



## Integrative Approaches to Thyroid Health: The Role of Varma Therapy and Yoga in Thyroid Care

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### Abstract

Thyroid disorders are among the most prevalent endocrine diseases globally, affecting millions of individuals and significantly impacting quality of life. While conventional medical treatments focus on hormone replacement or suppression, integrative approaches like Varma therapy and Yoga have gained attention for their potential to support thyroid health. This review explores the physiological basis of thyroid disorders, highlights the principles and practices of Varma therapy and Yoga, and evaluates their effectiveness based on available evidence. The article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of these traditional modalities and their role in managing thyroid dysfunction. Thyroid disorders, including hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, and autoimmune conditions, are prevalent endocrine diseases with significant impacts on quality of life. Traditional treatments often focus on hormone replacement or suppression, but integrative therapies like Varma therapy and Yoga have gained attention for their potential in supporting thyroid health. This review examines the physiological basis of thyroid dysfunction and the role of Varma therapy and Yoga in managing these disorders. Varma therapy, originating from South India, involves stimulating specific pressure points to balance energy and improve health. Yoga, through postures, breathing exercises, and meditation, promotes hormonal regulation, reduces stress, and enhances overall well-being. Both approaches are thought to benefit thyroid function by improving circulation, reducing inflammation, and managing stress, which plays a crucial role in thyroid health. While scientific evidence specifically linking these practices to thyroid disorders is limited, existing studies suggest that Yoga can regulate the endocrine system, reduce cortisol levels, and improve metabolic function. Varma therapy's holistic approach to energy healing and physical therapy may offer complementary benefits to conventional treatments. Despite the need for further research, these traditional practices provide a promising, integrative approach to managing thyroid dysfunction and improving quality of life.

**Keywords:** Thyroid Disorders, Varma Therapy, Yoga, Endocrine Health, Hormonal Regulation, Stress Management.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The thyroid gland is a vital endocrine organ responsible for regulating metabolism, growth, and energy utilization through the secretion of hormones such as thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Dysregulation of thyroid function can lead to widespread systemic effects, manifesting as disorders like hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, and autoimmune thyroiditis. These conditions are highly prevalent, with hypothyroidism alone affecting an estimated 5% of the global population, making thyroid health a critical area of medical research [1].

Thyroid disorders, including hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, and autoimmune diseases such as Hashimoto's thyroiditis and Graves' disease, are some of the most common endocrine-related health issues affecting individuals worldwide.

These conditions can lead to a variety of symptoms, ranging from fatigue, weight changes, and mood disturbances to more severe complications if left untreated. Thyroid hormone imbalances can also have widespread effects on metabolism, cardiovascular function, and cognitive performance, leading to a reduced quality of life for many individuals. While conventional treatment approaches often focus on either hormone replacement (as in the case of hypothyroidism) or hormone suppression (as in hyperthyroidism), there is increasing interest in exploring complementary and integrative therapies, such as Varma therapy and Yoga, to support thyroid health and overall well-being [2].

Conventional treatments for thyroid disorders primarily involve hormone replacement therapy (for hypothyroidism) or antithyroid medications and surgical interventions (for hyperthyroidism). While effective, these treatments often come with limitations, including side effects and the need for lifelong medication in many cases [3]. This has led to growing interest in complementary and integrative approaches to support thyroid health, alleviate symptoms, and improve overall quality of life.

Varma therapy, a cornerstone of Siddha medicine, involves the precise stimulation of specific points on the body to balance energy flow and enhance organ function. It is believed to directly impact the endocrine system, including the thyroid gland, by restoring the body's natural equilibrium [4]. Yoga, on the other hand, is a holistic practice that integrates physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation to promote physical and mental well-being. Its ability to reduce stress, enhance circulation, and stimulate the endocrine system has been widely documented [5].

This review explores how Varma therapy and Yoga can be integrated into thyroid care, emphasizing their potential to serve as adjunct therapies alongside conventional medical treatment. The discussion includes the physiological basis of these practices, specific techniques, and existing evidence supporting their efficacy.

## 2. Thyroid Physiology and Common Disorders

### 2.1 Thyroid Gland Overview

The thyroid gland, located in the neck, secretes hormones such as thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3), which regulate metabolism, growth, and energy balance [2]. The hypothalamic-pituitary-thyroid (HPT) axis tightly controls its function, with thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) playing a critical role.

### 2.2 Common Thyroid Disorders

- **Hypothyroidism:** Characterized by insufficient thyroid hormone production, leading to fatigue, weight gain, and depression [3].
- **Hyperthyroidism:** Excess hormone production causes symptoms like weight loss, anxiety, and tachycardia [4].
- **Goiter and Nodules:** Often due to iodine deficiency or autoimmune conditions like Hashimoto's thyroiditis and Graves' disease [5].

