

# Nia Technique: The Body, Mind, Emotions and Spirit Workout

Susan Sloan – Nia Black Belt Instructor and White Belt Trainer

I found the practice of Nia sixteen years ago in 2003.

It started off fulfilling my need to connect to personal joy through dance and music. I felt the powerful boost that dancing mindfully with a group of like-minded people gave me: for my body, my mind, my emotions, and my spirit.

I often experience myself as deeply emotional, and can wake up in the morning feeling completely shattered. My movement practice of Nia is the elixir that brings me back to balance on all levels. My mind gets focused by bringing in a focus and intent for my class that day. The focus is always about the body. In Nia we incorporate nine movement forms which encompass Martial Arts, Dance Arts and Healing Arts. This focus brings me into my body, where I can move safely and mindfully in my own range of motion. There are 52 moves in Nia which are simple for the base, core and upper extremities. These moves make up the form of Nia, and are designed to work the body optimally in accordance with the design of the human body; we call this The Body's Way. So, I can only feel better when I use these moves, as my body is being moved as it is designed, thereby setting up homeostasis (the body's own innate sense of intelligence).

For my emotions, I get to bring in the freedom and play with the moves (the form), using specific katas (two or three moves sequenced together). I can also make rapid-fire decisions in the moment as I vary the sequences by listening to the music which I know intimately chord by chord. This is excellent for developing neuroplasticity by creating new pathways in the brain and making split second decisions based on the sensation of moving to the music.

The freedom to bring in emotional expression is stimulated by using the Dance Arts of Nia. Jazz tunes me into my inner showman and brings out my spontaneous and sassy side. Modern Dance takes me into my dramatic side, and I find an outlet through my body to move through a range of emotions by creating shapes in space, and on and off balance; also stimulated by the music. Duncan Dance invites me to connect to my inner child and express myself in the form and freedom by tuning into the music.

This is where my spirit gets to soar as I connect intimately to moments of who I truly am, unfettered by my inhibitions, my life's conditioning, and I can just be me. I have been exploring the Healing Arts for a couple of decades now: Holographic Repatterning, Kinesiology, Postural Integration, Conscious Connected Breathing, Kahuna Body Work, Reiki hands-on healing, etc. These modalities take me to a place of exploration and deep connection to myself. The Healing Arts of Nia is the cherry on top of this. Using the Nia 5 Stages of Development, I can shift and move stuckness in my body, mind and emotional realms, and I get to feel better.

I am so grateful for the practice of Nia, the privilege of being able to share it with others in a class workout, and being able to teach others to experience these parts of themselves. In 2012 I stepped into training others to become White Belts and to teach Nia.

I look forward to sharing the Joy of Movement and the power to shift, move and connect with more people!

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