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## Marma therapy: A self-healing technique & connection between ayurveda and yoga

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### Abstract

As ayurveda is ancient science since then there is change in lifestyle, food habits, weather and work style and type of diseases also but basic fundamentals of ayurvedic science are still same. If one want to be happy and healthy both at physical as well as mental level he have to practice some fundamentals of ayurveda at both ahar as well as vihar level. For that we have to believe in ayurveda and its fundamentals. There is description of marma points in samhita but marma chikitsa is part of vedic sciences.in this paper we will discuss about general information of marma points,its vyutpatti, classification its importance and uses.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Marma, fundamental

### Introduction

#### Genesis of term marma

The term marma is etymologically derived from Sanskrit root word 'mri'.which represent the sense of vital part of the body, which is often used in the sense of jeevsthan, sandhisthan and Tatparya<sup>[1]</sup>.

Marma are the vital areas of the body. The Sanskrit phrase, 'Marayate Iti Marmani', also means death or serious damage to body or health after infliction to the point of their situation. Hence these areas are called Marma<sup>[2, 6]</sup>.

### Definition

A marma points are junction place of mamsa (muscular tissue), Sira (blood vessels), snayu (nervous tissue), asthi (osseous tissue) and sandhi (joints). The pranas are specifically situated in these marma by virtue of their nature, hence a trauma to any one of these marmas invariably causes physical disturbances in accordance with their particular type<sup>[3]</sup>.

### Number & classification of marma

Sushruta Samhita describes 107 Marma points in body. In Tamil traditions, 108 Marma points are enumerated, and in Kalari tradition of kerala 365 Marma points are in practice. Major marma points correspond to seven Chakras, or energy centers of the body, while minor points radiate out along the trunk and limbs. The points cover both the front and back of the body, including 22 on the lower extremities, 22 on the arms, 12 on the chest and stomach, 14 on the back, and 37 on the head and neck. (The mind is considered the 108th Marma.) Each has its own name based on their anatomical position<sup>[3, 6]</sup>.

### Classification based on consequence of trauma over the marma area<sup>[4]</sup>

- 1. Sadyah Pranahara Marma:** When a Marma point is injured, due to the spontaneous loss of Prana vayu, death is certain.
- 2. Kalantara Pranahara Marma:** These Marmas result in kalanthara (gradual) loss of life (pranahara), after lapse of some time.
- 3. Vishalyaghna:** The word shalya refers to a foreign body. When a foreign body pierces these varieties of Marma, the injured person survives as long as the foreign body remains at the place of injury. But on removal, it results in death of the individual.
- 4. Vaikalyakara:** These varieties of Marma when subjected to injury, cause deformity of those organs which are dependent on that particular Marma for their energy distribution. The word Vikalya or Vaikalya means deformity.
- 5. Rujakara Marma:** These Marmas neither result in deformity nor cause death, but results in excruciating pain (ruja), when injured<sup>[4]</sup>

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### Classification based on structure involved: <sup>[3]</sup>

1. Mamsa Marma (Muscles) 11 Points
2. Asthi Marma (Bones) 8Points
3. Snayu Marma (Tendons & ligaments) 27Points
4. Sandhi Marma (Joints) 20 Points
5. Shira Marma (Nerves, Veins & Arteries) 41 Points

### Classification based on sites and location of marma <sup>[4]</sup>

1. Shakha Marma (Legs & Feet)
2. Madhyamanga Marma (Trunk)
3. Jatrudhara Marma (Neck & Head)

### Importance of marma

The human body, needs shodhana (revitalisation) in order to perform its function normally and efficiently. In Ayurvedic system, especially in Kerala, Marma massage is performed as a routine in preventive medicine. A professional therapist isolates Marma points and tone them by increasing blood flow to affected part of the neuro-muscular junction. They also aim to tone the surrounding muscles. During ancient times, knowledge of Marma was known to kings and warriors. It was applied in battle fields to hit and achieve maximum lethal effect on enemies. This science was used both in warfare and surgery. From common ailments to serious neuromuscular diseases, all can be treated by Marma therapy <sup>[5]</sup>.

Common ailments like headache, bodyache, faulty spinal alignment, pain in the joints can be rejuvenated through Marma Chikitsa, which involves Swedana, and Abhayanga, treatment. The pressure application varies according to the nature of ailment and the point of application <sup>[5]</sup>.

### Uses of marma therapy

There are four basic purposes of Marma:

1. It removes blocks in energy channels called srotas.
2. It pacifies vata dosha, (air and space elements), bringing it to its normal path— especially vyana vata, (a sub-dosha which controls the autonomic nervous system.)
3. It creates physical, mental and emotional flexibility. Because of ama (toxins) and because of vata, human beings after 35 or 40 years of age become rigid — and this happens to animals and plants as well. As vata increases in body, it leads to degeneration. This rigidity means becoming fixed in ideas, emotions and physical movements.
4. This gentle treatment creates an opportunity to experience powerful and dynamic transformation at the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual level by building a positive link with the unconscious mind. Many a times, people are not able to go outside their 'comfort zone'. They think they have absolute limitations. After Marma is done, they can start taking positive risks <sup>[5]</sup>.

### Conclusion

Marma Chikitsa is an important aspect of Ayurvedic treatment where the application of pressure on these Marma points induces the flow of vital energy (prana) along a complex system of subtle channels called (nadis). Based on the knowledge enumerated in Dhanurveda (dealing with knowledge of bow and arrow fights), 107 therapeutic Marma points are recognised by Ayurveda. The injury to some of these lethal Marma points can lead to instant death. Massage is widely applied in the treatment of Marmas. The Marma massage can be used as a part of a rejuvenation therapy or it could be used as preventive measure from unwanted

conditions. Either way, Marma massage is really useful to help improve or maintain a healthy balance. Marma therapy focuses on energizing the body to relieve occupational illness and stress related diseases. Apeson can practice marma therapy for self healing as a preventive measure and also in many diseases.

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