

MARMA CHIKITSA TRAINING

Natural Practices for Good Health

Instructor: Colleen Fraser RMT, Certified Ayurvedic Practitioner
www.whistlerhealingarts.com



Introduction to Marma Chikitsa

Sunday, October 31, 2010

9:00am – 4:30pm

Course Facilitator – Colleen Fraser RMT,CAP

Course Description

Ayurvedic Massage is based on the knowledge of the marma points, the vital points of the body where structures pulsate and pain exists. *Marma Chikitsa* - the ancient ayurvedic system for pressure point bodywork- this course will take you into the theoretical and practical realm of Ayurveda's Tridosha System' of the 108 Vital Points. According to eastern Ayurvedic science, the human body is a biological combination of the five elements – Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. The combination of Ether and Air form Vata, Fire and Water form Pitta and Water and Earth form Kapha. Ayurveda further categorizes each dosha into subtypes (or subdoshas), depending upon their function and location. Marmas are portals into the multidimensionality of life. As junction points between consciousness and physiology, they provide a window into interchangeability of energy and matter. This workshop will explore how marma therapy supports and complements ayurvedic and yoga therapies, and we will all get an opportunity to experience the power of marma through learning a simple full body protocol. Clothes are worn for this training and students can bring along their notebook, tea or water, their meditation cushion and a blanket.

Marma Therapy utilizes numerous techniques to stimulate the marmani. Primarily, the following two techniques are used:

- **Pressing Technique:** Press along the hard body surfaces with flat hands moving in a circular manner. Caress and compress the softer areas of the body, applying wave-like pressure while constantly moving upward.
- **Small Circular Thumb Movements:** Small, circular, clockwise and counter clockwise massage movements are generally applied with the thumb to essential marma points of the body.

Although these are foundational techniques, there are other methods to stimulate marmas, like aromatherapy oils and the application of heat. Ultimately, however, it is the practitioner's skill, knowledge, attention and awareness, on a solid platform of love and compassion, that are crucial for attaining effective therapeutic results.

Course Outline

9:00 Introduction to Marma Therapy

- Historical and Philosophical Background of Marmani

- Understanding Tridosha: Determining the Individual Constitution
- Mechanisms of action
- The Three Pillars of Life: Food, Sleep & Immunity

10:30 Techniques of Marma Stimulation

- Guidelines for the Practitioner
- 5 methods of Stimulating Marmas
- Guidelines for Touch and Pressure
- Meditation of Breath Awareness
- Introduction to Aromatherapy, Essential Oils & Attars in Ayurveda

1:00 Therapist Practicum

- Therapist Practicum – treatment exchange. This is performed on massage tables. (see supply list for sheets and towels etc.)

3:45 Summary & Course Conclusion

- Ablutions for the Practitioner
- Ablutions for the Subject

Supplies

2 linen sheets
 Massage table
 Meditation cushion
 Blanket

Ayurveda and its Origins

The origin of this system goes back to a distant past, in which philosophy and medicine were not separated.

Ayurveda is a Sanskrit word meaning “the science of life”. It is an ancient art of healing which has been practiced continuously throughout India for around 5,000 to 7,000 years. It is probably the oldest authentically recorded healing science in existence today and includes yoga philosophy and integration of the body, mind and consciousness.

Ayu- meaning life and Veda- meaning knowledge or science.

Ayurveda is also referred to as “the mother of all healing” “knowledge of life”. Its principles are universally applicable. Those who wish to live happy, healthy and inspired lives can benefit from the wisdom Ayurveda holds.

Ayurveda teaches that all the information needed to heal and restore our body, mind and spirit is all around us all of the time. It is just a matter of tuning in to our true nature for us to become enlightened to what is helpful to ourselves.

Ayurveda looks at every person as a unique individual. It helps us to understand and to correct imbalances and to restore the innate harmony of the person. It gives us the insight to understand individual constitution and to create balance with in and all around us.

Ayurveda Today

Today we see much of Ayurveda and its influence in the western world. More skin centers and spas are offering Ayurveda on their treatment menus; some spas are totally dedicated to the principles alone. There are schools and institutes all over Europe and North America, as well as manufacturers, which make equipment which is used in certain Ayurvedic treatments, e.g. Shiro Dhara

Indian head massage is an example of an Indian technique that has become mainstream in our Western world. Abhyanga, Shirodhara, Marma Point (*turyia*) and other types of massage and poultices are also widely used in spas.

