect. The medicated oil is seen as a conduit for the “herbal intelligence” of the plants – the pranic energy and biochemical properties of dozens of herbs – to enter the body's channels. This **integration of touch, energy, and herbal intelligence** is almost philosophical: the therapist's touch and intention, coupled with the oil's herbal essence, harmonize to restore balance. As an Ayurvedic text describes, warm herb-infused oil massage “*harmonizes, detoxifies, strengthens and revitalizes the entire body... calms and strengthens the nervous system... [and] is a protector, preserver and rejuvenator*”. In short, thailams are the medium through which **therapeutic touch** and **herbal medicine** unite, making Kalari Uzhichil a holistic mind-body treatment rather than just a muscle rub.

**Summary - Why Oils Matter:** The use of thailams in Kalari Uzhichil lubricates the tissues and joints, **nourishes all layers of the body**, balances aggravated doshas, and activates healing at both the physical and subtle levels. It exemplifies the Kalari principle that touch and treatment should permeate “to the bone and marrow.” The oil is regarded as sacred – an anointment that carries the wisdom of herbs into the body's **srotas** (channels) and even the psyche. Thus, medicated oils are central to Kalari Uzhichil, enabling the integration of **martial training, healing, and Ayurveda** into one seamless practice.



## In-Depth Profile: *Dhanwantharam Thailam*

One of the most revered oils in Kerala's Ayurvedic system (and Kalari practice) is *Dhanwantharam Thailam*. This classical formulation is mentioned in the ancient texts *Sahasrayogam* (Taila Yoga chapter) and *Ashtanga Hridayam*, underscoring its pedigree. It is a **Vata-pacifying** medicated oil famed for its use in postnatal care and a wide range of Vata disorders. Below is a detailed profile of *Dhanwantharam Thailam*:

□ **Classical Source:** Descriptions of *Dhanwantharam Thailam* appear in *Sahasrayogam* (Taila Yogas, chapter 1) and *Ashtanga Hridayam*, which indicate its long-standing use. The formula is part of the Kerala Ayurveda tradition; its very name honors *Dhanwantari*, the mythical physician. Practitioners consider it a go-to oil for **strengthening and rejuvenation therapy**.

□ **Ingredients & Preparation:** This oil is renowned for its **rich poly-herbal formulation** - an amalgam of 40+ ingredients processed in a base of sesame oil. The preparation involves a prolonged cooking of a herbal decoction with herbal paste and oil, following classical *Taila paka* method so that both water-soluble and oil-soluble phytoactives are extracted. Key ingredients include:

- **Primary herb:** *Bala* - *Sida cordifolia* root (about 4.6 kg in the traditional batch) is the chief ingredient, known for strengthening nerves and muscles. It's boiled in a large quantity of water and cow's milk to create a nourishing decoction.
- **Decoction components:** The oil's decoction (*kashaya*) includes grains and roots that alleviate Vata. For example, barley (*Yava*), jujube fruit (*Kola*), and horse gram (*Kulattha*) are combined with the famous *Dashamoola* (ten roots) group. *Dashamoola* comprises roots like *Bilva* (*Aegle marmelos*), *Agnimantha* (*Premna mucronata*), *Shyonaka* (*Oroxylum indicum*), *Patala* (*Stereospermum suaveolens*), *Gambhari* (*Gmelina arborea*), *Brihati* (*Solanum indicum*), *Kantakari* (*Solanum xanthocarpum*), *Gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris*), *Shalaparni* (*Desmodium gangeticum*) and *Prishnaparni* (*Uraria picta*) - all boiled into a potent herbal extract.
- **Herbal paste (kalka):** A fine paste of about 28 additional herbs is added to the oil during cooking. These include strengthening herbs and regenerative tonics: *Meda* and *Mahameda* (two species of **Polygonatum** rhizomes), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Manjishta* (*Rubia cordifolia*), *Chandana* (Red sandalwood), *Sariva* (*Hemidesmus indicus*), *Kushta* (*Saussurea lappa*), *Tagara* (*Valeriana wallichii*), *Punarnava* (*Boerhaavia diffusa*), *Yashtimadhu* (Licorice), the trio *Triphala* (*Amalaki*, *Haritaki*, *Vibhitaki* fruits), and many others. Notably, a small amount of *Saindhava* (rock salt) is also included - an Ayurvedic technique to enhance absorption. (For reference, the full ingredient list spans 40+ items; the above are highlights with Sanskrit names and their English/botanical equivalents.)
- **Base oils:** *Tila taila* - cold-pressed **sesame oil** - is the base oil, chosen for its Vata-calming, nourishing qualities. Additionally, cow's milk is added as a co-solvent (its lipids and nutrients augment the oil's nourishing effect). The preparation is done by **slow heating** this mixture until all the water content evaporates and the herbal essence is fully absorbed into the oil.

