

Nia: Dancing Through Life

Tips for integrating Nia into every moment



The Ankle Joint -Your Mobility and Stability Pot of Gold

Did you know your foot has a partner called your ankle? Did you know your ankle is your foot's built-in shock absorber? Every time you walk, run, dance, skip, or stand, your ankles provide you with the cushioning and mobility to move with balance and grace. Without ankle joints, the straight bones in your feet could not support your dance through life!

Your ankle is a hinge joint, opening and closing your foot like the hinge of a door. To provide movement, it functions as a space keeper, holding space between the top of your foot to the ends of your two shinbones. This joint makes it possible to circle your foot, to flex and point your toes, movements that also naturally keep your ankle healthy.

When you walk, do you sense your ankles? Give it a try! Consciously sensing the support and involvement of your ankle joints as you move your feet, as you walk and dance, helps you maintain healthy ankles.

In Nia, we teach you to sense and use your ankle joints in all stances, steps and kicks. Each time you step, lead with your heel and imagine your foot is the mouth of an alligator, opening wide. As you walk, sense weightlessness by imagining rainbows of air filling your ankles. Keep your movement light and resilient by walking on clouds.

Ankle Wellness

Walk and sense the earth with your bare feet. Keep your ankles agile by sensing for relaxation in your feet.

To activate all parts of your foot and ankle, roll through your whole foot, from the heel to the ball, all the way through your toes.

Keep your ankles pliable and strong by rising up onto the balls of your feet, as if reaching for a high shelf, then slowly lowering your heels down. Repeat this exercise 10 times each day by integrating it into your daily life, such as when you brush your teeth.

Walk barefoot as often as possible to become aware of the relationship between your feet and ankles.

Practice the Nia moves Squish Walk and Duck Walk. (See the "52 Moves" chapter in the *Nia Technique* book* for more details.)

For more information

Ask your teacher for more information and other Nia handouts.

Get the Nia book, *The Nia Technique** (2004, Broadway Books).

Go to NiaNow.com to learn more and subscribe to the FREE monthly newsletter for Everybody!

*Rosas, Debbie, and Carlos Rosas. *The Nia Technique: the High-powered Energizing Workout That Gives You a New Body and a New Life*. New York: Broadway, 2004. Print.