



Sports Bra
Fitness

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Telephone: +61 (02) 42 214262. Facsimile: 61 (02) 42 215945

Website: <http://www.uow.edu.au/health/brl/>

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Graphic Design: Jemma Perin
demdem@lizzy.com.au

bullprint

Ph: +61 (02) 42 851446
Fax: +61 (02) 42 852243
Email: sales@bullprint.com
1 Molloy St, Bulli
NSW, 2516

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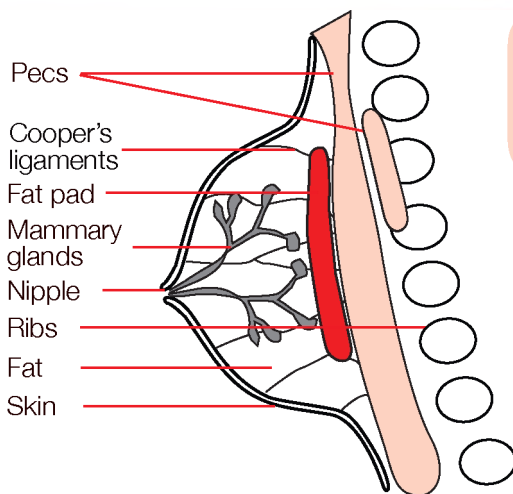
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Know your *breasts*

SO WHAT ARE BREASTS?

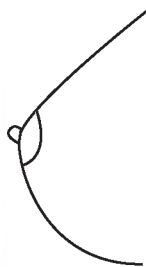
Breasts, bosoms, boobs, or whatever you want to call them, are something every female has. Although everyone's look different, all breasts sit on top of the pectoralis muscles ("pecs") and are all made of the parts shown in the picture below:



Cooper's ligaments and the skin are the only anatomical structures that provide any breast support.

BREAST SHAPE

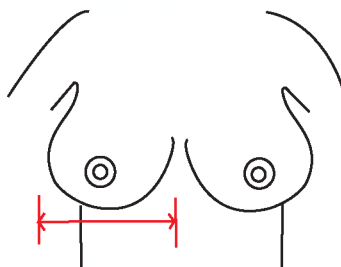
There are three different types of breast shape:



Pert breasts are round and sit upright.



Ptotic breasts are cylindrical and hang down.



Broad breasts are wide with breast tissue extending towards your armpit.

The design and fit of a bra can change the way your breasts look!

Does *size* matter?

DO YOU NEED A SUPPORTIVE BRA?

If you have small breasts that don't move much when you exercise, you're pretty unlikely to suffer from exercise-induced breast discomfort. Lucky for you, there is a wide selection of bras that are supportive enough for you to wear during sport. However, if your breasts move a lot during exercise or if you suffer from exercise-induced breast discomfort, even if they are small, a supportive bra is an absolute must. Generally, bigger breasts mean more movement and more discomfort. The solution - a more supportive bra! Some females might need a very supportive bra even when just doing gentle exercise, such as yoga or walking.

SIZE MATTERS!

It might seem pretty obvious but the bigger your breasts, the heavier they are. For example, a size 12B breast weighs about 200 g, but a size 16D breast weighs about 700 g; that's nearly 1 kg each! The largest known natural breasts weighed about 20 kg! All girls can suffer exercise-induced breast discomfort. However, the more your breasts move during exercise and the heavier they are, the more discomfort you are likely to suffer and the more you will need a supportive bra.

How can I *check* my bra size?

ESTIMATING BRA SIZE

A bra can only function properly if it fits you. So, getting the right size bra is just as important as choosing the right type of bra. Bra size has two components: a band size number (e.g. 10, 12, 14) and a cup size letter (e.g. A, B, C). The bra size you calculate is only an **estimate** and this size will vary from bra to bra. Therefore, you must try on every bra and check that it fits you!

Estimate your bra size by following the steps below.