□ **Therapeutic Indications:** *Dhanwantharam Thailam* is celebrated as a **Vatahara** (Vata-reducing) oil, effective in a broad spectrum of conditions:

- **Postnatal care:** It is famously used for **massage after childbirth**. New mothers receive full-body abhyanga with warm *Dhanwantharam* oil to restore strength, support recovery of the uterus and muscles, and balance Vata disturbed by delivery. In Kerala, it's part of the "soothika" regimen for **40 days postpartum**, helping the mother regain vitality and preventing Vata disorders (like joint pains or weakness) that often follow childbirth.
- **Neurological and neuromuscular disorders:** The oil is indicated for **paralysis (pakshaghata)**, hemiplegia, facial palsy, neuralgia, sciatica, and other neuropathies. Its Vata-pacifying herbs (e.g. *Ashwagandha*, *Bala*) support nerve regeneration and function. Patients with stroke or nerve injuries may be massaged with *Dhanwantharam* tailam to improve circulation and nerve response.
- **Musculoskeletal issues:** It is highly useful in **rheumatic and orthopedic conditions** - e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, spondylosis (neck or lower back), frozen shoulder, and generalized joint/muscle pain. The oil's analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties (thanks to herbs like *Dashamoola* and ginger family ingredients) help reduce swelling and stiffness. It is often recommended for chronic backache and knee pain due to degeneration.
- **Other uses:** *Dhanwantharam Thailam* is a versatile formula also employed in *post-fever convalescence* (to alleviate body aches after viral fevers), in certain gynecological ailments, and even as *Karna purana* (ear oil) for ear



problems in some classical references. Its 101-times processed version (*Dhanwantharam 101 avartti*) can even be taken internally in micro-doses for Vata disorders, under supervision.

In essence, **any condition stemming from Vata imbalance** – pain, debility, dryness, neurological deficits – is a candidate for Dhanwantharam Thailam therapy. As one source summarizes, this oil is *analgesic, anti-inflammatory* and indicated for “soothika (postnatal women), bala (children), injuries to **marma** (vital points), fractures, weakness, fever, gulma, insanity, urinary disorders, and gynecological issues,” among others. Such wide-ranging efficacy has earned it the reputation of a **“universal” massage oil for rejuvenation and healing**.

□ **Dosha Actions:** Dhanwantharam Thailam is **Tridosha-hara** in a gentle way but predominantly **pacifies Vata**. It also alleviates some Kapha when Kapha is combined with Vata (e.g. in certain arthritic conditions). Importantly, it is formulated not to provoke Pitta – many of its ingredients (like sandalwood, licorice, lotus root (Meda/Mahameda)) have cooling or neutral potency, making it generally safe in Pitta conditions as well. This balance means it can be used on a variety of body types, though it’s especially ideal for those with Vata aggravation (dryness, coldness, pain). Patients often report a feeling of warmth, comfort and groundedness after a Dhanwantharam oil massage – classic signs of Vata being calmed.