Today, an estimated 300,000 Ayurvedic physicians practice in India, often in close conjunction with doctors trained in Western, conventional medicine or homeopathy.

If using Ayurveda to assist us in our work, we have to stay within our boundaries as professional body skin and body therapists. That means using the knowledge we have to help analyze and assess our clients to give them customized, individual, specific treatments. Our goal is to help create an emotional and physical balance that helps toward a client’s well-being, this can contribute to them looking and feeling good on the inside and out.

An Eastern Approach to Health

The Elements

The entire cosmos is interplay of energies that come from the 5 great elements. The Seers of ancient India felt that these five states they called *Space (Ether), Air, Fire, Water and Earth* represent the five possible states of matter. We understand them as being unique by the way we experience them.

These are:

Ether

Air

Fire

Water

Earth

The Doshas

In Ayurvedic philosophy, the five elements combine in pairs to form three dynamic forces or interactions called *Doshas*. ***Dosha* means “that which changes.** “ It is equivalent to the English prefix “dys,” such as in dysfunction, dystrophy, etc. In this sense, *Dosha* can be regarded as a fault, mistake, error or a transgression against the cosmic rhythm. The *Doshas* are constantly moving in dynamic balance with each other. *Doshas* are required for life and are known as the governing principle as every living thing in

nature is characterized by the *Doshas*. The three active *Doshas* are *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.

At the time of fertilization the single male unit, the spermatozoan, unites with the single female element, the ovum. At the moment of this union, the permutations and combinations of bodily air, fire and water that manifests in the parents bodies determine the constitution of the individual. We are who we are because we each have our own unique balance of energy, or *Doshas*.

There are many things that happen both internally and externally, day to day and throughout life that can disturb the unique energy balance. This imbalance then reflects in the mannerisms, character and health of the individual.

Examples that can tip the balance:

- Emotions
- Diet, food choices
- Seasons and weather
- Physical trauma
- Work and family relationships

We always aim for our personal, unique balance, balance is the natural order, and imbalance is disorder.

Vata the Whirlwind

Elements: Space and Air (Ectomorph)

Summary:

A *Vata*- dominant person has a quick, bright, creative mind. This person may go through periods of worry and indecision more than other types. Possibly has clairvoyant tendencies, understands and forgets easily. Clear, open-mind, experiences void and loneliness. Have many dreams, subtle fear, anxiety and insecurity. Good in creative rolls at work.

When balanced, the *Vata-type* constitution is brilliant, compassionate, and inspiring to be around. When out of balance they become nervous, anxious, constipated, and cannot sleep, perhaps spaced out, flighty or insecure

The Physical Vata

Tall and skinny, or very short
Disproportionate features
Quick thinking, swift action
Hairs, dark, dry, brittle, coarse
Small narrow, sunken eyes
Receding gums
Fast speech

The Seat of Vata:

Vata is responsible for movement in the body, and resides in: colon, lumbar region, ears, bones, skin.

Typical Health problems:

Bloating, gas, constipation, moving pains, joint pain and stiffness, arthritis, lower back pain, nerve disorders, muscle twitching
Fear, depression, nervousness

Signs that you need to balance Vata:

- Are you constantly worried, anxious, overwhelmed, and fretful?
- Do you feel tired, but find yourself unable to slow down and relax?
Do you find it difficult to settle down and fall asleep at night?
- Is your sleep restless when you do manage to fall asleep?
- Is your skin feeling dryer than usual, stretched, taut or flaking?
- Is your hair more brittle, with more split ends?
- Are your lips raw and chapped?
- Is your throat constantly dry?
- Is your digestion irregular?
- Do you experience problems with abdominal gas?
- Do you feel you cannot sit still? That you need to be constantly moving?
- Do you feel “spaced out”?
- Is it harder to remember things for more than a short period of time?
Is your attention span shorter than usual?
- Is it harder to focus?
- Do your bowel movements occur less than once daily?

