

Nia *Something New is Afoot!*

by Vita Wind



There's a new movement form afoot and it's called Nia.

Nia is expressive, fun, soulful, martial, fluid, joyful, and it's hard to describe. In fact, even those who know Nia often say, "It's like chocolate, you have to taste it to appreciate it."

Since 1983, Nia has been developing as a "fitness" form that has thousands upon thousands dancing their fitness. From Europe to North and South America and even Australia, the quiet revolution has been brewing. Quiet, because it's still relatively little-known. Revolution, because those who enjoy it seem to embrace it so wholeheartedly they spread the willingly word.

Much like the early swell of Yoga or Pilates in North America, Nia is only now gaining a broader recognition. Not just for the "cognoscenti," it is practiced by people from all walks of life, all ages, all stages of agility, and all levels of fitness.

A fusion of and inspired by three of the Classical Arts — Martial, Dance, and Healing — Nia provides a total mind, body, spirit "workout" in a gentle, holistic way. Elements from the Martial arts (Tai Chi, Tae Kwon Do, Aikido) provide power, mindfulness and many of the stronger moves. Playfulness, linear and circular motion, expression and emotion are derived from the Dance Arts of Jazz, Modern and Duncan Dance. And finally the Healing Arts encourage touch, sensory awareness and alignment. All this quietly goes on in the background while the student is led through a dance-like routine to great World Music.

It's those very underlying benefits that touch so many people, their spirit and their emotions. Students gain physically — with improved flexibility, strength, agility, mobility, balance and cardio. But it's the less obvious benefits that keep many coming back year after year. Through the use of visualization, emotional expression, and sensory awareness, some students say they are more calm, restored, energized, and have a more positive outlook after a Nia class.

Nia's logo often includes the phrase, Through Movement We Find Health. Seeking pleasure and sensation while moving through space, making small adjustments to each move to find the body's own way, and ultimately achieving The Joy in Movement, that is what Nia is.



We are fortunate in Grey/Bruce to have several Nia teachers practicing and teaching this new movement form throughout the area.

To learn more about Nia and to find which classes are being held in your area, check out www.niac.ca/on/classes or www.nia_nia.com. You may also contact: Roberta Mohler, for Kimberley and Toronto at 519-599-2448 or nia_diva@sympatico.ca

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