STEP 1: CALCULATE BAND SIZE:

- While standing relaxed, measure around your chest just under your breasts (in centimetres).
- Use Chart 1 (see opposite page to find out your band size.)

cm

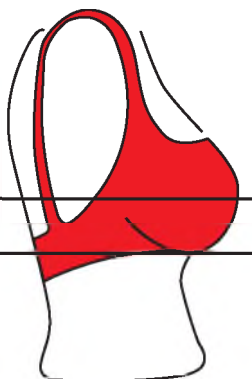
STEP 2: CALCULATE CUP SIZE:

- Measure around your chest over the fullest part of your breasts (with a bra on).
- Use Chart 2 (see opposite page to find out your cup size for your band size.)

cm

STEP 2

STEP 1



Will I always be the same bra *size?*

YOUR BREASTS CONSTANTLY CHANGE SIZE:

- As your body changes during adolescence.
- If you put on or lose weight.
- If you increase or decrease the size of your pecs.
- At different times during your menstrual cycle.
- When you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

As the **size of your breasts change so will your bra size!** In fact, you might need to wear a different bra at different times of the month if your breasts are affected by your periods.

It doesn't matter whether you measure yourself or get professionally fitted, your bra size is only an **estimate!** Remember, just because a 14B fits you in one style or make of bra, does not mean that a size 14B bra will always fit you. Even if it is exactly the same bra, but in a different colour, the size might be different (bras are dyed after they are made and the process can change the size).

Therefore, you must try on and assess the fit of every bra!

A study by Choice Magazine in 2005 found that 70% of females who were professionally fitted for a bra were wearing the wrong size!

What is *good* bra fit?

CUPS

| | |
|----------|---|
| A | Your breasts should be fully contained within the cup, not bulging over the top or out of the bottom of the cup. There should not be any wrinkles in the cup. |
| B | Your breasts should be lifted and slightly compressed against your chest, not hanging. |

FRONT BAND

| | |
|----------|---|
| C | All of the front band should be in contact with the skin of your chest, not gaping away from your body. |
|----------|---|

UNDERWIRE

| | |
|----------|---|
| D | The underwire should sit on your rib cage, not on your breast tissue. |
|----------|---|

BAND

| | |
|----------|--|
| E | The band at the back should be level with the band at the front. The band should not ride up as you raise your arms. |
| F | The band should be snug so that there are no wrinkles. But it shouldn't be so tight that it restricts your breathing or makes flesh bulge over the back or side band. Ensure that the band is wide enough. |

STRAPS

| | |
|----------|--|
| G | Wide enough and adjusted to comfortably provide breast support without digging into your shoulders. Make sure the straps have room to be adjusted in case you need to tighten them later on. |
|----------|--|

HOOKS

| | |
|----------|---|
| H | Ideally fitted on the middle or loosest hook when new so you can adjust the bra if the fabric stretches or if you change shape. |
|----------|---|

Your bra is too *big* if...

CUP

- There are wrinkles in the cup and the cups are not lifting and compressing your breasts.
- Your breasts are not lifted and instead hang down.

FRONT BAND

- All of the front band doesn't touch the skin of your chest.

BAND



- The back band sits higher than the front band because the straps are too tight and the band is too loose.
- The band is not firm around your trunk, even when on the tightest hook. It rides up as you move your arms above your head.

STRAPS

- Your straps keep falling off your shoulders, even when at their tightest.



Types of *support...*

| | FASHION BRA | MINIMISER BRA |
|------------------|---|--|
| SUPPORT TYPE | Designed to look good rather than provide support. | Designed to compress and hold your breasts up against your chest to make them look smaller. |
| TYPICAL FEATURES | Typically made from material that is attractive (e.g. lace or stretch Lycra) rather than strong or supportive. Straps are designed to be attractive or not to show and are therefore either very thin or don't exist. Cups often don't cover all of your breasts. | Although sturdy in construction, these bras are not designed for sport. Therefore, they aren't made of materials that breathe or keep sweat away from your body. |
| EXAMPLE BRAS |  |  |
| SUPPORT LEVEL | The name says it all - fashion, not support. While they can offer enough support for some smaller breasts, most females should not wear these bras during exercise. | Although not designed for sport, they can be supportive enough to be worn during exercise. |

What *type* of bra should you wear during sport?