Contributing factors

- Excessive late nights
- Too much exercise
- Too many leafy veggies or uncooked vegetables or food
- Too many telephone conversations
- Not enough time alone or too little meditation
- Too much TV or too many videos
- Emotionally charged relationships, not enough time to think them through
- Lack of touch
- Absence of routine
- Lack of emotional or family support

Communication style and approach

Vata people need to trust, they like to feel safe and secure. *Vata* are very chatty and like to talk, speak to them gently, but firmly, they can get excited easily and are very enthusiastic.

Therapist: Do not talk to much yourself, be genuine, remain diplomatic and respectful at all times.

Technique and strokes are soothing, gentle, rhythmic and delicate.

“ Treat Vata like a delicate rose”
Dr. Vasant Lad

Pitta - The sharp mind

Pitta Elements: fire and water (mesomorph)

Summary: The *Pitta* person is intelligent, professional at all costs and driven. Can be opinionated, critical, abusive and controlling. *Pitta* individuals are alert and have good powers of comprehension and concentration. Memories are sharp and minds are investigating and logical. At work they want to be active and leading edge, need challenge and something to engineer or develop. They make good sales people.

When in balance, *Pitta* are intelligent, disciplined, sharp, and contented. When imbalances, they are intolerant to heat, hypercritical, jealous and judgmental. May show short temper, anger and lust, hair prone to thinning and balding, and are prone to heartburn and ulcers.

The Physical Pitta

Well-balanced and energetic form
Medium height and build
Hair red, blond and silky, prone to going grey and bald
Eyes intense, bright, grey green, hazel, copper
Yellow gums
Speech clear, precise and sharp

The Seat of Pitta:

Pitta is responsible for transformation and metabolism and resides in the small intestines, stomach, sweat glands, blood, fat, eyes, skin

Typical Health Problems:

Fevers, inflammatory diseases, acid indigestion, stomach ulcers, rashes, sore throats and acne. Acne, hate, jealousy

Signs that you need to balance Pitta:

- Are you constantly critical, impatient, and irritable?
- Do you feel obsessed by work or a project, unable to stop for a break?
- Do you wake up in the very early hours of the morning and then find it difficult to get back to sleep?
- Is your skin feeling irritated or more sensitive than usual, breaking out or feeling inflamed?
- Is your hair falling out when you shampoo or comb it?
- Do you have problems with heartburn or excess stomach acid?
- Is your tolerance of other people or provoking situations lower than usual?
- Do you have temper outbursts over minor aggravations?
- Do you often feel frustrated?
- Do you feel hot even when you are indoors with air conditioning?
- Do you feel thirsty all the time?
- Are your eyes red?
- Is your speech often biting and sarcastic?
- Do you find yourself getting into arguments easily?

Contributing Factors

- Too much sun
- Getting too hot in the summer, maybe wearing too many layers
- Too much hot and spicy food
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Not enough water intake, especially in the heat, summer
- Arguing too much
- Not enough time spent outdoors, especially in green fields and by water
- Lack of firm, secure relationship
- Too much competition or jealousy

Communication style and approach:

Pitta have lots of likes and dislikes and are not afraid to tell you. They like to ask questions. They are intolerant and expect a lot from others. Greet the Pitta person professionally, always be on time and look immaculate! Tell It how it is, don't waffle or waste their time as it is precious. Educate well and give the facts.

Technique and strokes : Mix up general and specific, light and heavy, sustained and active movements.

“ Treat Pitta with a sense of pride and respect”
Dr. Vasant Lad

Kapha *The Easy-Going*

Elements: Earth and Water (endomorph)

Kapha people glide through space. Above all the constitutions, they can endure the most physically and generally feel no sense of physical threat from those around them. They have a tendency towards laziness which means they will get less stimulation of physical activity than they really need. *Kapha* represents solid structure of the body and lubricating mucous. *Kapha* represents solid structure of the body and lubricating mucous. *Kapha* types have strong, well-developed bodies and are mentally cool. They are honorable, keep their word and avoid lies. They are motherly, jealous and can be possessive. They are graceful, gentle, patient, faithful, peaceful, caring, compassionate and forgiving. *Kapha* make good, reliable managers, acting as the anchor in a business.

When balanced, the *Kapha-type* person is generous, kind, tolerant and gives you a sense that they are able to protect themselves and others.

