

SPORTS BRA BASICS

1. Choosing the Perfect Bra for You

Before buying a sport bra, ask yourself these questions:

- a. What's my regular bra size?
- b. What's my activity level?
- c. Do I run/walk every day, do aerobics, take a yoga class three times a week – how active am I?
- d. What styles do I like?

You should select a bra that fits your size, activity level, and personal preferences.

2. Avoiding Chafing

Chafing happens because of abrasion and moisture. When you wear a bra close to your body, after an extended time, the seams tend to run against your skin and cause abrasions. Rubbing seams combined with perspiration results in painful red marks in some very sensitive areas! You can avoid chafing by choosing seamless bras. Seamless refers to bras made using a new knitting technology that reduces or eliminates seams. The bras are made of fabrics that lift moisture away from your skin and allow it to evaporate. Selecting a bra that fits right is very important. If your bra is too loose or too tight, you'll increase your chances of chafing. Body lubricants also reduce chafing by acting as a protective barrier between your bra and your tender skin. Use it on all chafe-prone areas before every run or walk.

3. Avoiding the Uni-Boob Look

If you don't like the one boob look you get from bras that support your breasts by means of compression, choose bras that feature molded cups, which help you maintain your shape without sacrificing support. They're perfect for A cup women who want more shape, and A-C cups who simply hate compression sport bras. An added bonus is that because the cups are molded, there is no nipple show through.

4. Wearing One Bra, Instead of Two

If you select one bra that's the right support and fit for your size and activity level, you won't need to wear two. Besides, wearing two bras increases your risk of chafing and may cause you to overheat while you're working out.

5. Measuring Yourself for a Proper Fit

You'll need a tape measure, and a good fitting bra. With only a bra on, measure around your body, just below the breasts. This measurement should be in inches. Add 5 to that number. That is your Bra Size. Next, measure around the fullest part of your breasts. The difference between the two numbers is your cup size. One inch difference is an A, two inches a B, three inches a C, and so on. For example, if you measure 31 inches around your chest below your breasts, you'll add 5 to that for a bra size of 36. When you measure around the fullest part of

your breasts, you get 38. The difference between the 2 is 2 inches. You are a 38 B. If you're still unsure, many store employees can help you with this process.

6. Health Problems with Unsupportive Bras

Not wearing a supportive bra can lead to breasts that bounce and hurt while you're working out. Also, some bras can cause abrasion over your shoulders, across your chest, or along the base of your breasts. Getting a good comfortable bra is important.

7. Smaller Breasted Women and Support

Absolutely, smaller breasted women will experience discomfort if they are not wearing a bra that is supportive. The difference is that they do not require as much technology in their bra to achieve the proper level of support. **They do still need a good sport bra.**

8. Larger Breasted Women and Support for High Impact

If you're a size DD cup or above, it is important to purchase a bra that gives you the amount of support you need. There are certain features incorporated into a bra to offer more support and comfort: wider straps (even padded straps help distribute the load more evenly), encapsulated cups/molded cups, more coverage across the front and back, possibly an under wire construction. The demi-tops, tanks, and halters would not be recommended. Please refer to our handout "Resources for Larger Sizes" for more information.

9. Shopping Test/Tips for Support

First, do a "bounce test" for motion control and comfort. By running in place, or bouncing up and down, you will quickly learn if the bra is supportive enough for your needs. Buy from reputable companies that offer a good guarantee. If the bra has adjustable straps, make sure to adjust them for customized fit (this can make a big difference in the fit, comfort, support, and control of the bra). The biggest mistake most women make is having the straps too loose. Of course, be sure not to make them so tight that they pinch or dig.

10. Average Price for a Sports Bra

The cost of a good sports bra can be anywhere from \$35 to \$70 or more. We believe the old adage "you pay for what you get" applies to most bras. Do not base your decision on price, but on the other essential features we mentioned above. **SPORT BRAS MAY BE EXPENSIVE, BUT THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!**

11. Average Life Span and Replacement of a Sports Bra

The life span depends on the wash, care, and frequency of usage. We highly recommend not using a dryer as this may cause some of the fabrics to break down. It is time to replace the bra when it loses elasticity and support. Some bras will also gain an odor over time.