

# Nia 5 Stages:

## The Five Stages of Human Development - Debbie Rosas, Portland, OR

Everything in life begins from a place of emptiness and fluidity. As humans, what we perceive as the beginning of life is the embryo. From there we develop into a two-legged, upright being. If we are fortunate, we adapt in healthy ways to our everyday walking and to the ways in which we hold and use ourselves in life. However, most of us are not that lucky, and we find ourselves living with annoying aches and pains and sometimes with chronic, very painful sensations.

The Nia 5 Stages is an integrative practice based on the five stages of human development: embryonic, creeping, crawling, standing, and walking. Each stage is a foundation for the next. Combined, all five stages help people to integrate physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. When practiced daily and in the correct sequence these stages facilitate optimal alignment and function. Practicing the Nia 5 Stages allows your body to naturally reclaim the physical mobility, flexibility, strength, agility or stability you need so that Your Body's Way aligns with The Body's Way. The continual practice of the Nia 5 Stages provides a way for the body to do what it does best, which is to take care of itself, to self-heal. When allowed to, the body will always move towards healing itself, seeking where it functions optimally. Movement is medicine for the body and the Nia 5 Stages provide us a wonderful path towards improved health and wellbeing.

#1 - EMBRYONIC: On your back, move freely and comfortably as if in water, cooking all four sides. Connect to gravity, and move on in ways that are stimulating, healing and functional. Imagine your spine as a fish or as a flexible cord. The geometry and movement design you create is freeform. Move tenderly and make waves in the imaginary water. The flow of energy is maintained by moving fluidly and freely in the space. Sound with your voice, as if a dolphin, expressing joy, pleasure, love, and peace. Be fluid and flexible as you interact with space. Let all parts be soft and pliable. Allow your movement to be seamless as you radiate out 360 degrees. As you move, allow your focus to remain inward – centered around your imaginary umbilical cord. In this stage, everything you need is provided for you. Receive. This stage provides the opportunity for all five sensations: flexibility, agility, mobility, strength, and stability.

#2 - CREEPING: Lay flat with your belly on the earth. Imagine your spine as a Lizard, or like a ski slope, with the top of your head as the top of the hill. Your hands are like suction cups that can plug in to help pull and drag your body forward. As you Creep, your tail bone swishes like a tail. Press your hands and elbows into the earth, and sense your spine extended and breasts off the floor. Look out and ahead, as you drag your base, with your feet sunny-side up. The geometry and movement design you create is a linear and sloped, with your hips facing down and connected to the earth, your chest and head are up, elegantly curved towards the sky. The flow of the movement energy line is maintained with a slithery cross-crawl weaving action forward. Move intentionally into and through the space as you drag your shinbones on the floor. Your eyes look forward as you continue to push and pull.

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#3 - CRAWLING: Push to all fours, and allow space between your belly and earth. Imagine your spine as strong and flexible, like a Bear. Sense a tabletop with four vertical legs, your arms and thighbones, supporting you from underneath. Give your soft spine into the downward pull of gravity. Your head lifts up and away from your torso and your eyes look out into life. Let your belly relax and hang as your eyes look towards what is in front of you and peripherally available. Rest on all fours - two hands and two knees. Allow your two sets of shinbones to rest on the earth. Your feet are sunny-side up and your spine is hanging. Look ahead and begin to crawl with limp elbows, wrists, and hands. As you reach forward with your left hand, your right knee slides forward. Let your shinbones drag. The flow of this movement energy line is maintained by sensing the your weight shifting, briefly balancing on three points in a reciprocal, bilateral action. The geometry of this movement is a cross-crawl balancing act. Move powerfully and quietly, into and through space, on and off balance. Your three body weights are now exposed on all sides. Your focus is directed outward and your eyes look forward and around, into life. Sound with your voice the rumbling of a sleeping volcano waking, expressing your free will and desire, personal power and grace. Be strong and tender, like a Bear. The primary sensation of this stage is mobility.

#4 - STANDING: Crouched in squatting, stand with your feet flat on the earth. Rest into the down of your stable foundation as preparation to rise up. Place your feet in a personal way, using a width and toe directions that feel comfortable. Feel the interaction of your ankle, knee, and hip joints as you give your weight into gravity. Allow yourself to shift your body weight from side to side. Sit to the side with your heel high, while the opposite foot rests with the whole foot on the earth. Rest into your base and feel relaxed power. Allow your eyes to look up and out as you reach up towards the sky. Imagine your spine like a monkey, naturally animalistic and organically human. The flow of this movement energy line is maintained by moving energy from behind and underneath, up along a flexible vertical line that energetically grounds down while at the same time seeks what is up and above.

#5 - WALKING: Walk on the balls of the feet momentarily then allow your heels to come down and walk using the heel lead. Sense the two parts of Walking: Step and Stance. Sense the step, leading with your heel and rolling through your whole foot. Sense the stance, and look through the windshield as you hang your lower jaw, arms, and hands. Standing fully upright, with a fluid alignment, walk around the space. Imagine your spine like an antenna, connecting you to the Heaven and Earth. The flow of this movement energy line is maintained by allowing the electromagnetic fields to move energy up and out, radial, in all directions. Rest on the Earth, rise to the Heaven, and be supported energetically in all directions, pulsing from every cell. Moving on flexible and powerful feet, your energy support continues to come from behind and underneath you - moving energy from the earth up and through you. The geometry and movement design of this stage is a moveable, pliable, vertical up and out weave that interacts with the design and fabric of life. Feel the vertical and horizontal flow as you walk fluidly through the space, wagging your tail and keeping all thirteen joints active. Keep the balls of your feet, hip joints, shoulder joints, and eyes active. Allow your arms to swing freely and let your hands touch the space around you. Sense the space around you as you walk, especially the rings of air around your waist and neck. Sense the imaginary feather

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along the back of your neck as it reaches up to tickle the clouds. Sound your emotions with your voice, singing to the world who you are and who you desire to be. Be integral, conscious and loving, like a Sacred Athlete. This stage provides the opportunity for all five sensations: flexibility, agility, mobility, strength, and stability.