

Stand aside, stunt double!

Alias star Jennifer Garner worked hard-really hard-to get in shape for the role of her life. Now she's getting a kick out of life and throwing her own punches.



A TOP A 30-FOOT BAMBOO LADDER ON THE SET of ABC's hit drama Alias, Jennifer Garner is about to fight her nemesis in yet another effort to save the country from evil. It's a formidable task, and she keeps repeating instructions to herself: "Take the hit, let go, tighten stomach, flail arms, scream." So what if real-life CIA double agents don't have choreography to follow as Garner, who plays agent Sydney Bristow does? She and her co-stars share a very real commitment to getting it right, whether "it" is dialogue in a foreign language or a difficult stunt. Right now, "it" is all about getting kicked in the head. Garner-fastened into a custom-made harness that's attached to a stunt wire-falls and screams with such a mix of fear and

Bam!

indignation, you wonder if she let go before she was actually ready. When she hits the mat, her gleeful laughter gives her away. For Garner, there's nothing better than getting paid to fall 30 feet for a living. "I do 95 percent of my own stunts," Garner proudly tells SELF. "I shoot everyone, and Dana Hee, my stunt double, shoots them as well. Anytime you don't see my face on camera, it's Dana. I'm trying to learn to act with my body the same way she does." To that end, Garner has embarked on some intensive training which began before she even landed the role. It was a remark from her husband, Scott Foley (Felicity's Noel Crane), that inspired Garner to master martial arts moves before her Alias audition. She had studied ballet from age 5, so she had the required agility. But, Garner admits, "I hit like a girl." Apparently, her spouse agreed "Scott was very encouraging but he told me, 'If they ask you to throw a punch, you're sunk,' and I knew he was right." She enrolled in private lessons for a month at a tae kwon do studio. When the producers asked Garner if she could kick, she recalls, "I thought, Finally, I've been waiting for this. And I threw a couple." Once Garner got the part of Bristow, her workouts intensified. Los Angeles-based fitness trainer Valerie Waters led her through hour-long cardio and strength-trainings sessions three times a week.

