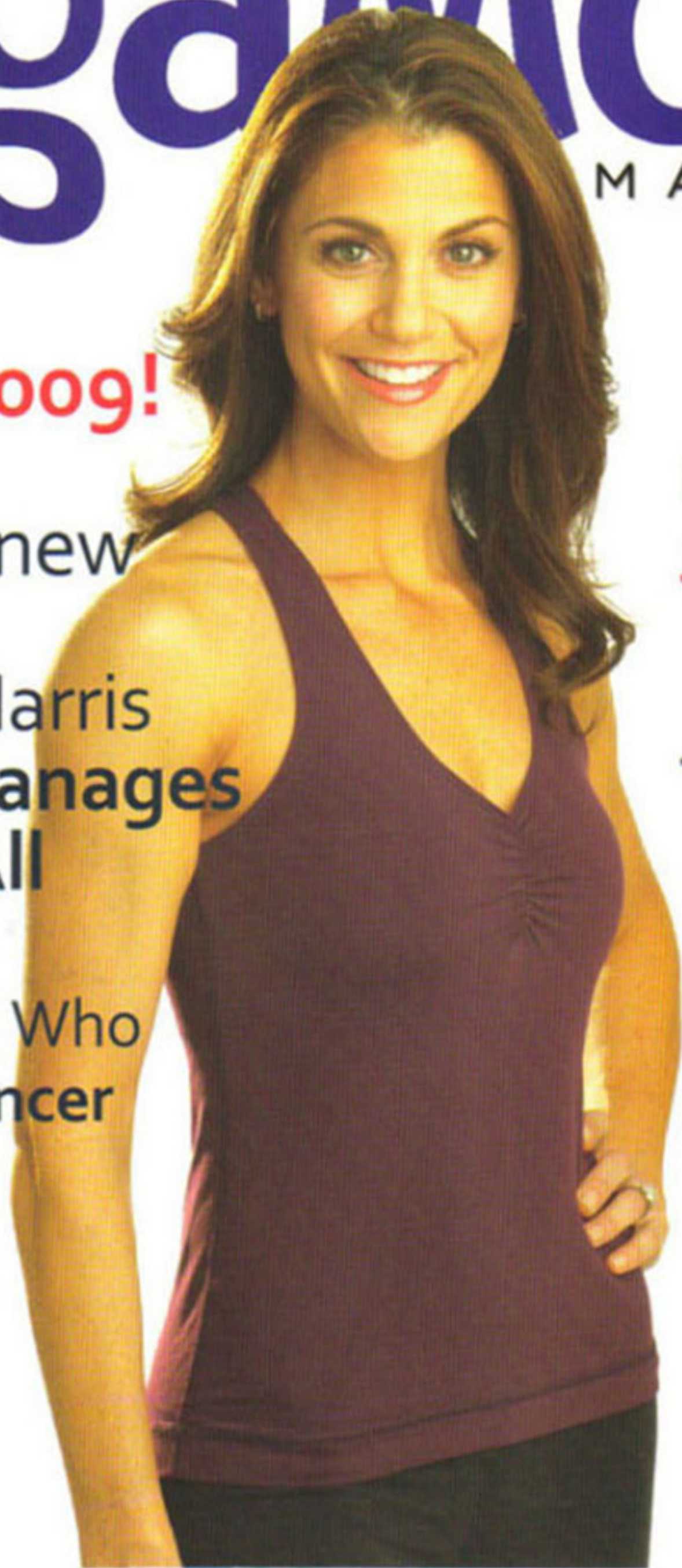


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ON THE COVER: YogaMom Samantha Harris, co-host of ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*. Photography by Jon McKee (jonmckeephotography.com).
 Makeup: Rebecca Schwedner (rebeccaschwedner.com; 323.691.0019).
 Hair: Sean Smith (323.938.9151). Clothing courtesy New Balance.

