



Unit 2: Traditional Kalari Approaches to Pain Relief

PAPER 9 — Pain Management & Stress Relief Techniques

Unit 2: Traditional Kalari Approaches to Pain Relief

(Key marma points • Pain-reducing strokes • Oil selection • Heat therapies (Kizhi) • Case-based protocols)

Therapeutic map: how Kalari eases pain

Kalari Uzhichil reduces pain by combining three levers in a repeatable order:

1. **Prepare** the tissues (oil film, long glides, gentle decompression) → lowers nociceptor drive.
2. **Regulate** with brief, breath-timed **marma** contacts → segmental gating and autonomic settling.
3. **Integrate** with midline sweeps and a seated finish → the nervous system keeps the gains.
Use **fewer, better** marma points, keep contacts **broad & oblique**, and match oil/heat to the day's tissue state.

1) Key marma points for pain modulation

Autonomic down-regulators (quiet the system):

- **Sthāpanī** (glabella), **Śaṅkha** (temple), **Āvarta** (supraorbital rim) — feather-light holds for headache/over-arousal.
- **Talahridaya** (centre of palm/sole) — distal “reset”; excellent close for any session.
- **Vidhura** (mastoid-ear sulcus) — eases ear/sinus pressure; gentle only.

Safety: Head points are **sūkṣma**; use feather contact, no tapping or heat.

Segmental musculoskeletal modulators (reduce local guarding):

- **Krikatikā** (occipital notch) — suboccipital release for neck pain.
- **Aṃsa / Aṃsa-phalaka** (acromial complex / scapular plane) — shoulder girdle reset.
- **Kaṭikā-tāruṇa** (sacroiliac rims) — lumbar/pelvic easing via traction.
- **Vṛhati, Pārśva-sandhi** (thoracic paraspinals / costovertebral rings) — mid-back stiffness.
- **Jānu** (knee ring), **Maṇibandha** (wrist ring), **Kūrpara** (elbow ring) — joint pain; treat as **rings**, not points.

Distal channel clearers (support venous/lymph return):

- **Indrabasti** (mid-calf corridor), **Gulpha** (ankle ring), **Ūrvi** (medial thigh bed), **Ani** (distal thigh), **Kṣipra** (web spaces).

Safety: **Kukundara** (sciatic notch) and **Ūrvi** (near femoral bundle) — work **around**, not into, neurovascular pits.

Agni marmas (vital fields—regulatory only):

- **Hṛdaya** (precordial), **Nābhi** (umbilical hub), **Basti** (deep pelvic), **Ādhipati** (crown).

Rule: **Broad, breath-timed rests only. No vertical pressure. No stacked heat.**



2) Application of specific Kalari strokes for pain reduction

Thirumu (long glides): distal→proximal, even tempo; hydrates fascia, engages A-beta touch fibers (“gate control”).
Eduthu-thirumu (lift-knead): broad scoop with whole hand/forearm to dissolve density; avoid thumb pinches.
Akam-thirumu (centering/inward): ring-wise draws tissue toward joint/sandhi; traction beats compression.
Ring-work & traction: circle **around** Jānu/Kūrpara/Mañibandha; gentle joint traction to unload nociceptors.
Wave sweeps (rib/abdomen): cupped, exhale-timed waves soften sympathetic tone.
Marma holds: 4-6 total, **oblique** vector, feather→light depth, 2-5 exhales each.

Do / Don't

- **Do:** move from your legs, breathe with the stroke, stop at warmth + softening.
- **Don't:** jab vertical into joints, compress carotids, or “chase” hot pain with pressure.

3) Oil selection for pain-relief (tailams & blends)

Warming (uṣṇa) for cold, stiff, Kapha-Vāta tissue:

- **Koṭṭamcukkādi** (decongesting), **Mahanārāyana** (nourish + ease), **Dhanvantaram** (Vāta pacifying).

Cooling (śīta) for hot, irritable, Pitta tissue:

- **Pinda/Manjiṣṭhādi**, **Kṣīrabala** (milk-processed) — calm heat, soothe reactive skin.

Local sprain/contusion (sub-acute cool): **Murivenna** around (not on) the lesion.

Blends: sesame:coconut **2:1** for guarded but heat-sensitive tissue; **+10-15% castor** locally for dense peri-joint rings.

Dose levers: **Concentration × Area × Time × Temperature.** Raise one → lower another.

4) Use of heat therapies (Kizhi) for pain

Podi Kizhi (powder bolus) — drying/lightening; Kapha heaviness, morning stiffness.

Ela Kizhi (leaf bolus) — warming/penetrating; cold, sticky peri-joint stiffness (non-inflamed).

Navarakizhi (medicated rice bolus) — nourishing heat; Vāta dryness, chronic spasm with fatigue.

Contact temperature: ~42-45 °C at bolus face. **Keep it moving.**

Sequence rule: oil film → mobilise → **Kizhi around** the field (not on hotspots) → short marma holds → integrate.

Contraindications: acute hot swelling, fever, neuropathy with low heat sense, varicosities (direct heat), pregnancy (avoid abdomen/leg-deep heat), cardiac/respiratory instability.

Never stack heat + pressure over Hṛdaya, Nābhi, Basti, Ādhipati or carotid corridors.

5) Case-based protocols

A) Posterior-chain low back pain (mechanical; Vāta-leading, cool/stiff)

Goal: unguard lumbar fascia, restore hip rhythm, settle system.

