



# International Journal of Indian Medicine

[www.ijim.co.in](http://www.ijim.co.in)

**ISSN: 2582-7634**

**Volume - 5, Issue - 7  
July 2024**



# IJIM

INDEXED



# International Journal of Indian Medicine

International Category Code (ICC):  ICC-1702International Journal Address (IJA):  IJA.ZONE/258276217634

## A REVIEW ON MARMA THERAPY AND YOGASAN IN MECHANICAL LOW BACK PAIN.

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### ABSTRACT:

Lumbago, commonly known as low back pain (LBP), is a prevalent symptom associated with musculoskeletal disorders affecting the lumbar spine. It is particularly common among women who engage in tasks requiring forward bending, such as housework and gardening. LBP can be acute, sub-acute, or chronic, often leading individuals to seek medical attention. Marma therapy, an ancient Ayurvedic practice, focuses on specific points on the body connected to internal organs, doshas, and srotas through Pranic channels. By stimulating these points, Marma therapy enhances organ function and provides relief for conditions such as LBP. Additionally, yoga plays a significant role in managing LBP through targeted asanas that stretch and strengthen muscles, improving posture and flexibility. Yoga also incorporates breathing techniques that relax muscles and reduce pain. This paper explores the prevalence of LBP, the scientific basis of yoga and Marma therapy in managing this condition, and the historical and therapeutic significance of Marma points as described in ancient texts. Together, yoga and Marma therapy offer a holistic approach to alleviating LBP by combining physical strengthening with energy balancing, making them effective complementary treatments.

**KEYWORDS:** Marma Therapy, Yogasan, Mechanical low back pain.

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**How to cite this article:** Shah S. A review on Marma Therapy and Yogasan in Mechanical low back pain. Int J Ind Med 2024;5(7):14-19 DOI: <http://doi.org/10.55552/IJIM.2024.5703>

**INTRODUCTION:**

Lumbago, or low back pain, is a typical symptom linked to disorders affecting the lumbar spine's musculoskeletal system. It can manifest in different forms—acute, sub-acute, or chronic. Today, this condition is especially prevalent among women who perform tasks requiring forward bending, such as house cleaning, dishwashing, or gardening. These repetitive movements contribute to back pain. Acute cases of low back pain are a frequent reason for adults to visit their family doctors. While most individuals recover with or without treatment, some require bed rest and timely medical attention. Marma points are areas where different tissues, including muscles, veins, ligaments, bones, and joints, meet. In ancient times, this knowledge was highly valued by kings and warriors, particularly for its use in battlefield strategies to maximize damage to opponents. Marma techniques were also applied in surgery and medicine. Marma therapy can address a variety of ailments, from headaches, body pain, and misaligned spines to more severe neuromuscular conditions. The therapy involves applying pressure with the fingers, palm, or heel, depending on the ailment and the targeted Marma point. According to *Sushruta Samhita*, there are 107 Marma points in the body. The major Marma points align with the seven Chakras, while the minor points are distributed across the limbs and torso. These include 22 points on the legs, 22 on the arms, 12 on the chest and abdomen, 14 on the back, and 37 on the head and neck. The mind is considered the 107th Marma, with each point having a unique name based on its location.

**Prevalence of low back pain:** According to the 2010 Global Burden of Disease Study estimated that low back pain is among the top 10 diseases that account for the highest number of DALYs worldwide. The prevalence

of non-specific (common) low back pain is estimated at 60% to 70%. Prevalence increases and peaks between the ages of 35 and 55. Low Back Pain is the major work-related musculoskeletal disorder among the IT professionals in India and it was found that, more than 50% of them reported Low Back Pain. As Yoga have its specific action on muscles and its relaxation on body. The basic strength of Yoga lies in its stretching of muscles and joints and then holding it in position combined with scientific breathing technique. The targeted Asana exercises for low back pain works systematically on the lumbosacral region. Stretching joints and muscles to anatomical limits augments very well to compliment the natural physiological movements. These steps of Yoga reduce to help the fatigue of muscle. The problem of lumbago is being experienced by many women as they have been working in forward bending status in many conditions particularly in rural areas. As the more stress falls on their vertebral column. This spine is made up of a chain of small bones called vertebrae (backbone) that surround and protect the vital spinal cord. The vertebrae are supported by ligaments of muscles that give them strength and flexibility. All these components together. They form the human back, which is located at the back of our body and extends from the neck to the lower hips.