□ **Usage in Kalari & Ayurveda:** For maximum effect, Dhanwantharam tailam is **warmed before application** and used liberally for Abhyanga (warm oil massage). In Kalari Uzhichil, therapists use it for full-body massage, working it into muscles and joints with firm, synchronized strokes. It’s often followed by a **warm bath or steam**, which further helps the oil penetrate and also removes any excess oil. In Ayurvedic clinics, this oil is also used in specific treatments: e.g. *Dhara* (stream pouring of warm oil, or oil pooling techniques) for neurological cases, or *Kati Basti* (warm oil retained on the lower back) for back pain. Additionally, as mentioned, it can be **taken internally** in special cases – an advanced practice where a medicated oil (processed 101 times) is ingested in small drops to deeply pacify Vata from within.

□ **Synergistic Practices:** To enhance its benefits, Dhanwantharam massage is often combined with **mild sudation** (steam or hot cloth) to help the herbs penetrate the tissues. In Kalari practice, a common routine is massage at dawn, followed by stretching exercises or yogic movements to let the oil further seep into the body’s channels. Practitioners also recommend specific breathing exercises (pranayama) post-massage, aligning with the idea that the oil carries prana into the body. The philosophical view is that Dhanwantharam Thailam, blessed by the deity of Ayurveda, works on multiple layers – physical, energetic, and spiritual – especially when applied with mindful intention.

## Safe Heating Techniques for Oils

Using **warm oil** (never cold) is a cornerstone of Ayurvedic massage – warmth enhances absorption and adds Vata-calming qualities of heat and unctuousness. However, it’s crucial to heat oils **safely** to preserve their properties and avoid accidents. Traditional practitioners and modern therapists employ several methods:

- **Hot Water Bath (Water Jacket):** The simplest traditional method is to place the oil container in hot water. For example, fill a bowl or basin with hot water and set your bottle of oil into it for a few minutes. Within 5–10 minutes the oil becomes pleasantly warm (around body temperature). This indirect heating prevents overheating. In a quick home setup, one can use a large mug of hot water and submerge a small bottle of oil in it – test after a few minutes and it’s ready. This method has been used in Kalari settings by keeping a copper pot of oil in a larger vessel of hot water. **Safety tip:** Be careful when removing the bottle – the water on the outside can be very hot.
- **Double-Boiler Method:** This is a **highly recommended modern technique** for evenly warming oil. Place a smaller bowl containing the oil inside a larger bowl of hot water (similar to how one melts chocolate). The water gently transfers heat to the oil. Gently stir or swirl the oil with a clean finger; in about 1–2 minutes the oil reaches the perfect temperature. This method gives good control and avoids direct flames. It’s essentially an adaptation of the traditional water bath using kitchen bowls or a double-boiler pot. Many Ayurvedic spas use this to warm large quantities of oil without degrading the herbs.
- **Massage Oil Warmers (Electric):** For convenience, therapists use electric oil warmer devices. These are single-bottle warmers that **automatically regulate temperature**, often capping around ~60°C (140°F) so the oil stays warm but not scalding. You plug it in, insert the oil bottle, and within ~20 minutes the oil is consistently warmed. Modern warmers often keep the oil at a steady temperature throughout the session (avoiding the need to reheat). Some warmers even can stay on for hours or overnight, so the oil is ready for morning massage. This is very handy for daily practitioners. **Note:** 60°C is generally the upper safe limit – at that temperature the oil feels hot but shouldn’t burn; good warmers never exceed this, preventing destruction of the oil’s nutrients.



- **Traditional Oil Lamps/Warmers:** An old-school method still used in Kerala is a **copper or brass oil warmer** with a tealight or small flame beneath (essentially a decorative version of a double boiler). One pours the oil into the upper copper bowl and lights a candle underneath. The gentle flame warms the oil slowly. Many authentic Kalari clinics have beautifully crafted warmers (often copper) for this purpose. *Caution:* This method requires attention – **open flame** means you cannot leave it unattended, and it may heat unevenly. Keep stirring and check the oil frequently. The advantage is it creates a calming ambiance (the ritual of lighting a ghee lamp or candle can add a meditative quality to the massage setup).

