

Bow — as I brought myself to the floor in a simple but clearly rehearsed and choreographed movement. Bow pose works your entire back evenly and again demonstrates strength and flexibility. The judges looked to see if my feet were at the center of my body from the side, a perfect teardrop. I do find this challenging and have to continuously roll forward like a wheel going to a place of discomfort and feeling pressure in my upper abdomen and my lower ribs on the floor. I strive to maintain a six-inch gap between my knees and my feet, as it is not uncommon for the legs to open beyond hip-width distance in order to attain further range. If the knees open too wide, form is sacrificed for range and a good judge will notice and mark maybe a half point off.

In previous years as I trained for the championship, bow revealed imbalances in my body as I noticed my right toes were slightly higher than my left. When I teach I've been known to say, "First we work to heal your body of any ailment or disease, and then we develop greater awareness, refining each posture as we find equilibrium. It is completely normal to have one side stronger, one more flexible, and that imbalance will flip-flop from shoulders to hips, from knees to ankles." Observing my body with a keener eye and striving to attain physical balance is deeply satisfying. I find joy in discovering imperfections and after years of practice I am able to laugh and let go when I fall out of a posture, as it is a gentle reminder that I am human! I simply begin again with faith that I have exactly what I need and no expectations of what is to come. Even at the championship, the participant is given a second chance. Should they falter before they've

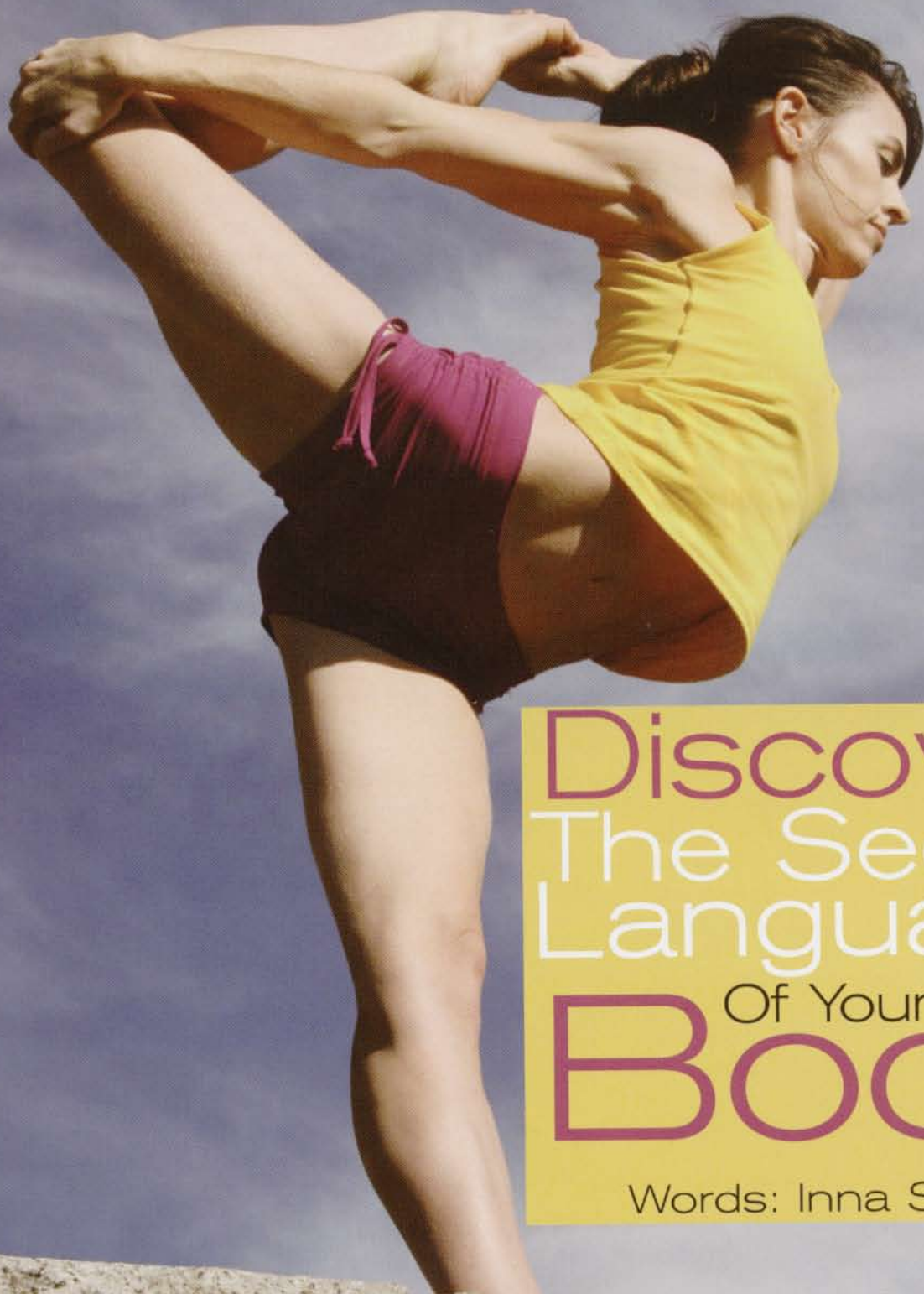
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reached the height of the posture, it is a good idea to begin again. However, a second attempt can only receive half the maximum points allotted for a perfect demonstration so the participant must determine when this is in their best interest.

From Bow, a gentle push-up moved me into Rabbit pose where a deep forward compression brings my forehead to my knees, feet on the floor. I attempt to bring my hips directly above my knees and to round my spine as much as possible and strive for a perfect C-curve. This is not easy for me to attain, and after eight years I still find this one of my most challenging postures. The grip is the key to Rabbit pose. Strong fingers wrapped around one's heel to the inside of your foot will allow for greater traction and thus more extension through the

WELLBEING

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Photo: Guy Lacroix



Discover
The Secret
Language
Of Your
Body

Words: Inna Segal