



Research Article

Marma Therapy for Stress Relief and Emotional Balance - (Understanding Marma Points of Urdhvajatrugata Marma)

Dr. Vishal Rohilla ^{1*}, Dr. H.S. Bali ²

¹ PG Scholar, PG Final Year, Department of Shalya Tantra, Jammu Institute of Ayurveda and Research, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India

² M.S. (Shalya Tantra), F. Mas, Professor & H.O.D., Department of P.G. Studies in Shalya Tantra, Jammu Institute of Ayurveda and Research, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Corresponding Author: * Dr. Vishal Rohilla

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Abstract

Marma Sthanas are key anatomical points where the Mamsa (muscle), Sira (vein), Asthi (bone), Dhamni (artery), and Sandhi (joint) converge, and where Prana (life force) resides. Ayurvedic scholars have classified these Marma Sthanas based on factors like location, number, composition, and the effects of injury. The Sushruta Samhita, an ancient Ayurvedic text, lists 107 Marma Sthanas, which are divided across the Shakha (limbs) and Skandha (shoulder area). Of these, 37 Marma Sthanas are found in the head and neck region, collectively known as Urdhavajatrugata Marma. Trauma to these Marma points can cause severe pain and may even be fatal. Marma Therapy, particularly for Urdhavajatrugata, plays a vital role in relieving stress and restoring emotional balance. Thus, understanding the Marma points is crucial for healthcare practitioners to avoid causing harm during surgery and to support patients in achieving emotional and physical well-being.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The word "Marma" is derived from the combination of "Mri dhatu" (meaning death) and "Manin" (meaning the cause of), referring to the vital points that can potentially lead to death, or the places where life energy resides, often associated with joint (Sandhi) areas.

Marma points are specific anatomical locations in the body where life energy is concentrated. These points are believed to contain the three doshas:

- **Vata** (air and space)
- **Kapha** (earth and water)
- **Pitta** (fire and water)

These doshas are thought to influence both our physical and emotional well-being. Stimulating Marma points is said to enhance physical and mental health, while injury to these points can lead to negative health effects. In severe cases, damage to Marma points may cause further injury or even be fatal.

Location of Marma Points

There is a total of 107 Marma points distributed across various regions of the human body:

- **11 Marma points** in the limbs
- **26 Marma points** in the trunk
- **37 Marma points** in the head and neck region
- **33 Marma points** in other areas of the body

Urdhvajatrugata Marma (Marma of Head & Neck)

A total of 37 Marma points is scattered across the head and neck region:

Marma of Neck (14 points):

1. **Dhamniyan** (Nila-2, Manya-2, located on each side of the neck, lateral to Matruka): 4 points
2. **Matrakayan/Kanta Sira** (Located on each side of the neck along the trachea): 8 points
3. **Krikatika** (Located at the junction of the head and neck, near the occipital protuberance): 2 points

Marma of Head (23 points):

1. **Vidhura** (Located postero-inferior to the ear, 1 on each side): 2 points
2. **Phana** (Located at the saddle/roof of the nose on the olfactory tract, on both sides): 2 points
3. **Apanga** (Located at the lateral angle of the eye, outer can thus, on both sides): 2 points
4. **Avarta** (Located just above the lateral eyebrow, on both sides): 2 points

5. **Utkshepa** (Located at the hairline of the scalp, above the temporal region, 1 on each side): 2 points
6. **Shankha** (Located between the ear and forehead): 2 points
7. **Sthapani** (Located between the two eyebrows): 1 point
8. **Simanta** (Located at the sutural joint over the skull): 5 points
9. **Shrungataka** (Located inside the skull, at the lateral aspect of the sphenoid bone, nourishing the sense organs: nose, ears, eyes, and tongue): 4 points
10. **Adhipati** (Located at the superior/top part of the intracranial region where several sinuses converge, including the superior sagittal, straight, occipital, and transverse sinuses): 1 point