**Concept of Marma:** References to 'Marma' are also found in Atharvaveda, with numerous other scattered references in Vedic and Epic sources. Marma Sharira is one of the prominent patients in Ayurveda. References of Marma are found in Rigveda. The great Indian Epic Mahabharata and Bhagavata Gita, elephants, horses and soldiers wore varma to protect Marma. Arjuna and Karna were only vulnerable to be killed through marma exposure. Ravana and Krishna are said to

have died due to injury on Nabhi and Kshipra marma respectively. The concept of Marmas forms a part of Shareera. Marma is very vital part of human body. Marma is the part of body, if injury happens to Marma it results into death or fetal complications hence called as Marma. Marma is a specific anatomical location where five structures of human body viz. Mamsa, (Muscles), Sira (Vessels), Snayu (Ligaments), Asthi (Bones) and Sandhi (Joints) fusion together at one point. Acharya Vagbhata says that those sites which are painful on application of pressure and shows abnormal pulsation should also be considered as Marmas. There is 107 Marma located at different places all over the body. Of which, 44 Marma are present in the extremities, 12 Marma are present in the trunk (out of which 3 in the abdomen, 9 in the thorax) 14 Marma are in the back, and 37 in the head-neck region.

**Marma therapy:** It involves working on specific points or areas on the body that are connected through Pranic channels to internal organs, the doshas (vata, pitta, kapha), and srotas (body channels). As massage techniques evolved, these points became vital for stimulating internal organs. By applying pressure or massaging Marma points in a particular way, benefits can be achieved in both the area of the Marma and the associated organs, improving their function. A typical Marma massage lasts about 10 to 15 minutes, often followed by a steam bath or warm shower. It is important that Marma therapy be performed by experienced therapists under the guidance of a qualified Ayurvedic physician. This therapy can be part of rejuvenation treatments or used preventatively to maintain balance and avoid unwanted conditions. Healing through Marma therapy influences the Chakras (Shatchakras and Nadis) and enhances physical well-being. The main objective of

Marma therapy is to activate and stimulate different body organs and systems, energizing the body and relieving occupational stress and illness.

**The Role of Yoga in Managing Low Back Pain:** Low back pain (LBP) is one of the most prevalent musculoskeletal disorders worldwide, affecting millions of individuals annually. It can significantly impair quality of life, limiting daily activities and work productivity. In recent years, yoga has emerged as a popular complementary therapy for managing and alleviating low back pain. This overview explores the scientific evidence supporting the role of yoga in treating LBP, the mechanisms by which it may provide relief, and considerations for its safe practice.

### **1. Evidence from Scientific Studies:**

Numerous clinical trials and systematic reviews have investigated the efficacy of yoga in managing low back pain:

#### **Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses:**

**Cramer et al. (2013):** This meta-analysis included 10 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and concluded that yoga was more effective than no treatment and usual care in reducing pain and improving functional status in individuals with chronic low back pain.

**Holtzman et al. (2011):** Reviewing multiple studies, the authors found that yoga was as effective as physical therapy in improving pain and function for chronic LBP patients.

**Cochrane Review (2017):** This comprehensive review assessed 12 RCTs and determined that yoga may provide modest improvements in pain and disability for people with chronic low back pain compared to minimal intervention.

**Individual Clinical Trials:**

**Saper et al. (2017):** In a study published in *Pain*, participants with chronic low back pain who engaged in a 12-week yoga program reported significant reductions in pain intensity and improvements in functional disability compared to a control group receiving education and stretching.

