

Globe Life

Health and Fitness A marathoner's key gear starts from the ground up Page 4

FEVER PITCH » REC SOCCER

The World Cup effect

BY DAVE MCGINN

On a soccer field in Montreal, one man had World Cup excitement coursing through his veins. The man, a corporate executive in his early 30s, was standing near the opposing team's goal when the ball came soaring through the air toward him. Normally not the type to try anything fancy (like most of the players in his league), the man hurled himself into a bicycle kick, a move made famous by Pele.

"I guess he just felt the need to do it," says Albert Zbily, president of the Canadian Corporate Soccer League, who was watching the game two weeks ago. "He jumped up, scissor kicked the ball and it just went nowhere." He hit the ground so hard, Mr. Zbily thought he might have to call in the physiotherapist from the sidelines.

With World Cup excitement having reached fever pitch, players in this league and others across Canada are amping up their games. They are trying new moves, playing with more determination and even giving the referees an earful over calls that would normally not be disputed. Even the most casual players are embracing their inner superstars, mimicking what they see on TV in an attempt to elevate their play to the level of the biggest tournament on the globe.

"People are kind of losing it," Mr. Zbily says. One of the 36 teams in the Canadian Corporate Soccer League has billed itself Bafana Bafana, the name of South Africa's team, and shows up for games in the team's jersey, he says.

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Players such as Marcus Christman, right, and Paul Russo are amping up their game in response to footie mania. TIM FRASER FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

EXERCISE » TRY DOING THIS WITH A STRAIGHT FACE



Nia classes combine techniques from martial arts, dance and healing practices to maximize variety in movement and stimulate the body in different ways. DELLA ROLLINS FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

LOVE-IN REGIMEN

Students in a Nia class fly like butterflies, bend like flowers, tickle the air and leave embarrassment at the door



AMY VERNER SWEAT

averner@globeandmail.com

The most difficult part of a Nia class is letting yourself go. As in, feeling completely uninhibited to move like a monkey, a butterfly, a sumo wrestler, or some zany combination of all three. You must accept the fact that you will likely look - and perhaps even sound - ridiculous. You will need to assure yourself that there is no right or wrong and no judgment, so long as your body is moving freely.

If you can do all this - and for some people, the "unlearning" curve may be steep - you just might enjoy Nia more than any other type of group fitness class that exists today.

Nia is no new kid on the block. Founders Debbie Rosas Stewart and Carlos Aya Rosas developed the program in 1983 and in the years since, it has gained momentum to the point that approximately 2,200 trainers now share this free-spirited form of fitness with students in 43 countries.

Short for Neuromuscular Integrative Action (as well as non-impact aerobics), Nia does not feel like a workout so much as a danced-based love-in that focuses on natural movement. To that end, it draws from nine well-established forms of mind-body exercise from the three categories of martial, dance and healing arts: tae kwon do, Tai Chi and aikido; jazz, modern and Duncan dance (from Isadora); and Feldenkrais, the Alexander technique and yoga.

Jennifer Hicks is among the 120 members of the Nia Instructors Association of Canada. She is responsible for the organization's marketing, but more importantly, she is passionate about teaching Nia.

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STATSCAN

Ottawa should come to its census



ANDRÉ PICARD SECOND OPINION
apicard@globeandmail.com

Statistics Canada's national treasure - a sure that is, tragically being plundered and opened by its short-term government masters.

The data Statscan are invaluable to go business, charities and, naturally, every single citizen. The information analysis the agency provides the bedrock on which public policies - social and fiscal - are built.

So why is the government undermining the data?

Ottawa's decision to scrap the mandatory survey is a point. But it is only one of many bad decisions.

The Workplace Employee Survey was a 2009; it was the only information on job health benefits and pension plans. The Household Spending Survey, a major medical changes that will use of key information Canadians spend, as well as borrow. The Survey of Social Security, which distribution of asset debts across regions groups, age groups and types, has been deepened. So, too, has the Longitudinal Survey of Health and Retirement.

