



Photos courtesy of nia-nia.com

Whether it stands for “non-impact aerobics” or “neuromuscular integrated action,” NIA translated into Swahili means “with purpose.” The NIA technique is a comfortable and pleasurable aerobic movement that combines dancing and martial arts.

First developed more than 20 years ago, NIA classes are available in fitness centres across North America and abroad (see nia-nia.com); each class lasts approximately one hour.

Similar to the slow and steady movements practised in various forms of yoga and tai chi, NIA uses choreographed whole-body actions of various speeds, intensity levels,

ranges of motion, and styles. Music and visualization are used to enhance the workout experience along with vocalizations, such as shouting the word “yes” following a martial-art type movement. NIA is completed barefoot and exercises the body without excessive pounding, running, or repetitive stress. The movements are fun, effective, and can be performed by all individuals regardless of age, gender, or fitness level.

By emphasizing what the developers of NIA called the “joy of movement,” NIA nurtures the mind, body, and spirit by improving strength, circulation, balance, and posture, and provides a safe outlet for stress release. —M.C.