Classification of Marma Based on Effect of Injury

1. **Sadyo Pranahara Marma (Immediate life-threatening injury)**
 - **Shrungataka**: 4 points
 - **Adhipati**: 1 point
 - **Shankha**: 2 points
2. **Kalantara Pranahara Marma (Delayed life-threatening injury)**
 - **Simanta**: 5 points
3. **Vaikalyakara Marma (Disabling injury)**
 - **Vidhura**: 2 points
 - **Krikatika**: 2 points
 - **Apanga**: 2 points
 - **Neela**: 2 points
 - **Phana**: 2 points
 - **Avarta**: 2 points
4. **Vishalyaghna Marma (Injury that can be treated without causing death)**
 - **Utkshepa**: 2 points
 - **Sthapani**: 1 point
5. **Rujakara Marma (Pain-producing injury)**
 - All other Marma points not classified under the above categories.

The vital role they play in both physical and emotional health, as well as their importance in Ayurvedic healing and safety during surgical procedures.

Table: Marma Classification (Udarwajatrughata)

Marma point	Location	Believed to affect
Sthapani marma	Centre of forehead	Mind, brain, and nerves
Phana marma	Either side of the nose at the base of the nostrils	Sinuses, ears, sense of smell, and stress levels
Shringataka marma	Centre of the chin	Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and various nerves
Vidhura	Mastoid region	Ears
Apanga	On the outer side of the orbit, below the eye	Eyes
Avarta	Above the eyebrow on lateral sides	Eyes
Utkshepa	Above the shankh Pradesh, at the level hair line	Mind, brain and nerves
Shankha	Lateral side of the eye brows, above the ear, middle of forehead	Middle meninges
Simanta	Cranial sutures	Mind
Adhipati	Probably cranial nerves	Mind, brain, and nerves

Dhamniyan	Bilateral side of trachea	Speech
Matrakayan/Kanta sira	Carotid sheath structures	Throat
Krikatika	At the junction of head and neck	Stability of head

Concept of stress in Ayurveda:

Along with Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Moha (infatuation), Irshya (envy), Mana (arrogance), Shoka (grief), Chinta (worry), and other emotional disturbances of mind, Acharya Charaka defined anxiety in terms of Chittodvega. A better name to describe the entire state of anxiety is chittodvega.

According to Acharya Sushruta, the terms "Shoka" (grief) and "Chittaviparyaya" are synonyms for "Chittodvega." According to Acharya Vagbhata, the name "Chittopaplava" indicates anxiousness.

Ayurveda described the pathophysiology of Stress and emotional reactions to all bad things that happen in life are normal, but people with a "Satva" dominated mind can withstand the negative effects of these emotional disturbances since they are not impacted by them. However, individuals who are primarily "Rajas" or "Tamas" react excessively to emotional upheaval.

How Marma Therapy Manages Stress:

Balancing Energy Flow: Stress can disrupt the flow of prana in the body. Marma therapy aims to restore this balance by stimulating key points, which helps in calming the mind and body.

Relaxation: Gentle pressure on marma points promotes deep relaxation, reducing muscle tension and calming the nervous system, which is crucial in stress relief.

Improved Circulation: Activating marma points enhances blood circulation, which helps the body eliminate toxins and supports the organs involved in stress regulation.

Mind-Body Connection: The therapy encourages mindfulness and deep breathing, fostering a stronger connection between the mind and body, which is essential for reducing stress.

Release of Endorphins: Stimulating these points can trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural "feel-good" hormones, which help in elevating mood and reducing anxiety.

CONCLUSION:

Marma therapy is a holistic approach to managing stress, offering both physical and mental relaxation. These points are similar to acupressure or acupuncture points and are believed to be intersections of muscles, veins, ligaments, bones, and joints where energy (prana) flows.

Enhancing the effects of marma therapy by incorporating yoga and meditation can further reduce stress

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About the Corresponding Author



Dr. Vishal Rohilla is a PG Final Year Postgraduate Scholar in the Department of Shalya Tantra at the Jammu Institute of Ayurveda and Research, Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, India. He is engaged in advanced academic and clinical training in Ayurvedic surgical sciences, with a focus on the principles and practices of Shalya Tantra.