**Plan (45-60 min):**

1. **Open:** warm **Dhanvantaram** thin film; distal→proximal Thirumu along calves/hamstrings → sacral decompression.
2. **Mobilise:** forearm glides on paraspinals; pelvic ring traction; optional **Navarakizhi** 8-10 min posterior chain.
3. **Marma (3-4):** **Kaṭikā-tāruṇa**, **Vṛhati**, **Indrabasti**, **Talahridaya** (sole) — breath-timed.
4. **Integrate:** midline sweep; seated finish.
Home: 2×/day hip-hinge to wall (8 reps), 5-min easy walk + 4-in/6-out breathing.

B) Neck stiffness / cervicogenic headache (Pitta-irritable; hot/tense)

Goal: decompress suboccipitals, reduce heat, calm autonomic.

Plan (35-50 min):

1. **Open: coconut / Pinda** thin film; parascapular Thirumu; **no friction**.
2. **Mobilise:** gentle Krikatikā decompression; scap clocks; avoid carotid compression.
3. **Marma (4-5):** **Sthāpanī**, **Śaṅkha**, **Āvarta**, **Krikatikā**, finish with **Talahridaya** (palm).
4. **Integrate:** crown-light rest or palm-seal; seated exit.
Home: screen breaks; nasal 4/6 breathing 3 min; two gentle chin-nod sets.

C) Knee joint ache (Sandhigata Vāta with Kapha bogginess; non-hot)

Goal: decongest ring, improve slide, unload nociceptors.

Plan (40-55 min):

1. **Open:** thin sesame film; brisk calf Thirumu; **Indrabasti** corridor flush.
2. **Mobilise: ring-work** around **Jānu**; ankle traction; optional **Podi/Ela Kizhi** 6-8 min **around** joint.
3. **Marma (3-4):** **Jānu** (ring), **Ūrvi** (soft holds, avoid pulse), **Gulpha**, finish **Talahridaya** (sole).
4. **Integrate:** seated knee/ankle pumps.
Home: sit-to-stand 2×8 (pain ≤3/10), calf raises 2×10, short walks.

Red flags for all cases: sudden neuro loss, night pain with fever, acute hot swollen joint, suspected DVT/PE, traumatic deformity → **medical referral**.

Summary Tables (LMS quick-reference)**A) Marma sets by goal**

| Goal | Primary marmas | Notes |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Autonomic calming | Sthāpanī, Śaṅkha/Āvarta, Talahridaya | Feather holds; exhale-timed |
| Neck/shoulder ease | Krikatikā, Aṃsa, Aṃsa-phalaka | Oblique contact; avoid carotids |
| Lumbar/pelvis | Kaṭikā-tāruṇa, Vṛhati, Indrabasti | Traction > compression |
| Joint rings | Jānu, Maṇibandha, Kūrpara, Gulpha | Treat as rings; no vertical jabs |

B) Stroke choice by tissue state

| Tissue feel today | Oil | Stroke emphasis | Add-ons |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cold, stiff (Vāta/Kapha) | Dhanvantaram / Mahanārāyana | Long forearm glides; traction | Podi/Ela (brief) or Navara |
| Hot, irritable (Pitta) | Pinda / coconut-forward | Even, non-frictional waves | Skip heat; cool cloth finish |
| Dense peri-joint | Sesame + 10-15% castor (local) | Ring-work, ankle/wrist traction | Short Podi/Ela around ring |

**C) Kizhi selection & safety**

| Kizhi | Use for | Avoid | Notes |
|--------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Podi | Kapha heaviness, adhesions | Hot/inflamed joints, very dry skin | Quick, rotating passes |
| Ela | Cold, sticky peri-joint stiffness | Reactive skin, face/neck | Work around joint |
| Navara | Vāta dryness, fatigue | Active āma, acute dermatitis | Nourishing heat; steady pace |

D) Case quick-ref (sequence)

| Case | Open | Mobilise | Marma | Integrate |
|---------------|--------------------|--|--|------------------|
| Low back | Dhanvantaram film | Paraspinal glides; optional Navara | Kaṭikā-tāruṇa, Vṛhati, Indrabasti, Talahridaya | Midline → seated |
| Neck/headache | Pinda/coconut film | Scap clocks; Krikatikā decompression | Sthāpanī, Śaṅkha, Āvarta, Krikatikā, Talahridaya | Crown/palm rest |
| Knee ache | Sesame film | Jānu ring-work; ankle traction; Podi/Ela | Jānu, Ūrvi, Gulpha, Talahridaya | Pumps seated |

E) Safety snapshot

| Rule | Why |
|---|--------------------------|
| No heat + pressure on Hṛdaya, Nābhi, Basti, Ādhipati | Vital fields (agni) |
| Avoid carotid compression (Mātrikā/Dhamanī) | Vascular risk |
| Treat neurovascular pits around , not on | Prevent zing/paresthesia |
| Pain ceiling during work $\leq 3/10$ and baseline by next day | Safe dosing |

Key take-aways

1. Prepare → **Regulate (Marma)** → Integrate is the Kalari pain-relief arc.
2. Choose **oil and heat** by tissue state: warm for cold-stiff, cool for hot-irritable; dose conservatively.
3. Use **rings and traction** at joints, **feather** at sūkṣma/agni marmas, and keep marma list short (4-6).
4. Finish seated with a distal **Talahridaya** hold and one simple home cue (breath + movement).
5. Stop on red flags; safety is skill, not luck.