Regardless of method, here are **safety tips** for heating oils:

- **Aim for “just above body temperature”:** The oil should be comfortably warm to the touch – roughly in the range of **40–45°C**. A quick test is to drip a bit on the inside of your wrist or back of your hand – it should feel pleasantly warm and not cause redness. Therapists often describe the ideal as **“warm and silky to the touch”**. Overly hot oil can scald the skin or cause discomfort, defeating the purpose of a soothing massage.
- **Avoid direct high heat:** Never boil the oil or heat it to smoking point. High temperatures can **destroy the delicate herbal active compounds** in the thailam and can polymerize the oil. If using a stove, use the **lowest flame** and remove the oil pan as soon as it’s warm. Do not let it sit on a hot burner – oil can overheat rapidly. (Signs of overheated oil include a nutty or burned smell and darkening in color – if that happens, it’s best not to use it on the body.)
- **No microwaving:** It’s generally advised **not to microwave** medicated oils. Microwaves heat unevenly and can create hot pockets that might burn the client, plus the electromagnetic exposure might alter the oil’s qualities slightly. Traditional methods are gentler and more in line with Ayurveda’s view of treating the oil as a living substance.
- **Stir and test:** Whichever heating method you use, **stir the oil** (with a clean finger or spoon) to distribute heat evenly. Always test the temperature before applying on a large area – a drop on your inner arm or the client’s skin ensures it’s safe. Remember, what’s “warm” to your hand might be “hot” to a more sensitive area of the body, so adjust accordingly.
- **Maintain oil quality:** If you are reheating the same oil multiple times (say for personal daily use), try to heat only the amount you need each time. Repeated heating and cooling can degrade the oil faster. Store oils in cool, dark places and keep caps tight, as heat and air exposure speed up rancidity. Using a **water bath or double boiler** helps prevent the oil from ever getting too hot, thus preserving its herbal potency.
- **Ideal temperature range:** As noted, dedicated warmers keep oil around 45–60°C. In practice, ~45°C (113°F) is often perfect for body application – warm enough to open pores and carry herbs in, but well below burning point. The oil should **never be so hot that it causes redness** on the skin; the goal is therapeutic warmth, not a burn.

By following these techniques, therapists ensure the oil is optimally warm – enhancing its penetration through the skin’s channels – **while keeping both the patient and the precious oil safe**. Warm oil not only feels more comforting, it also “opens up” its lipid structure to carry the herbs deeper. Ayurveda emphasizes that **the potency of an herbal oil is only fully realized when used warm**, as the heat enlivens the oil’s qualities (sukshma guna – subtlety) to reach the tissues. So heating is a small but vital step in treatment.

## Therapeutic Comparison of Classical Oils

The Ayurvedic texts describe many medicated oils, each with unique herbal makeups and therapeutic niches. Below is a **comparison table** of five classical thailams – including Dhanwantharam – highlighting their primary uses, dosha effects, target regions, and classical references:

Ayurvedic Oil	Primary Use Case (Key Indications)	Dosha Balance (V/P/K)	Target Region / Application	Classical Source
<b>Dhanwantharam Thailam</b>	Postnatal care (restorative massage after delivery); neurological support (paralysis, sciatica); musculoskeletal conditions (arthritis, spondylosis, back pain). Also general rejuvenation.	Vata-pacifying (also mild Kapha)(Calms Vata, no strong Pitta aggravation)	Full-body abhyanga (warm oil massage), especially <b>whole-body rejuvenation</b> and postpartum routine. Used warm daily or as needed; also in <i>dhara</i> and <i>basti</i> therapies.	<i>Sahasrayogam</i> (Taila Prakarana 1); <i>Ashtanga Hridayam</i>