There is also tremendous pressure on Statistics Canada to cut back on analysis simply become a maverick gatherer of data in a tradition of hewers and drawers of waste.

All this is occurring during a recession while economic and policies are changing. It's as if our politicians do not want to let impact on their constituencies as if they think that spin is an adequate substitute for sound statistical analysis.

The census is, arguably, the most important began in 1841 as a simple counting of people; and has evolved into a detailed statistical portrait of Canada that reveals and shifts so that public policy can be refined.

» SEE 'CENSUS' PAGE 2

A WEEKLY GUIDE TO SURVIVING SOCIAL SCRAPES » BUT HE HAS FLEX TIME!

So your colleague has perks. Get over it



DAVID EDDIE DAMAGE CONTROL
damage@globeandmail.com

THE QUESTION

I work for a large corporation that recently introduced a flex/telecommuting initiative.

resource who overheard him) that my boss gives my peer more flexibility because he is married, has kids and needs a better work-life balance than I do. (I am living with a guy, with no kids, eldercare). I am beyond furious! For the past year I have been told it is because of my type of job. What do I do? Tell HR? Demand to work three days at home and see what happens?

THE ANSWER

FROM PAGE 1 ▸ NIA

Exercise that works the imagination

She reached out to me because Nia has changed her life. As someone who had always believed that exercise should involve pain, she rebelled when she discovered this alternative workout. She received her instructor certification four years ago and her personal appeal was persuasive enough to pique my interest.

There are upward of 40 different Nia workouts, all targeting different areas of the body via various themes. Names range from obscure (Infinity, Alpha Omega) to literal (Butterfly) to cheesy (Zen-sation, Sex!) and Ms. Hicks says it can take up to two months before she's gone through the cycle (Nia instructors pay a membership fee and receive four new classes from the founders — licensed music included — each year).

The footwork — often performed sans shoes — is never fancy; at most a cha-cha, grapevine, dance square or four-point turn. Leave the choreography to the contestants on *So You Think You Can Dance*.

"We don't always want to be doing repetitive movement," says Ms. Hicks who teaches at The Joy of Dance and Flow Yoga among other locations in Toronto. "The [steps] are chosen so we can have variety in movement to stimulate the body in different ways." Sometimes, this means using the imagination: We drum the ceiling, mimic pulling taffy to



The burn typical of most exercise classes is not as important as the sense of release which Nia inspires. BELLA ROLLINS FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

some than others. Ms. Hicks encourages sound effects as they not only help engage the core, they can be a very effective form of release.

Underlying every action in Nia is the goal of improving mobility and stability. One 62-year-old woman, Susan Berger, started coming to classes a few

classes that want you to go for burn," she says.

She insists that unlike conventional aerobics classes, Nia must be tried to be appreciated. "People say it's like the experience of eating chocolate; there's no way to describe chocolate until you eat it." Anyone watching a class

All about Nia

WHAT IS IT?

A low-impact workout that draws from modern dance, martial arts and healing arts. Expect to channel Celtic, African and Latin moves, sometimes all in a single class.

HOW HARD IS IT?

Nia is nowhere near as intense or choreographed as the highly popular Zumba workout although sweating is not uncommon. Surrendering to the body's innate desire to move can be more challenging than three sets of push-ups.

WHAT DOES IT WORK?

The whole body, although areas such as the spine, pelvis and hip flexors seem to get special attention. All steps can be modified to reduce or increase difficulty. Post-workout high feels as good as a visit to the shrink.

WHAT ARE CLASSES LIKE?

Two words: Hippie aerobics. Done barefoot and set to a hodgepodge of spirited world music tracks, the hour-long sessions are designed to release all inhibitions.

WHO'S TRYING IT?

Not men, that's for sure (although there's no reason why they can't). Women in their late 20s through 60s — with varying degrees of fitness and even more varied outfits (spoofed-track suits, qinqham shirts, flared

Sweat-o-meter: Nia

Muscle burn: 2 / 10

