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Samantha Harris

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OCTOBER 2011



October ²⁰¹³

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UP CLOSE

Running With The Stars

SHAPE Middle East chats with former Dancing With The Stars presenter, Samantha Harris, to discuss charity, career choices and running.



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SHAPE: You graduated from Northwestern University with a Journalism degree. Did you know you always wanted to go into TV presenting?

Samantha Harris: Although at the time there really weren't very many traditional hosting jobs, I still knew it was still the kind of thing I wanted to do. I worked at the station in Minneapolis, my home town, while in college and somewhere between producing, writing, editing both news stories and entertainment news stories, I got my groundings.

SHAPE: You're an avid runner. How and when did you get into running?

SH: I got into running when I started dating my husband, who was a former college basketball player. He liked to go for runs and while I was always very active and very fit, I never thought of myself as a runner, per say. That said, I wanted to impress him, and so I started jogging with him. I realised it was a really great way to keep active, while enjoying the outdoors (which I love).

SHAPE: As a mother and a career person, how do you juggle the two? What are your secrets?

SH: I try to schedule exercise like an appointment in my day. Ideally, I would work out five days a week. However, there are weeks when shooting schedules and kid's schedules are so intense that I only exercise three days a week. Occasionally, I get a 6th bonus day if, on the weekends, my husband and I take the girls in a stroller for a walk. We'd walk and jog intermittently to our favourite health breakfast spot.

SHAPE: What would that favourite health breakfast spot be?

SH: A local restaurant in our neighborhood that has egg white omelets and whole grain pancakes with lots of fresh fruit. After breakfast, we do a 20-minute walk back home. Now we try to get the girls out of the stroller on the walk home, which is exciting. They're only two and five.

SHAPE: What kind of foods do you fuel up with prior to your workout?

SH: Greek yogurt is one of my standard go-to's and, lately, I've been adding chia seeds into it so I can get a little bit of an Omega 3 boost. I usually have at least

one Greek yogurt. I also have a smoothie, which may have a Greek yogurt in it or just a big scoop of vanilla whey protein powder. With the smoothie I throw in kale, spinach, chia seeds, flax seeds, and then I use a little bit of skimmed milk, which adds a bit of extra protein. I also use a lot of fresh fruit, like frozen strawberries, frozen bananas, frozen blue berries and pineapple, which is the key ingredient to cut down the bitterness of the kale. It's a great breakfast on-the-go!

SHAPE: We know that you do quite a bit of charity. How did you get involved with Feeding America?

SH: Soon after my older daughter was born, I was approached by them to get the word out about hunger in America. In the US, one in five children are struggling with hunger. As a new mum, it was a very eye-opening statistic to learn and very defeating in a way. Then I realised there's hope. Feeding America helps with the transportation, distribution and cultivation of food to make sure we can get those resources to the people who need them.

SHAPE: We hear you recently became a certified personal trainer. Tell us more about that.

SH: Yes, I am! I passed my exam in July, and I wanted to put my money where my mouth is and have more credibility to be able to speak on health and fitness issues. I'm not quitting my day job as a TV host at any time, but I definitely am very passionate about

a healthy lifestyle and having fitness integrated into one's daily life. Getting my certificate was really nothing more than me wanting to have the information and education for my own self and for my family. That said, I am now also able to help others reach their own personal fitness goals, which is wonderful.

SHAPE: A recent article written by the President of Barnard College stated that, because women are able to achieve more now than ever before (we can be successful business women while still having a family) we have adopted a 'superwoman' like mentality where every aspect of our lives must be perfect. Because we can have it all, we feel we should. As a successful TV presenter, mother and wife, how would you respond to this?

SH: I agree in many ways that I do feel there is a pressure to do it all and be everything to everyone. I want my career, and I have been working hard from a young age. I don't want to give that up, and I don't feel it's fair that I have to give it up to have a family.

However, I want a family more than anything. At the end of the day, it's what means the most. The most successful career doesn't mean anything if I come home to an empty place. My kids and my husband have given me such fulfillment and warmth my heart and soul, and can't imagine sacrificing family for a career either.

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the *SHAPE* sheet

Samantha in her own words

1. IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A DESERT ISLAND AND YOU COULD ONLY HAVE THREE THINGS WITH YOU, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Sun screen. I'm very big on high SPF for protecting my skin. I would definitely have my family and if there's internet service, I would want to have a computer. There would be so much you could access and it would be hard to be cut off from what's happening in the world.

2. WHAT IS YOUR HIDDEN TALENT?
I can wiggle my ears! I can move them up and down without using my hands.

3. IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE SUPERPOWER, WHAT WOULD THAT BE?
I would like to fly. I love to travel it would give me the opportunity explore the world, moving from place to place quickly without having to deal with airport security. I think it would be amazing to have that aerial perspective as well.

4. ON YOUR IPOD, WHAT ARE WE LIKELY TO FIND AS YOUR TOP FIVE RUNNING SONGS?
I have probably over 400 Broadway show tunes, so they're always circulating toward the top. That said, it would have to be Loathing from Wicked, Dance of the Robe from Aida, Yeah by Usher and Lil Jon, Wings by Little Mix and Just Like a Rockstar by the Fresh Beat Band.

RUNNING STRONG

Samantha Harris shares her workout secrets to help you build lean muscle and improve your running stamina.



1 DEEP CHAIR LUNGE WITH BICEP CURL

This is a perfect example of a compound movement. You're working your legs to strengthen them for the run, your hamstrings – which have to be strong to be able to have nice, long strides – and your biceps at the same. (A) Stand directly in front of a chair and put the toes of one foot on the chair behind you while keeping the weights on your side. (B) Bend into a lunge and curl the weights while contracting your biceps, and then get back up. Switch sides once you complete your first set of repetitions.



2 LATER LUNGE WITH SIDE LIFT

(A) Stand with legs apart, one leg slightly bent, arms (holding dumbbells) bent at side. (B) Raise bent leg in the air and move arms in lateral motion up. Return to starting position. Once repetitions are finished, switch sides.

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3 PLANK-PIKE FOR ABS

Another really important part of running is to have a strong core. Running is not just about having strong legs, because when you run you are engaging your entire body – mid-section and arms. The stability ball makes the exercise a little more challenging. You can put your elbows on the mat on the floor if you feel more comfortable. (A) Start in the plank position with your feet at hip distance and your elbows on the stability ball. (B) Bring your legs and elbows towards each other, and bring up your hips and then back down.



4 HAMSTRING STRENGTHENER

This is almost the reverse of the last exercise. The emphasis is to work your hamstrings to strengthen them for the run. (A) Lie down on the floor and put your heels on the stability ball and keep your arms at your side, pressing into the ground to give you support and contract your abs. (B) Use your heels to pull the ball towards your glutes and at the same time elevating your hips. Return to your starting position and repeat.