**Cherkin et al. (2016):** The *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* published findings from a large RCT showing that yoga was more effective than a self-care book for improving back-related function and reducing pain at 12 months follow-up.

**2. Mechanisms by Which Yoga Alleviates**

**Low Back Pain:** Yoga may alleviate low back pain through several physiological and psychological mechanisms:

**Improved Flexibility and Strength:** Yoga incorporates stretching and strengthening exercises that enhance the flexibility of muscles and increase the strength of the core and back muscles, providing better support for the spine.

**Postural Alignment:** Regular yoga practice promotes awareness of body alignment, helping individuals maintain proper posture during daily activities, which can reduce strain on the lower back.

**Enhanced Mobility:** Yoga movements increase the range of motion in the spine and hips, addressing stiffness and improving overall mobility.

**Stress Reduction:** Chronic stress can contribute to muscle tension and pain perception. Yoga's emphasis on breath control and mindfulness helps reduce stress levels, potentially decreasing pain sensitivity.

**Neuromuscular Re-education:** Yoga enhances proprioception and body awareness, facilitating better movement patterns and reducing the risk of injury or exacerbation of existing pain.

**3. Types of Yoga Beneficial for Low Back Pain**

**Hatha Yoga:** Focuses on basic postures and gentle stretching, making it suitable for beginners and those with limited mobility.

**Iyengar Yoga:** Emphasizes precise alignment and the use of props (like blocks and straps), which can help individuals perform poses correctly and safely.

**Viniyoga:** Tailors yoga practices to individual needs and abilities, allowing for modifications that accommodate specific back issues.

**Restorative Yoga:** Utilizes passive poses supported by props to promote deep relaxation and muscle release, aiding in pain relief.

**4. Safety and Precautions:** While yoga is generally considered safe, certain precautions should be taken to prevent injury, especially for individuals with existing low back conditions.

**DISCUSSION:**

Marma therapy involves targeting specific points on the body, connected through Pranic channels to internal organs, doshas (vata, pitta, kapha), and srotas (body channels). These Marma points are used to stimulate and enhance the function of internal organs by applying pressure, massage, or stimulation in specific ways. When applied to treat conditions such as low back pain, Marma therapy can provide significant relief by improving energy flow and promoting healing in the affected area. A Marma massage session typically lasts 10 to 15 minutes and is followed by a steam bath or warm shower for relaxation and enhanced benefits. To ensure safety and effectiveness, Marma therapy should always be performed by skilled therapists under the consultation of a qualified Ayurvedic physician. For managing **low back pain**, combining Marma therapy with yoga can offer a comprehensive

approach. Low back pain, a common musculoskeletal issue, often arises from poor posture, muscle imbalances, and stress. Marma therapy works by stimulating specific points that correspond to the lower back, energizing the area, reducing inflammation, and improving the flow of Prana (vital energy) to relieve pain. Additionally, yoga helps by strengthening the muscles surrounding the lumbar spine, improving flexibility, and promoting proper alignment and posture. Yoga also incorporates mindfulness and stress reduction, both of which can lower pain perception and prevent further injury. By integrating **yoga and Marma therapy**, the benefits of physical strengthening and energy balancing can be maximized. While yoga enhances flexibility and supports spinal alignment, Marma therapy addresses the subtle energy systems, promoting overall harmony and healing in the body. Together, they create a holistic approach to relieving low back pain, making these ancient practices highly effective in both prevention and treatment.

### CONCLUSION:

Scientific evidence supports the use of yoga as an effective intervention for managing chronic low back pain. Its multifaceted approach addresses physical, psychological, and functional aspects of pain, offering a holistic treatment option. However, to maximize benefits and minimize risks, yoga practices should be tailored to individual needs and performed under proper guidance. Incorporating yoga into a comprehensive treatment plan, alongside other medical and therapeutic interventions, can significantly enhance outcomes for individuals suffering from low back pain.

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**Source of Support: None declared**

**Conflict of interest: Nil**

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