

IDEA WORLD 2022 SESSION #204

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THE NIA® EXPERIENCE

Barefoot Fusion Fitness for Body + Soul

About the Nia® Experience

[Nia®](#) is the original JOY workout - a dynamic fusion of dance, martial arts and mindfulness that has been transforming bodies and lives around the world for nearly 40 years.

Blending the joy of dance, the discipline of martial arts and the mindfulness of somatics, with universal spiritual principles, Nia's groundbreaking body-centered practices support physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and well-being.

The Nia Class Experience provides an adaptable, effective and inspiring workout that will leave you physically energized, mentally calm, emotionally balanced and joyful in spirit.

6 Fundamentals of Nia Philosophy

- 1. The Joy of Movement is the Secret to Fitness.** Stop exercising. Start moving. Your body is designed to move. Movement can and should be pleasurable, joyful and fulfilling. In our 40 years of experience, we've found that following pleasure and joy in movement supports optimal and sustainable health and well-being.
- 2. Fitness Must Address the Human Being, Not Just the Body.** To feel good enough to last a lifetime, exercise must satisfy the heart and soul. At Nia, we believe that exercise done purely for its own physical sake that is devoid from the soul and human spirit is not fun or fulfilling and ultimately fails.
- 3. Movement Must Be Conscious, Not Habitual.** Whole-being fitness begins with heightened awareness of body and mind. In Nia, the focus on physical sensation makes movement a meditation that brings consciousness, intention and presence to your movement experience.
- 4. Move Your Body the Way It was Meant to be Moved.** Gain fitness by doing movements that shift your body's *own* weight, with varying levels of intensity, range and speed. Replace and/or supplement repetitive jogging, jumping and lifting with

stances, postures, steps, blocks and kicks that are compatible with your body's natural structure and feel good. These movements will reduce body fat, increase strength, endurance and muscle definition *and* promote balance, grace, flexibility and mobility.

5. **Use Your Body to Heal Your Mind, Emotions and Spirit.** Every muscle in the body has neuronal *nodal points*, memory receptors that are connected to the brain. These receptors create muscle memory and help store the physical components of emotional traumas. You can use the body to heal the mind and spirit by joining muscular movements with introspection, intention, visualization, imagery and expressiveness.
6. **Take the Path of Least Resistance.** Contrary to popular belief, the *easy* way is the *natural* way. The militaristic, punishing element often found in traditional fitness is not only passé, it is not as effective. Psychologically, it can create resistance and insecurity rather than enthusiasm and self-respect. Physically, it creates too much strain and can lead to injury. To achieve lasting body-mind-spirit fitness you must move in accord with what we call *The Body's Way*: the structural design of the body that dictates its proper use. Function follows form, and proper function of the body is always easier to perform and is more physically rewarding than improper function.

7-Cycle Class Experience

The Nia Class Experience blends 7 cycles, 9 movement forms, and 52 Moves to create a whole-body experience that will leave you feeling simultaneously energized and relaxed.

- **Cycle 1: Set Focus + Intent:** By taking the time to set a focus and intent at the beginning of each class, you bring an element of mindfulness, presence and intention - engaging the brain and integrating mind and body.
- **Cycle 2: Step-In:** Stepping over an imaginary threshold to enter the practice removes distractions and creates a sense of presence and enhanced awareness to support mindful, embodied movement choices.
- **Cycle 3: Warm Up:** Start moving slowly and mindfully warm up the body beginning with the body's 13-major joints. Sink and rise through planes of low, middle and high to organically warm up muscles and joints from the inside out.
- **Cycle 4: Get Moving:** Increase the speed, intensity and/or range of motion of movement in order to elevate the heart-rate and stimulate cardiovascular conditioning. Activate your *Conscious Personal Trainer* and make choices in every moment to *increase* or *decrease* the intensity and range of motion of your movement to meet the current needs and desires of your body.

- **Cycle 5: Cool Down:** Begin to decrease the speed, intensity and range of motion of your movement to slowly bring down your heart-rate, stretch your muscles and connective tissue and prepare your body to move to the floor.
- **Cycle 6: FloorPlay:** Rather than go through the motions of sit-ups and pushups, FloorPlay invites a spirit of play and exploration by using gravity, time, space and your body to PLAY in a way that naturally massages and strengthens the body from fingers to toes.
- **Cycle 7: Step-Out:** To bring the experience full-circle and to a state of completion, consciously step out over the threshold of the class container and into the rest of life.

Resources

The Nia Technique: The High-Powered Energizing Workout That Gives You a New Body and a New Life by Debbie Rosas and Carlos Rosas. Broadway Books, 2005.
ISBN: 0-7679-1730-8

Reflection:

Take a few moments after your Nia® Experience to reflect. Notice how your body feels and what sensations, thoughts and feelings arise.

How did your body feel at the beginning of class?

What sensations did you notice in your body as you began to move?

What thoughts did you notice during your class experience?

Did you notice any feelings or emotions arise during your class experience?

How did your body feel at the end of class?