

# Nia 5 STAGES



## A LITTLE HISTORY

Since the creation of Nia in 1983, co-founder Debbie Rosas was inspired by remarkable people in the field of somatic education, including Stanley Keleman, author of *Emotional Anatomy*. As Debbie began to develop Nia's FloorPlay, part of her study included researching Keleman's work and playing with developmental movement. This inspired her to look at healing, restructuring and re-patterning from a foundational perspective. While Keleman used the developmental stages to investigate emotions, Debbie focused on the physical and energetic benefits they offer. Using the design of the body as her map and sensation as her guide, Debbie began closely examining the organic process of how we learn to walk. What she discovered was a simple and efficient way to allow the body to naturally realign itself - physically and energetically - that leads to self-healing (feeling better) and conditioning. Debbie found that powerful results could be achieved by moving through these developmental stages; and that no matter how many times people practice, profound changes occur. Her findings from years of practice and research led to the development of the Nia 5 Stages - first introduced in Classic Nia, and now offered as stand-alone classes, workshops, and an in-depth Teacher Training.

## THE PRACTICE

Nia 5 Stages is a physical practice based on five stages of human development: Embryonic, Creeping, Crawling, Standing and Walking. Consciously moving through these stages as an adult re-integrates the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual elements in such a way that after just five minutes of practice, participants notice improvements in power, range of motion, and ease in areas of their bodies other forms of exercise do not affect. This process of realignment allows the body to do what it is designed to do: explore its potential, self-heal and grow.

### Nia 5 Stages practice results in:

- Increased energy and vitality
- Improved posture and grace
- Increased Sensory IQ and overall body awareness
- A deep sense of relaxation
- Physical and energetic alignment

### Nia 5 Stages practice is excellent for:

- Reclaiming optimal alignment and functioning
- Releasing tension and blocked energy
- Regaining flexibility, agility, mobility, strength and stability (FAMSS)
- Reclaiming and maintaining joint mobility and muscle balance
- Cross-training for any physical activity

## YOUR PRACTICE

Each day, practice the Nia 5 Stages at home for five minutes, spending one minute in each stage or until your body is ready to move on. Attend weekly classes to embody The Body's Way education and to deepen your own process.

### EMBRYONIC



The first stage, Embryonic, is a circular architecture. Embryonic is fish-like, with fluid, gentle, dynamic movements. Rolling and "cooking" all four sides, you move as if you are in water, suspended and supported to move freely. In this stage, move from your center at a speed that feels right for you. Everything you need is provided – simply receive and sense pleasure. Slip into the pre-verbal state, where you can move without thinking.

### CREEPING



The second stage is Creeping, a linear, horizontal architecture. Creeping is lizard-like, integrating the action of opposite sides. Your body is a long line with a curve in the lower spine, a smooth slope from tail to head. Your shoulders face forward and your hips face down, resting on the earth. One leg is long and extended as the opposite knee draws up, freeing your hip joint to help you move forward. Use one hand to slightly reach out and pull, while the other hand pushes, staying close to your body. The pressure of your hands against the earth keeps your upper chest up, away from, and off the floor. In Creeping, sense the extension of your spine as you look out, using your hands and forearms to move forward. Your feet remain "sunny side up."

### CRAWLING



The third stage, Crawling, begins in a four-legged "tabletop" architecture, with the spine softly released. Crawling is bear-like, shifting from four pillars of stability onto three pillars of mobility. As one hand reaches, soft and paw-like, sense the looseness of your hand and wrist joint, fingers

dripping down, free of tension. Your belly hangs down with the pull of gravity, creating a curve in your lumbar spine. Here, your spine naturally begins to develop agility, mobility and strength. Look out into the world to develop mobility in your neck. Your feet are still "sunny side up" as you crawl in your own way.

### STANDING



The fourth stage, Standing, is a stable, vertical architecture. Begin squatting, monkey-like. Place one whole foot on the ground for stability, and rest your weight on the ball of the other foot, with the heel up. Build strength and flexibility by resting into gravity. Feel free to shift from side to side, making adjustments from the ground up to support Your Body's Way. Everything you do should add to your comfort and ease. With your rib cage mobile and your hands and arms free, look up and wait until you feel ready to rise.

### WALKING



The fifth stage, Walking, is a vertical, moving architecture. Enter this stage by first rising onto the balls of your feet and walking with your heels up. When you are ready, drop your heels and allow them to lead your walk, rolling through your heel onto your whole foot. Human-like, walking is the dynamic action of catching yourself from falling, which involves two actions: a stance and a step. Integrated, these actions create the forward motion of traveling freely through space as an upright being.

Take a moment to give Body Gratitude.