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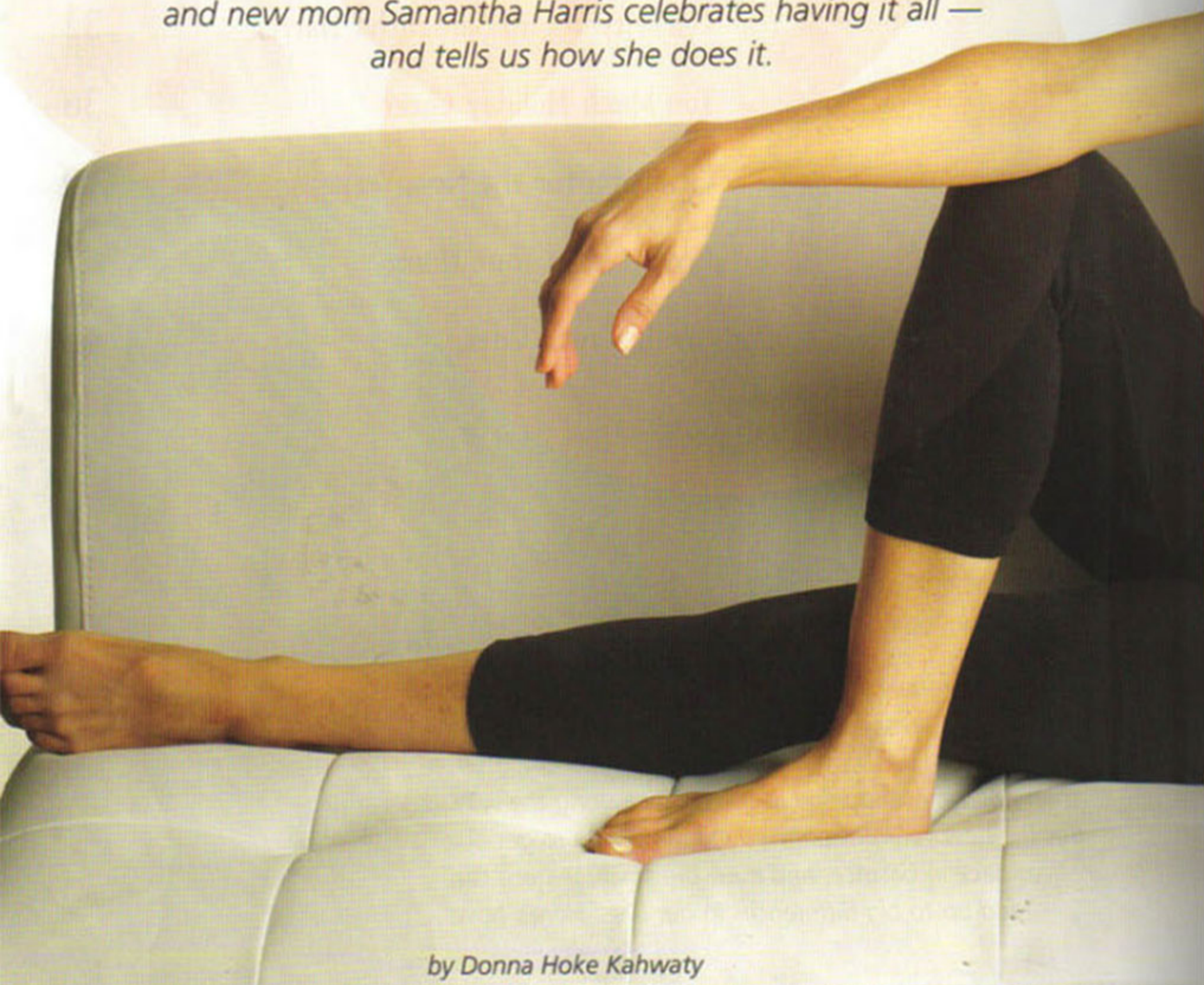


For most YogaMoms, the end of the year is more like a crash landing after a whirlwind of holiday celebrations. Even with the best intentions, more often than not we overindulge at some point along the way. But the new year presents unlimited options to get our lives back in balance, and even the smallest steps can add up to big differences in our lives. Here's how.



