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FitParent

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THE INSIDER & DANCING WITH THE STARS
SAMANTHA HARRIS
ON MOTHERHOOD AND MULTI-TASKING





fancy footwork

Samantha Harris may do her best work giving props to others on *Dancing With The Stars*, but she is certainly no stranger to the spotlight herself.

BY SONIA LOWE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN FOLEY

With over 20 million viewers tuning in to watch *Dancing With The Stars* weekly and an impressive international fan base in over 120 countries, it's no wonder Samantha is a favourite in over 600 million living rooms across the globe. If that wasn't enough, this Emmy-nominated correspondent recently left *E!* to join Executive producer Linda Bell Blue's hit series *The Insider*.

In our *Fit Parent* interview, Samantha reveals how she manages the demands of parenting, her profession and her perfect figure.

The new season of *Dancing With The Stars* has such an eclectic group of celebrities - and a few last minute inclusions - who do you think is going to take it all?

This season certainly has a wonderful mix of people who are truly at the top of their respective fields. I think a lot of eyes will be on Shawn Johnson, who won the gold in gymnastics at the Beijing Olympics. We know she has the flexibility and the grace required for dance, but we'll see whether or not she has the technical ability when wearing three-inch heels and dancing backwards.

Learning the various techniques, and even remembering the choreography must be incredibly difficult.

And don't forget the contestants are performing in this high-pressure environment with 20 million viewers tuning in every week. It's amazing to see how they handle the stress and the pressure, not to mention, how they succeed in overcoming their nervousness and anxieties.

PHOTO: ANDREW DAVISON; FASHION: STYLIST KEVIN BEAUMARTIST.COM; HAIR: CHRISTA FOLEY; MAKEUP: REBECCA L'OPANO; LOCATIONS: LOSANGELESSTATE.COM

Black tuxedo dress, \$320 from 7 For All Mankind; "Clover" black platform heels, \$315 from Peiss; Vintage gold cuff, www.7forallmankind.com; www.peiss.co.uk

What is the best thing about working on *Dancing With The Stars*?

I definitely love watching the rehearsals. That's where you get to see the real struggle and perseverance of the contestants. My mother and aunts all danced professionally so I've seen what it takes to get there. I danced a lot as a kid myself, but never became the dancer I thought I could be after missing out on a lot of the technical years of training while playing sports and doing other activities. It really takes a full time, life-long commitment to be as terrific and technically proficient as the pros who are on our show.

They really look so graceful and dynamic.

Oh I know. I love watching the musculature of the body... seeing how each muscle moves to create a dance line and posture for each specific genre. And then you add all the sweat,

My days were filled with a lot of activity. Then, when I moved out to Los Angeles everything changed. I had to struggle just to survive and make ends meet and all of a sudden, without the team sports and coaches and a committed circle of athletes around me, fitness took a backseat. I found that no one was telling me that I had to work out, so I had to take the responsibility upon myself if I wanted to stay in shape.

I think that really is key. We have to take responsibility for ourselves.

To be honest I am the same weight I was in junior high. I was just a lot softer then. I knew that to be healthy and to have the energy to do all that I wanted to do, I really needed to embrace fitness as a part of my daily life.

Treadmills couldn't keep my interest so I started taking aerobic classes and soon found that circle of committed people and inspiring

And productive in your personal life too. You're married now and have a daughter, Josselyn. How do you and your husband Michael (a financial wholesaler) find time in your active lifestyles for parenting?

It is quite the juggling act as we desperately struggle to get from A to B. I literally run from place to place, whether it's from my office to the studio, or home to pick up Josselyn before heading off to her music class. I think that's one of the reasons why I no longer work out six days a week like I used to. But this keeps me pretty active because I'm packing so much into each day to accomplish everything. The one thing that does fall by the wayside however, is time to breathe and time for just my husband and myself. We do like to exercise together and even though we may be tired or stressed, we always feel better afterwards.

How has motherhood changed you?

Hands down, it changed my priorities as a person. Immediately, for my husband and I, everything else took second position to taking care of our daughter and making sure she was happy. It has been such a blessing. I'm really completely at a loss when trying to describe what being a parent is like, because it's so intangible. From the moment my daughter was born, I knew she would always be my baby, no matter how old she got. It also gave me a much stronger appreciation for my own mother. It certainly has been very eye-opening for me.

After Josselyn was born, you actually included her in your exercise program when getting back into shape. Have you kept that up?

It's a lot harder to do lunges and squats with her now that she's older. She is much heavier now, so carrying her when stair climbing, as I did before, is not as easy. I do carry

her around a lot however, because when I get home from work I just want to hold her. Carrying that weight on my arms definitely helps supplement those days when I can't do free weights at the gym.

I also do interval jogging with my husband while pushing the stroller. We enjoy trips to Santa Monica beach and alternate who pushes the stroller and jogs, and who

Fairy Dress in watermelon, \$295.
"Emile" flower detail heels in natural, \$300 both Finess
(www.finess.co.uk)



excitement and passion that the contestants bring to each performance... it just makes everything so much more entertaining.

Was it your introduction to dance as a child that sparked your interest in fitness? Well I've always loved to be active. Throughout high school, I was involved in dance; I played basketball; I was constantly on the go,

coaches that I had missed since I left school. That really was what kept me going.

All of sudden I realized - 'I love this exercise thing! I love feeling fit and strong! I have muscles that I never had before! I have abs!' It really is an exciting thing to see how the body can change. My whole life actually changed. The healthier I felt physically, the more productive I became professionally.



“From the moment my daughter was born, I knew she would always be my baby, no matter how old she would grow to be.”



works the stairs. We try to do that most weekends and usually enjoy an awesome breakfast afterwards.

Any interest in the more spiritual side of exercise, like Yoga or Tai Chi? I've recently embraced Bikram Yoga. I found a place close to the studio, and I've been sneaking out right after the show, taking a class and then going back to the studio. As crazy as it sounds, doing yoga in a 106 degree room, energizes me for the rest of the day.

You also must be eating pretty well to maintain all that energy.

It's all about balance. I have an incredible sweet tooth, so I know I'm going to have my chocolate covered raisins, frozen yogurt and ice cream - sometimes every single day - to be honest. In order to do that, I have to make sure I am careful with other food choices. I will eat bean proteins, egg whites, chicken and fish and cut out mashed potatoes with butter or macaroni and cheese and fatty red meats.

Really, once you take on an active lifestyle, the nutritional choices become easier. It all goes hand in hand. You look better, you feel better and you really want to eat better. Now, I'm no angel, put french fries in front of me and I will eat them every time! But I balance that with other things, so if I do falter, I don't completely fall off the wagon. I get right back

on track with the next meal. The same goes with fitness. If I go a week without working out, because my schedule just doesn't permit, or if that hour at the gym would have cost me an hour with my daughter, my daughter is going to win. So that's when we try to put her in the stroller and get out for a run with bonding time together.

Well you've certainly managed to maintain a fantastic set of abs. Any tips? There are no shortcuts to showcasing a six-pack, and doing 100 crunches every day isn't going to get you there any quicker. You have to make smart choices with what you eat and maintain a balance of protein, carbohydrates and essential fats. You also have to incorporate your core into your day. You can engage your abs while just walking down the street or sitting at your desk. Try to sit up a little straighter and contract your muscles. Being aware of your core in the long run, will strengthen your back too.

Thanks for the tip. We look forward to seeing you on *Dancing With The Stars* and *The Insider*.

Absolutely, and I'm also going to be guest hosting *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* for a week in May and I'm currently working on my own hair care line called Salon Silky, which will be out very soon.

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