Ayurvedic Oil	Primary Use Case (Key Indications)	Dosha Balance (V/P/K)	Target Region / Application	Classical Source
<b>Mahanarayana Thailam</b>	Broad-spectrum joint & muscle oil: <b>arthritis (osteo-/rheumatoid)</b> , joint pain with swelling, backache, stiff muscles; also beneficial in nerve pains (neuralgia, sciatica) and as a general tonic oil for weakness. Traditionally even used in mild paralysis cases.	Vata & Pitta pacifying(Calms Vata, alleviates inflammatory Pitta)	Any <b>affected joints or limbs</b> ; commonly used in local massages for knee pain, shoulder stiffness, etc. Also suitable for full-body massage in Vata individuals. Can be used in <b>Nasya</b> (nasal drops) or <b>Basti</b> (enema) for Vata disorders.	<i>Bhaishajya Ratnavali</i> - Vatavyadhi chapter (classical formulary)
<b>Murivenna Oil</b>	Injury healer: <b>wound healing</b> (cuts, ulcerations), <b>sprains &amp; strains</b> , fractures (to reduce pain and swelling), ligament and sports injuries. Excellent for acute trauma - it speeds tissue repair and reduces inflammation. Also used for bursitis, bruises, and non-healing ulcers (e.g. diabetic wounds).	Vata & Pitta pacifying(Relieves Vata pain, cools Pitta inflammation)	<b>Topical application</b> on wounds or painful areas. Often used by soaking a cloth and wrapping (bandage or <b>pichu</b> ) over sprained joints or cuts. Not typically for full body; applied locally on affected site (external use; though can be given in drops internally for ulcers).	<i>Yogagrantham</i> (Kerala traditional text)
<b>Karpāsasthyādi Thailam</b>	Neuromuscular specialist: <b>paralysis (hemiplegia, paraplegia)</b> , <b>facial palsy</b> , cervical spondylosis, motor neuron diseases. Indicated in post-stroke rehabilitation to strengthen nerves and muscles. Also used for chronic neck/back pain with tingling or nerve involvement, and muscle wasting conditions.	Strongly Vata pacifying(Calms deranged Vata in nerves)	<b>Head and spine focus:</b> Often used in head massage for facial palsy or Shirodhara; and in <b>Pada abhyanga</b> (foot massage) for paraplegia. Applied to affected limbs in paralysis. Also used in Vata <b>Basti</b> (enema) treatments and <i>Nasya</i> for cervical issues.	<i>Sahasrayogam</i> (Taila Prakarana 11) (Kerala tradition)
<b>Sahacharadi Thailam</b>	Lower-body Vata disorders: <b>Sciatica (Gridhrasi)</b> , low back ache, sacroiliac pain, hip pain, leg cramps, <b>numbness in legs</b> . Often prescribed for difficulty in walking due to vata in legs (e.g. in neurogenic claudication). Also useful in gynecological vata issues and Varicose veins (via oral use) per texts. Helps in stiffness of thighs and convulsions as well.	Vata pacifying (especially in <i>Apana Vata</i> region)(Calms Vata in lower body; mildly reduces <i>Kapha</i> )	<b>Lower back and limbs:</b> Ideal for massage from waist down to feet. Common in <b>Kati-abhyanga</b> (back massage) and leg massage for sciatica. Often combined with steam on lower back. Can be taken orally in small doses for vata in pelvic region (under guidance).	<i>Ashtanga Hridayam</i> , Chikitsa Sthana 29 (treatment of sciatica/limb pains)

*Sources:* The above comparisons are drawn from classical texts and Ayurvedic pharmacopeia descriptions, as well as modern expert summaries. Each oil's name often reflects its key ingredient or the sage who formulated it (e.g., *Sahachara* herb in Sahacharadi, *Karpasa* = cotton seed in Karpasasthyadi, *Narayana* = Lord Vishnu, implying a "great" oil in Mahanarayana, etc.). This table should guide a therapist in choosing the appropriate thailam based on the patient's condition and dominant dosha.