## 3. Varma Therapy in Thyroid Care

### 3.1 Principles of Varma Therapy

Varma therapy is a traditional South Indian healing practice rooted in Siddha medicine. It is based on the concept of energy channels (nadis) and vital points (Varma points) that regulate the body's physiological functions. According to Siddha philosophy, disruptions in energy flow through these points can result in illness, including endocrine imbalances [6]. Stimulating specific Varma points helps restore energy balance, improve circulation, and enhance the function of affected organs, including the thyroid gland.

### 3.2 Varma Points for Thyroid Health

Several Varma points are believed to influence thyroid function. These include:

- **Thilantha Kalam:** Located near the neck, this point is associated with regulating thyroid hormone production and balancing the HPT axis.
- **Athisaram:** Situated at the base of the throat, this point enhances energy flow and supports metabolic processes.
- **Manipooraka:** Found in the abdominal region, this point indirectly supports thyroid health by improving overall energy distribution and metabolic balance.

Regular stimulation of these points, often through gentle pressure or massage, is thought to alleviate symptoms of thyroid dysfunction and promote glandular health. Practitioners recommend a holistic approach, combining Varma therapy with dietary and lifestyle modifications [7].

### 3.3 Evidence Supporting Varma Therapy

Although the scientific evidence for Varma therapy in thyroid care is still emerging, preliminary studies and anecdotal reports suggest promising outcomes. For example, small-scale studies have observed improvements in thyroid hormone levels and reductions in stress-related symptoms following Varma therapy sessions [8]. Larger, controlled clinical trials are needed to substantiate these findings and establish standardized treatment protocols.

Varma Points	Location	Function
Thilartha Kalam	Facial region	Balances thyroid hormones
Athisaram	Base of the throat	Enhances metabolic processes
Manipooraka	Abdominal region	Supports overall energy flow

## 4. Yoga and Thyroid Health

### 4.1 Yoga's Holistic Approach

Yoga is a mind-body practice that combines physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation to achieve physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The thyroid gland, as part of the endocrine system, is highly responsive to the holistic effects of Yoga. Regular Yoga practice is believed to:

- Improve blood circulation to the thyroid gland.
- Enhance the body's ability to manage stress, a key factor in thyroid disorders.
- Stimulate energy centers (chakras) associated with thyroid function, particularly the throat chakra (Vishuddha).

### 4.2 Yoga Asanas for Thyroid Function

Specific Yoga postures are particularly beneficial for stimulating and supporting thyroid health:

- **Sarvangasana (Shoulder Stand):** This inverted posture directs blood flow to the Facial region, enhancing thyroid function and improving hormone regulation [9].
- **Matsyasana (Fish Pose):** This posture stretches the neck and throat, stimulating the thyroid gland and relieving tension.
- **Ustrasana (Camel Pose):** By opening the throat and chest, this backbend posture improves flexibility and stimulates the thyroid gland.

Yoga Asana	Benefit
Sarvangasana	Improves thyroid circulation
Matsyasana	Stimulates thyroid function
Ustrasana	Enhances flexibility and gland stimulation

### 4.3 Pranayama Techniques

Breath control practices play a crucial role in managing stress and enhancing endocrine health. Two key techniques include:

- **Ujjayi Pranayama:** Known as the "victorious breath," this technique involves slow, deep breathing that soothes the nervous system and promotes hormonal balance.
- **Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing):** This practice helps balance the autonomic nervous system, reducing stress and enhancing overall energy flow to the thyroid gland [10].

## 5. Integrating Varma and Yoga for Thyroid Care

### 5.1 Synergistic Benefits

Combining Varma therapy with Yoga offers a holistic approach by targeting both physical and energetic imbalances. Varma therapy focuses on direct stimulation of energy points, while Yoga improves circulation, stress management, and glandular function.

### 5.2 Practical Guidelines

- Regular Varma sessions targeting thyroid-specific points.
- Daily practice of Yoga asanas and pranayama techniques.
- Consistent monitoring of thyroid hormone levels to assess progress.

## 6. Current Evidence and Research Gaps

Although both Varma therapy and Yoga show promise in thyroid care, research is limited. Key gaps include:

- Lack of large-scale clinical trials.
- Insufficient mechanistic studies linking Varma points to thyroid function.
- Need for standardized protocols for Yoga practices targeting thyroid health [11].

## 7. Conclusion

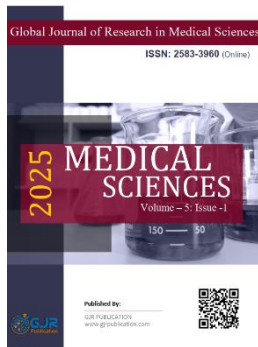
Varma therapy and Yoga represent complementary approaches that can potentially enhance thyroid health through holistic means. By improving circulation, reducing stress, and balancing energy pathways, these practices may serve as valuable adjuncts to conventional treatment. Further research is essential to establish their efficacy and integrate them into evidence-based thyroid care.

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#### CITATION

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