

# How to Buy a Sports Bra

## Fast Facts



### 80 % of Women are in the wrong size bra

which means women's breasts are not being given proper support. Whether you're a small-breasted walker or a large breasted volleyball player, without a sports bra you can risk damage to your breasts. A woman's breasts lack any major muscles so she has to rely on two things to support her properly, the ligaments in her breasts and a properly fit sports bra. Once the Cooper's ligament (the supportive ligament of the breast) has been stretched, the only solution is a surgical repair that can be costly. Even though sagging naturally occurs throughout a woman's lifetime, a properly fit bra can help to delay the onset of sagging breasts. Don't be fooled into thinking that only women with large breasts will sag, even A cups are at risk for sagging



### Bras have a life of 6 -12 months

a good sports bra is not an inexpensive investment. Take extra care to hang it on a line to air dry after hand washing. Machine drying destroys the elasticity and support of the Lycra found in all good sports bras. Fabric softener reduces the wickability of the fibers. Remember women need to be refit at least once a year to ensure they are wearing the correct size bra.



### Average woman's bust size is a 36C

and has been growing since people are getting larger. Remember women need to be refit at least once a year to ensure they are wearing the correct size bra.



### Two most important pieces of equipment for an active woman- technical shoes & technical bra

No matter what your activity or breast size, a sports bra has become an integral and important piece of apparel. Sports bras are just as important as a properly fit pair of shoes. So why does a woman need a properly fit sports bra and what's the difference between a fashion bra and a sports bra?

## What to look for in a sports bra?

Finding the right sports bra isn't easy. A good sports bra helps to eliminate breast movement. It must have:

- the ability to wick moisture away from the skin, particularly between the breasts
- breathability to allow for a cooling flow of air
- ability to quickly dry
- must be proportioned and contoured to minimize chafing
- straps that don't dig into the shoulders
- the band around the lower chest shouldn't shift or bind
- thread must be soft and plush to minimize skin irritation
- have at least 25% Lycra, anything less won't compress breasts sufficiently

Before you buy, you must also consider your body type and activity. Different types of activity have different levels of breast movement. How much heat, and therefore perspiration, an activity generates will also determine the amount of moisture management needed. You may even have several different sports bras for several different activities.

There are three major types of sports bras, compression, compression/encapsulation, and encapsulation. The compression style bra is the most common and is designed to press the breasts flat as a single unit against the chest to minimize movement. The compression bra works well for small to medium breasted women, or A and B cup women.



The second style of sports bras, the compression/encapsulation bra is designed to encapsulate each breast as well as press the breast against the chest cavity. Typically these bras are great for medium to larger breasted women, such as C, D, and some DD women.



Encapsulation bras are best for larger breasted women. These look more like regular bras, some even have underwires, but they offer much more support by harnessing

each breast individually instead of compressing them as a single unit. Every part of an encapsulated sports bra must contribute to supporting the breasts so the shoulders don't bear all the weight.

When trying on a sports bra you should think of your bra as a house. The band is the foundation, the cups the supportive walls, and the straps the roof. The band of the sports bra should be doing all the work by offering your breast the most support. The cups of the bra are designed to help keep the breasts in place and offer additional support to the band. Finally, don't allow your straps to do all the work. The straps are designed to offer the least amount of support and shouldn't be over loaded with all your breasts' weight.

So are you wearing a cute fashion piece or a heavy duty comfortable sports bra? The answer lies quite often in the band strength and your breast size. The larger busted women needs more band strength than the smaller busted women. Typically this means that the larger the cup size becomes then the stronger and thicker the band gets. Most fashion bras are compression style bras with smaller bands that can be stretched to twice their size. Even well built compression bras can become fashion pieces for the C, D, and DD woman. If you desire a bra that looks great with a matching pair of shorts then look no further, because bra companies are now designing bras that are supportive as well as colorful. The C, D, and DD women out their can finally say good bye to black and white and hello to colorful, great looking supportive bras.

When shopping for a sports bra, try several styles that correspond to your lingerie bra size, keeping in mind a good sports bra will fit more snugly than a regular bra. Test for motion control; do a couple of jumping jacks or try running in place. Does it minimize breast movement well enough? Clap your hands over your head. If the elastic band around your chest moves up, it doesn't fit properly. Check the seams are smooth and soft. Look for breathable and supportive fabrics such as CoolMax, CoolMax Alta, Supplex/Lycra and PowerLycra to name a few.

## How to fit a sports bra

*Fitting a bra is an 'art' not a 'science'*

- Measure the your rib cage to figure out your band size
- Add 5" to the rib cage measurement
- Measure the your bust size (around the fullest part of your breast)
- Subtract the band size from the bust size to determine your cup size:

-1" difference = A cup

-2" difference = B cup

-3" difference = C cup

-4" difference = D cup

-5" difference = DD cup

*if a 36DD is not available a 36DD can become a 38D by going up a band size and down a cup size*

Find a bra that will support your activity level and works for your cup size then make sure that the band, cups, and bra fit well.

Signs that a bra does not fit well

- Gapping or Spillage
- Think of the band of the bra as the "foundation" of the bra-supporting the breast
- Straps digging into the shoulders
- If you pull on the shoulder straps and you feel all the weight in them the it is NOT a good fit

Finally, a good sports bra is not an inexpensive investment. Take extra care to hang it on a line to air dry after hand washing. Machine drying destroys the elasticity and support of the Lycra found in all good sports bras. Remember the life of a sports bra is 6-12 months and women need to be refit at least once a year to ensure they are wearing the correct size bra.

All the staff at Fleet Feet Sports-Louisville, including the men (just so they know) have been educated in how to fit and what to look for in a sports bra. We appreciate your business and look forward to helping you and your friends in the future with their bra questions and fittings.

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