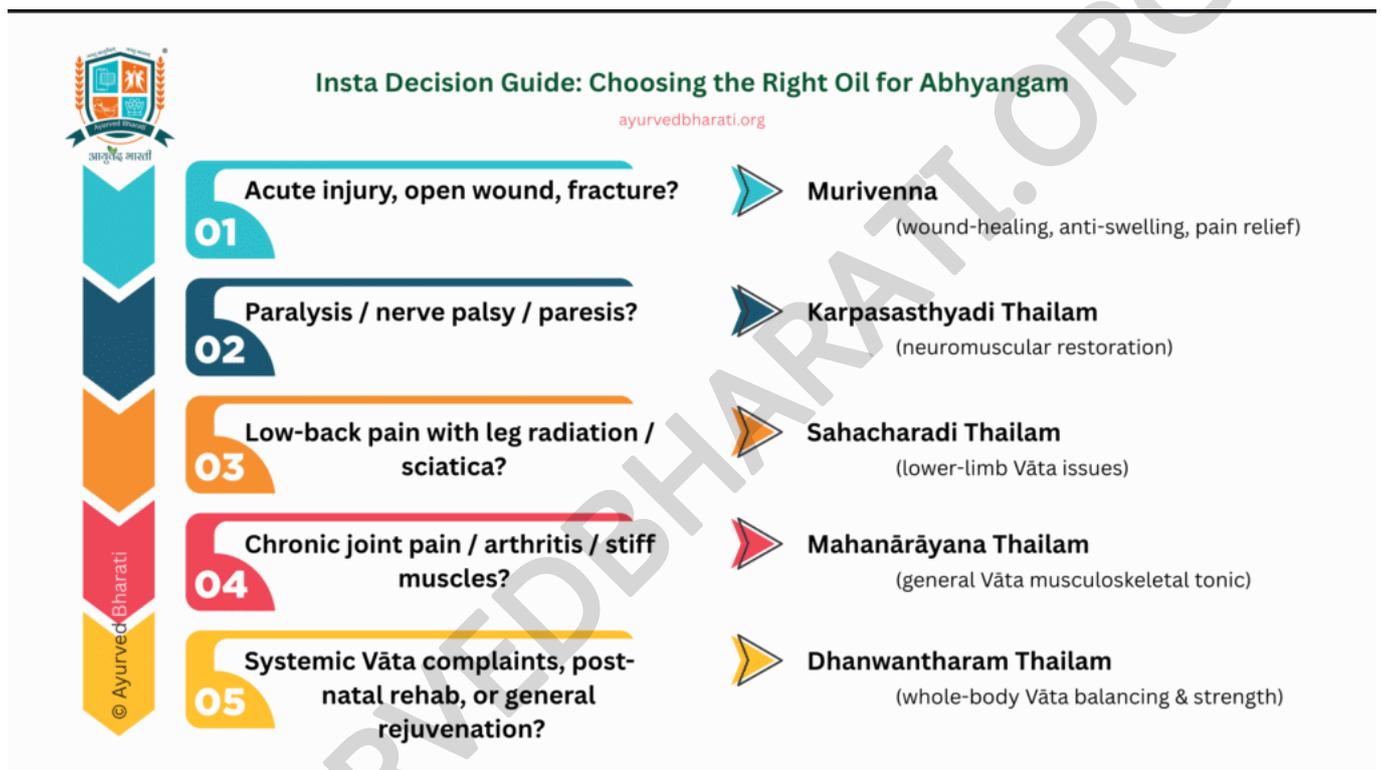
## Decision Guide: Choosing the Right Oil (Flowchart)

Knowing the unique qualities of each oil, a practitioner can follow a simple **selection logic** when treating patients or Kalari trainees:

- If the individual has an **acute injury**, open wound, or fracture → **Use Murivenna** (best for wound healing, reducing swelling and pain of trauma).

- If there is **paralysis, paresis, or nerve palsy** (clear Vata in nerves) → **Use Karpasasthyadi Thailam** (specialized for restoring neuromuscular function).
- If experiencing **sciatica or low back pain radiating down the leg** (classic Vata in lower body) → **Use Sahacharadi Thailam** (targeted for lower limb Vata issues).
- If suffering from **chronic joint pain, arthritis or stiff muscles** (general Vata musculoskeletal pain) → **Use Mahanarayana Thailam** (potent all-purpose joint tonic).
- If the goal is **overall rejuvenation, postnatal recovery**, or there are multiple Vata-related complaints systemically → **Use Dhanwantharam Thailam** (whole-body Vata balancing and strengthening).