DANCING THROUGH LIFE

As *Dancing With The Stars* enters its seventh season, co-host and new mom Samantha Harris celebrates having it all — and tells us how she does it.



by Donna Hoke Kahwaty



Samantha Harris was a YogaMom waiting to happen. Juggling two jobs, a healthy diet (except for the stash of M&Ms in the freezer) and an active lifestyle, Harris needed only a child. When Josselyn Harris was born on September 23, 2007, the *Dancing With The Stars* host gleefully joined the ranks of YogaMoms across the country.

"I love the idea that I can incorporate bits and pieces of the yogic ideal, whether it's spirituality or balance, and not feel like I need to go 100 percent yogi," Harris says. "I can embrace the lifestyle without having to be extreme."

Even if she wanted to be extreme, Harris couldn't possibly find the time. As a full-time writer/producer/reporter for E! Entertainment, Harris is seen in more than 120 countries by more than 600 million viewers. Despite those numbers, she's most often recognized as the co-host of the ultra-popular *Dancing With The Stars*, a part-time job that requires 13-hour production days twice a week as well as hours of fittings, meetings and script memorization. For four years, she's been married to financial wholesaler Michael Hess, and when they became parents a year ago, Harris knew something had to give.

"Motherhood was a big adjustment and it forced me to assess what's important and what I can do without," Harris says. "I realized I can live without a busy social life, and I look forward to quiet nights with my husband after we put Josselyn to bed." Harris also cut cooking time in half by signing on with a healthy home meal delivery service three nights a week.

"I know in my mind I want to cook an amazing healthy meal for my husband and me, but after working a long day, when I do come home, I just want to play with the baby or go on a walk or hike, not slave away," Harris maintains. "I really enjoy cooking and have so many cookbooks with pages dog-eared for things I would love to make, but cooking takes a lot of time, so that was something I could give up. When Josselyn is older, it will be fun to have her help."

Harris already includes Josselyn in her own activities whenever she can, stair-climbing with her daughter strapped in a carrier, or doing walk/run intervals with the jogging stroller. She even

sneaks her into the E! offices once or twice a week. "We have lunch and there is a swing set with a koi pond," Harris says. "She's become a popular guest at the office; she likes to dance for everyone."

Clearly, dancing is in the genes. Harris grew up in a family of dancers. In the days when the Minnesota Vikings actually contracted a high school dance team to cheer, her mother and aunts, who were high schoolers at the time, were out front leading the cheers. Harris herself took dance classes through

college and beyond. "We were never of the ability of the *Dancing With The Stars* dancers, but I have such an appreciation for how the pros move," Harris says. "Watching them do their best work on our stage day after day is incredibly moving; that's what makes this the dream job."

Harris's dancing background may have given her a leg up on the competition for her dream job, but don't discount determination and talent. After graduating from Northwestern University with a



Fast Facts

Birthday: November 27, 1973, Hopkins, Minnesota

Go-To Meal for Dinner Parties: Chicken Marbella, a dish made with white wine, capers and prunes

Most Surprising DWTS Guest: "The show takes celebrities who viewers think they know and lets viewers see the person behind the celebrity. That worked the most with Jerry Springer, who's very raunchy and out there with his talk show. The real Jerry is this warm, wonderful menschy man who was just a delight to get to know."

Favorite Yoga Poses: "Chair to get the glutes and thighs burning, twists because I feel like my back is so kinked up from holding the baby, and standing splits to really open up the hips."

Least Favorite Yoga Poses: "Anything that gives my knee too much flexion, like camel. Crow is uncomfortable, and I don't like doing handstands. I don't like what I think of as tricks, where everyone else looks and says, 'Wow, I wish I could do that.'"

When Pushups Come to Yoga: "Pushups are fantastic because they work all areas. I can do them on my toes, but I can't do as many yoga pushups on my toes — four or five and my triceps want to give out."

Married with Children: After seven years of courtship, husband Michael Hess proposed on a hike in Malibu; they've been married four years. Daughter Josselyn was born September 23, 2007.