When imbalance occurs, they suffer from envy, greed, possessiveness, laziness, lust and depression. Can be obese, disorganized, sloppy and develop allergies with dull activity, speech, and behavior.

The Physical Kapha

Solid, well-developed bodies, strong muscles and heavy bones

Slow and graceful movement

Gain weight easily

Hair thick, lustrous and brown

Large dark eyes, long thick eyebrows and lashes

Strong gums

White teeth

Slow speech

The Seat of Kapha: *Kapha* represents solid structure of the body and lubricating mucous. The chest is the seat of *Kapha* and it also resides in throat, head, sinuses, nose, mouth, and stomach.

Typical Health Problems

Generally strong, vital capacity and stamina and are mostly healthy. Some have problems that are the result of over-burdening their stomach and thus blocking their lymphatic systems. Digestion can be slow. Most problems are related to the water principal, colds, flu and sinus congestion, excess mucous and catarrh. Sluggishness and water retention, diabetes and sinus headaches are common. They have excellent long-term memories and a good, steady sex drive. Caring, sentimental, romantic, jealous, obsessive and possessive.

Signs that you need to balance *Kapha*

- Are you gaining weight easily, even though you feel like you don't really have an appetite?
- Do you feel tired even though you are not performing any physical activity?
- Do you find it difficult to awake even after long hours of sleep?
- Do you wake up feeling refreshed or tired?
- Is your skin feeling oilier than usual, with breakouts?
- Is your hair oily and streaky even with regular shampooing?

- Are you heavy and congested in your throat, head and chest?
- Is your digestion slow?
- Do you feel heavy and lethargic after a meal?
- Do you feel like you just want to sit and be a spectator?
- Do you feel withdrawn?
- Is it difficult to deal with change?
- Do you constantly feel the need to “cling”?
- Do you feel mentally unmotivated?

Contributing Factors

- Not enough exercise
- Too much sweet food and drink
- Too much sleep, late morning and afternoon
- Overeating, especially rich foods
- Too much cold food, especially ice cream and ice-cold drinks
- Getting wet, rain and snow
- Not drying self after bath or shower
- Excessive dependence on a loving relationship, not enough independence or detachment

Communication style and approach

Kapha- types are slow and steady. They will remember what you tell them if it has been meaningful. *Kapha* people like their comforts, but will always spend wisely. Greet cheerfully, speak enthusiastically, but do not rush or overpower, share insights with the *Kapha* person, motivate and inspire. You could try to indulge them, but it has to be on a worthwhile item or treatment.

Technique and strokes- Firm, confident and vigorous, joint mobilizations and stretching.

“ Kapha needs encouragement and support. Treat enthusiastically”
Dr. Vasant Lad

Which Dosha Are You?

Most people are a combination of 2 *Dosha* characteristics (such as *Vata-Pitta*) with one normally more significant than the other. Although each person’s metabolic type is determined by a predominant *Dosha*, all three *Doshas* exist in varying amounts in every cell, tissue and organ in the body.

The 3 *Doshas* are responsible for the arising of natural urges and for individual preferences in foods: their flavors, temperatures and so on. They govern the creation, maintenance and destruction of bodily tissue, and the

elimination of waste products from the body. They are also responsible for such emotions as fear, anger and greed: and for the highest order of human emotions such as understanding, compassion and love.

In general, there are seven types of constitutions:

1. Vata
2. Pitta
3. Kapha
4. Vata-Pitta
5. Pitta-Kapha
6. Vata-Kapha
7. Vata-Pitta-Kapha

The client and the questionnaire:

Use the *Dosha* questionnaire with your client to assist in your analysis: Ask them to answer the questions in their own time, but not taking hours to answer each question, normally their gut reaction is the correct answer to the questions, they have to be honest.

Tick the box in the column that is most appropriate to them, look at the columns on completion and total which line has the most ticks that will tell them which are their predominant *Dosha* type. Some may overwhelmingly be predominant in one; most will be a combination of two.

In the West, we tend to be mostly *Vata/Pitta* types, this is as a result of lifestyle and diet. Our illnesses and diseases reflect the weaknesses of these *Dosha* types. The East has far more people with a *Kapha* constitution because the pace of life, diet and other cultural differences are evident.