The above can be visualized as a flowchart:



## Integration with Kalari Principles & Closing Thoughts

Kalari Uzhichil is not just about physical manipulation; it embodies Ayurveda's principles of harmony and balance. The choice and use of oils exemplify this integration:

- The therapist considers the **dosha state of the Kalari practitioner** each day – e.g., if a student shows signs of aggravated Vata (cracking joints, fatigue, anxiety), a Vata-calming oil like Dhanwantharam or Sahacharadi is chosen to ground them. For a Pitta inflammatory flare (say a swollen sprain), a cooling oil like Murivenna (coconut-based) is selected. This dynamic selection aligns with the Kalari principle of *“treat the present condition”*.
- **Energy and intent:** While applying the oil, the Kalari massage practitioner focuses on transferring healing energy through the hands. The oil, rich with herbal *ojas* (vital essence), is seen as nourishing not only the body but also the subtle energy body of the warrior. It's said that *“the oil is the medium through which the Guru's healing intent flows.”* Thus, an advanced Kalari therapist meditates on strength and vitality for the receiver while oiling each marma point.
- **Discipline and routine:** In Kalari training, receiving oil massage is a discipline in itself – students often undergo massages at dawn, then practice, then again an evening abhyanga on particularly strenuous days. This instills an understanding of how *regular self-care* (snehana – oiling) is essential for peak performance. Over the 6-day week (Mon–Sat training), different oils might be used: e.g., **Day 1 after weekend rest** – a lighter oil to warm up (maybe



Mahanarayana); **mid-week when fatigue sets in** – a rejuvenating Dhanwantharam massage; **after a sprain in sparring** – immediate Murivenna application; and so on. The **“intelligence” of these oils** complements the practitioner’s own body intelligence in healing itself.

Finally, remember that **Ayurvedic oils work best in conjunction with proper lifestyle and therapies**. Massage is one aspect; in Ayurveda it’s often coupled with internal herbal medicines, adequate rest, and nutrition (for example, after a Dhanwantharam massage, drinking warm spiced milk can further nourish the dhatus). Kalari Uzhichil, being a martial art therapy, adds the dimension of physical exercise and yoga stretches post-massage, which further directs the oils into the tissues.

As we conclude Part 1 of Ayurvedic Oils & Their Properties, we have explored how and why these oils are used, with a focus on Dhanwantharam and comparisons to other oils.

### Practice & Reflection for Students:

- **Observation Exercise:** This week, before your own abhyanga or Kalari massage session, **warm the oil using two different methods** (e.g., one day via double-boiler, another day via direct low flame) and notice any difference in the oil’s feel or effectiveness. Does the oil absorb faster when properly warmed? Record your observations.
- **Case Study Reflection:** Think of a scenario (from your experience or imagination) – e.g., a Kalari student with a twisted ankle, or a new mother with back pain, or an older person with knee arthritis. **Which thailam would you choose** for each scenario and why? Write down the rationale referring to dosha and properties (this will help solidify your understanding of the comparison table).
- **Integration in Practice:** During your next Kalari Uzhichil practice, pay attention to **marma points** – as you massage each marma, mentally note the sensation. Can you feel the oil helping to “open” that point or release tension? After the session, jot down which marmas felt tender or released – this journaling will heighten your sensitivity to energy flow in massage.
- **Self-Massage Routine:** If possible, perform a self-abhyanga on at least one day using **Dhanwantharam Thailam (or a vata-pacifying oil)**. Do it in a quiet space, treating it as a moving meditation. Afterwards, take a warm shower and see how you feel physically and mentally. This first-hand experience will deepen your appreciation of what your clients or students experience.

By engaging in these practices and reflections, you’ll not only memorize the properties of these oils but also **embody their benefits**, which is the true aim of learning in a Kalari Ayurvedic tradition.