

Dancing Darling

New mom Samantha Harris has done everything from wowing audiences on Broadway to captivating viewers each week as she takes them through the wild world of celebrity dancing! BY BONNIE SIEGLER

It seems Samantha Harris is rather fearless when it comes to balancing out her everyday life. After all, she co-hosts the hit series *Dancing With The Stars* and she's unafraid to walk up to megastars on the red carpet during award-show season for *The Insider*. She even braved singing and dancing in front of a live audience as Roxie Hart in this past summer's Broadway production of *Chicago*. To top off all that, she gave birth to baby daughter Josselyn in September 2007 and returned to work just three months later. How did she do all this and stay sane? "Mom is a tough job and I tend to try and do too much in one day," reveals Harris. "I don't allow enough time to get from Point A to Point B. But I have found some ways to relieve stress and balance out myself." One key component of a calmer day is taking a simple walk or playing with Josselyn. "The happiest time is seeing that smile on her face when I get home from a day at work. We like to go outside and play on the sidewalk with chalk, drawing just lines and squiggles right now—sometimes a heart or sailboat."

Being a first time mom is, by most accounts, both exhilarating and exhausting at the same time. Over the past two years, Harris has become adept at fusing fitness and family and by all accounts, the performer is no newcomer to health and fitness. She began ballet classes as a young girl back in Hopkins, Minnesota, and with her mom in a dance company, she literally followed in her footsteps. "I still love to dance," she admits. "That's why I just had to fit in Broadway over the summer. It was a dream come true, but with a grueling schedule." Her childhood not only helped form her physical destiny, but it also helped create a balanced lifestyle. "A dancer's must is creating that long spine, so Bikram yoga workouts have really helped me both physically and emotionally. That class is about sweating out all the toxins, but has a few good balancing postures that if your core isn't engaged and you're not focused on the center of your body interacting with the entire movement, you'll fall out of the pose."

As much as Harris loves the perks for her body, it's the mind benefits that really have her hooked on this yoga discipline. "Putting my mind in that particular focus is a great thing for me because I tend to be the person

who is challenging myself to push to the next thing before I'm ready to. This yoga puts me in the moment and ensures I won't compete with the person next to me to get to the next step before I'm ready to move on. So it has really helped center me both in class and in everyday life."

After a long day at work, followed by a workout, Harris says her favourite "me time" is massage time. "It's just great for relaxation and rejuvenation for my psyche. My ideal relaxation is to take a great workout class, then go and steam for awhile to get rid of the toxin build-up, get a massage, go in the Jacuzzi and then have a great meal." A favourite meal when at a restaurant revolves around sushi, wrapped in soy paper instead of seaweed. "It's not as much a health, but taste preference." Harris also brings Japanese food home in the form of edamame that she buys frozen and then pops into the microwave for a few minutes. "It's a great snack. My daughter actually now loves it, as well." The new mom gives credit to this healthy snack for helping her lose her pregnancy weight, especially around the midsection. It's proven that women who snack on soy burn twice as much belly fat as those who avoid soy. As for other foods? "I have all but given up eating red meat. Growing up in Minnesota and eating more butter, milk and red meat — every part of the cow — than I care to remember has made me lose the taste for those foods. Obviously there is always concern if I'm getting enough iron so I eat a lot of leafy green vegetables. And for the most part, I try not to eat fried foods unless it's one of my favourite foods." Nutrition that she shares with Josselyn includes wheat bread "and it has to be whole grain." "I eat bananas, strawberries, and I hide in the freezer. I probably

So is it harder for her to host contestants on "Dancing With The Stars" because I watch everyone dance because I watch it every day. It's fun for me to watch everyone dance when there's a move gone wrong. In a room full of people, I can dance. In a room



Samantha Harris