To find out your *Dosha* type you can go to my website and click the ‘What’s your *Dosha*’ Tab written in orange print. You can also use the form below that my teacher Dr. Lad created.

www.whistlerhealingarts.com

CHARACTERISTICS OF BODY HUMOURS

In each of us resides the elements of Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth.
To discover which elements predominate in your constitution, mark
the characteristics which pertain to you the most.

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Dr. Robert Svoboda, B.A.M.S.

CATEGORY	VATA – Ether & Air	PITTA – Fire & Water	KAPHA – Water & Earth
WEIGHT	Tendency to leanness or unstable weight	Medium, stable weight	Tendency to overweight
TENDENCY TO BURN	Low	High	Medium
SKIN	Dry, rough	Lustrous, often lots of pimples, freckles, or moles and early appearance of wrinkles	Soft, unctuous and smooth
SWEAT	Scanty	Profuse	Moderate
HAIR	Rough, dry and curly	Thin or balding, early appearance of grey hair, light coloured, fine in texture	Smooth, oily and straight
EYES	Small in size, small pupils	Moderate in size, moderate in pupils	Large in size, large in pupils
HUNGER & THIRST	Irregular	Excessive	Moderate
FOOD PREFERENCES	Hot, oily, soupy, heavy and spicy	Cold, heavy, raw fruits and vegetables	Warm, dry, light and spicy
TASTES LIKED	Sweet, sour, salty	Sweet, astringent, bitter	Pungent, bitter, astringent
DIGESTION & ELIMINATION	Constipated tendencies; gas; hard, dry stools	Good digestion, quick evacuation, tendency to uniformed stools	Slow digestion, tendency to large, well-formed stools
VOCAL HABIT	Talkative	Moderate	Low
VOCAL QUALITY	High-pitched, tense, dissonant	Intense	Low-pitched, resonant, drone
SLEEP	Irregular	Average	Deep and long
DREAMS	Motion (flying, climbing, running etc.); remembered only sometimes	Color; heat, light, anger; usually remembered	Placid, watery, sentimental; often remembered
STRENGTH	Poor strength, lack of endurance	Medium strength	Strong, good endurance

GENERAL LEVEL OF ACTIVITY	Restless, very active, nervous	Directed activity, easily irritated	Placid, calm, complacent
MENTAL MAKEUP	Unsteady, fickle mind, ambitious, quick to love and hate, quick to grasp and reject, quick to make decisions, fearful, jealous, short memory	Impatient mind, ambitious, enthusiastic, intelligent, brave, proud, irritable, easily angered	Steady, patient mind, serious, slow, idle, tranquil, grateful, foresighted, long memory
TOTALS:			

Marma Point Massage

Where consciousness meets matter

Marma means ‘hidden or secre’’. Gently palpate the soft tissue around the marma point area and touch with 5-10 gms of pressure. Gradually increase your pressure into a downward spiral clockwise, hold for 3 seconds, and gradually unwind counter-clockwise. (10-20 sec per point)

By definition, **a marma point is a juncture on the body where two or more types of tissue meet, such as muscles, veins, ligaments, bones or joints.** Yet marma points are much more than a casual connection of tissue and fluids; they are intersections of the vital life force and prana, or breath.

"The marma points are where consciousness meets matter; where deep silence resides in the body." Says Dr, Vasant Lad. In Ayurveda, marma points are thought to house the three pillars of life, otherwise known as the doshas.

According to Ayurvedic philosophy, *doshas* make up a person's constitution. The trinity includes *vata* (air), *pitta* (fire) and *kapha* (earth). Everyone is born in a state of balance, or *prakriti*. During the aging process, factors such as anxiety, lackluster diet, or poor sleep habits cause disharmony among the *doshas*. Over the years, *doshic* imbalances begin to block the movement of free-flowing energy in the body. Eventually, the stagnation opens the door to physical and mental discomfort and disease. .

In all, **108 marma points** cover the human body. They range in size from one to six inches in diameter. The points were mapped out in detail centuries ago in the *Sushruta Samhita*, a classic Ayurvedic text. Major marma points correspond to

the seven chakras, or energy centers of the body, while minor points radiate out along the torso and limbs. The points cover both the front and back 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 Sanskrit name given by *Sushruta*, one of the founding fathers of Ayurvedic medicine.