Yoga Wisdom to Pass On to Josselyn: "Stop and take a moment to appreciate what's around you. I try to point out pretty cloud formations or a flower we might be passing. Hopefully, she's picking it up."

double major in journalism and theater, Harris headed to Los Angeles in search of something in the entertainment news business. Unfortunately, in the mid-'90s, cable as we know it today was in its infancy, and those jobs were scarce. That left Harris living the stereotypical life of the would-be performer — juggling three jobs while she auditioned for acting jobs by default.

(FINDING HER NICHE)

"That was not fun," Harris recalls. "That was a lot of years sitting in a room at casting calls with 20 other girls who look just like you, but maybe you were too short, or brown-eyed instead of blue, and you never knew why you weren't chosen, but you kept persevering."

Over the next five or six years, as cable exploded, Harris found herself taking more and more hosting auditions, which confirmed her natural abilities. "With hosting jobs, I got a callback 90 percent of the time, whereas with acting, I got a call maybe 18 to 20 percent of the time," Harris acknowledges. Though she landed some bit parts, the always-up-to-a-challenge Harris resolved to nab a major acting role — just to prove something to herself. After she was cast as Maryann in the 2001 CBS movie *Surviving Gilligan's Island*, Harris closed the book on acting, concentrated on her hosting career — and watched it take off.

Harris's big break came when after taping "a ton of TV pilots that never made it," she was cast to host a show for *AMC Access*, an offshoot of NBC's *Access Hollywood*. From there, she signed with her current agents, and before she knew it, she was hosting *The Next Joe Millionaire*, then turning down a spot on *The View* (she was slated to fill Elisabeth Hasselbeck's slot, and has since guest-hosted) in favor of a job offer from *Extra!* that would enable her to stay in Los Angeles.

(TAKING TIME TO BREATHE)

Nobody could keep up with Harris's schedule without the abundant energy that comes from good genes and a healthy lifestyle. Growing up in Hopkins, Minnesota, Harris not only danced, but also played basketball and ran track, and she likes to work out just as hard now as she did then. Over the years, she dabbled in yoga, but it wasn't until about seven years ago that she got serious about it.

"I'm the type of person who is always go, go, go and for me to stop for an hour, I want incredible cardio, high energy, great music and a good sweat," Harris says. "But at the same time, I knew that yoga was important because I needed a forced hour where I could just stop and calm down all the stressful forces, take a breath and remember that life is good."

The problem: she got bored. Thirty minutes into class, she found herself thinking about 20 other things and staring at the clock. But as she does with everything, Harris persevered. Her mental focus improved. After a few months, she didn't look at the clock until 45 minutes had passed. Soon, the hour was flying by. "That's when I realized that yoga really needed to be part of my life," she concedes.

Not surprisingly, Harris's inner intensity junkie prefers ashtanga, a good sweaty practice that promotes deep stretching. She took yoga throughout her pregnancy, and even credits yoga for keeping her calm through the early stages of labor. "Do I think that yoga could help me through a non-epidural assisted labor? No," she laughs. "But I've always felt that it has been my saving grace in very stressful situations. If I get into that ujjayi breathing for a minute or two, it immediately calms me down. Even when I get nervous before I go on stage, a couple of yoga breaths are enough to get me going and once I'm into it, I'm fine."

(SAMANTHA — IN BALANCE)

And that's what Harris loves about the YogaMom lifestyle — whatever she does, whatever benefit she gets — can be enough. When it comes to diet, she's no different. "I eat a lot of sushi, whole grains, brown rice, tons of fruit, lots of Greek yogurt," she begins, "but I'm not a vegetarian. I don't eat red meat, but I always have some kind of protein — chicken, fish or tuna. Sadly, I eat plenty of pesticides, though I do try to give my baby as much organic as possible. I have a sweet tooth, and usually opt for Splenda, but have a nightly handful of dark chocolate-covered raisins. I fool myself and choose to believe that because they're fruit that they're not so bad..."

"My diet is all about balance. If I can exercise for an hour three or four times a week and make good meal choices the majority of the time while I juggle my career, family and personal time, then I'm not going to feel guilty about having dessert," Harris maintains. "My whole life is a balancing act." Y