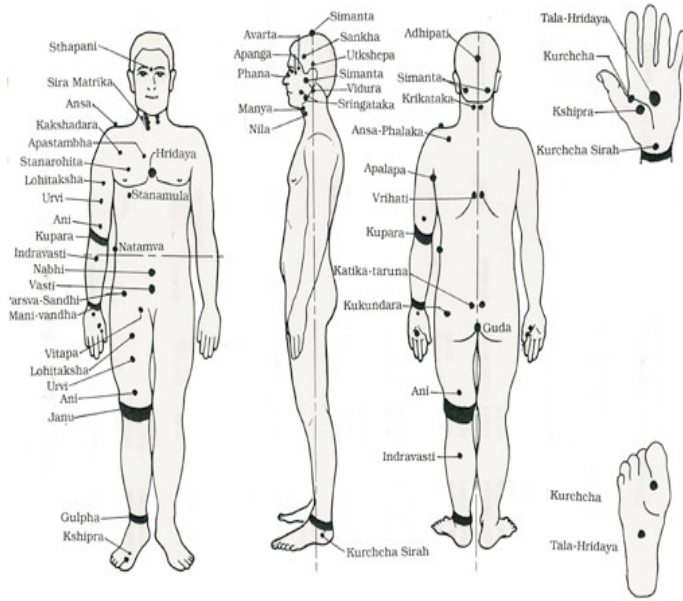
Marma points are located and measured by the finger widths, called *anguli*. Unlike the tiny, pin-pricked-sized points in comparable therapies, like acupuncture, marma points are relatively large and easy to find.

Many historians believe that other point therapies, including acupuncture, acupressure and reflexology, grew out of the science of marma. The key difference is that most other point practices work through the body's network of energetic currents, or meridians. Marma points, on the other hand, bridge the gap between the physical and energetic bodies by carrying energetic information between the mind and the body's organs and tissues.

"A marma point is the junction between physiology and consciousness," says Ed Danaher, director of the Pancha Karma department at the Ayurvedic Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico. "They are vital points on the body where vata, pitta, and kapha are present in their subtlest forms."

Marma-point massage dates back to southern India circa 1500 BC. Masters of kalari, an ancient martial art, first discovered the power of marma points. In battle, kalari fighters targeted an opponent's marma points as a way to inflict pain and injury. According to Kalari lore, people have 12 marma points that, when hit with a knockout blow, can cause instant death. These areas were so important that soldiers even used armor to protect their horses' marma points while riding into battle.

Along with their ability to kill, however, comes an ability to heal. Wounded Kalari fighters were nursed back to health with marma therapy. Eventually, Ayurvedic physicians around India learned of the technique's powers and brought Kalari Masters into hospitals to teach the art. Soon, marma-point training became mandatory for surgeons, who would take great pains to work around specific points lest they risk a patient's life. Today marma-point massage is still a respected component of Ayurvedic healing.



In ancient Vedic times, marma points were called bindu – a dot, secret dot or mystic point. Like a door or pathway, activating a marma point opens into the inner pharmacy of the body. The body is a silent, universal, biochemical laboratory—operating every moment to interpret and transform arising events. Touching a marma point changes the body’s biochemistry and can unfold radical, alchemical change in one’s makeup. Stimulation of these inner pharmacy pathways signals the body to produce exactly what it needs, including hormones and neurochemicals that heal the body, mind and consciousness. This deep dimension of marma therapy has the potential to unfold spiritual healing.

Dr. Vasant Lad

Certificate of Completion

Practitioners will be awarded a certificate of completion for this 1 day course. The British Columbia College of Massage Therapists has recognized this course “Introduction to Marma Chikitsa” Code/Category PE/A2 and has **awarded 7.0 CE/PD credits for Cycle 7** of the QMC CE/PD program.

References For Course Material

Ayurveda: The Science of Self-Healing - www.ayurveda.com

Dr. Vasant Lad

Marma Points of Ayurveda

Dr. Vasant Lad

The Ayurvedic Cookbook

Amadea Morningstar

A Life of Balance
Maya Twari

Ayurveda, Natures Medicine
Dr. David Frawley