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

When choosing a bra to wear during sport, the main things to consider are that the bra must be **comfortable**, it must **fit well** and it must provide enough **support** to limit your breast motion and/or breast discomfort during sport.

Some other things to look for in a supportive bra are:

- Stronger, less elastic materials - not lace or stretchy material found in fashion bras.
- Fabrics that can breathe - this keeps sweat away from your body, making the bra cooler to wear during exercise.
- Wider, padded straps that connect to the rear band of the bra closer to the middle of your back.
- A wider chest band that is made from a sturdy material that supports the weight of your breasts.
- Cups that contain most of your breast tissue.

Am I being *supported* enough?

CHANGE ROOM TEST

When buying a new bra, running on the spot in the change room is a good way of seeing how supportive the bra actually is. How much breast movement does the bra really limit? Try this quick test...

STEP 1: BREAST BOUNCE-0-METER:

Using your index finger, hold the breast “bounce-0-meter” vertically so that it sits on top of the front band of the bra you want to buy. The black line should sit level with your nipples. Holding the bounce-0-meter in this position, run on the spot and watch how much your nipples move above and then below the black line. If your total movement stays within the pink zone - you are well supported! If the movement goes into the black zone, you should look for a more supportive bra. You can find the bounce-0-meter inside the back cover of this booklet.

STEP 2: BREAST DISCOMFORT:

Now run on the spot:

- Is the bra generally comfortable? If not, try another bra.
- If yes, how much breast discomfort or pain do you have while running and jumping? Rate this 0 = no discomfort to 10 = worst discomfort ever. Hopefully, you have no discomfort but if your rating is more than 5, you should try a more supportive bra.



Does my bra *fit* properly?

One of the main reasons a bra feels uncomfortable is that it doesn't fit! For a well fitting and comfortable sports bra, look in the mirror and make sure that:

- The size and shape of the bra cup and underwire match your breast size and shape; the underwire does not dig into your breasts.
- The cup fully contains and moulds to the shape of your breasts, with no wrinkles or bulges.
- The band supports most of your breast weight. Check by sliding the straps off your shoulders; your breasts should not drop more than a centimetre or two;
- The band does not slide up and down your trunk as you move your arms above your head or does not feel too tight, making it hard to breathe.
- The straps are firm without digging into your shoulders. A tight strap does not mean a supportive bra!
- The fabric is strong, sturdy and supportive with no seams that rub or irritate your skin or nipples, while also allowing sweat to dry from your body.

UNSURE ABOUT THE FIT?

After reading this booklet, if you are still not sure if your bra fits, then get professionally fitted. Ask the fitters what to look for to make sure your bra fits you correctly! Professional fitters can be found in specialty lingerie shops and major department stores (e.g. David Jones, Myer). Yes, it can be embarrassing, however, these women do this all the time, so there's nothing to worry about. Getting your fit right now is worth the embarrassment if it can stop you getting hurt later!

Tips for bra *bands!*

WHICH HOOK SHOULD I USE WHEN DOING UP A NEW BRA?

Ideally the middle or loosest hook. This allows you to tighten or loosen the bra as the material stretches with wear or as you change shape.

HOW TIGHT SHOULD THE BAND BE?

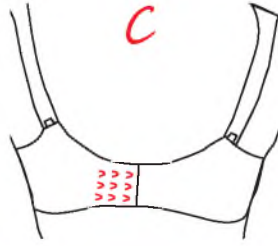
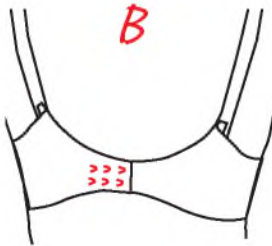
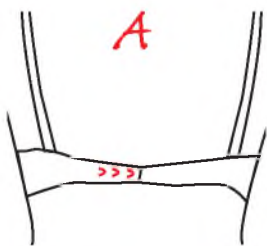
The band should be firm (so it doesn't ride up if you lift your arms above your head) but not cutting in (no bulging flesh!). The band should support most of the weight of your breasts; the straps take the rest. So if the band is too loose, the straps will have to support too much weight, causing strap discomfort. If the band is too tight, flesh will bulge over the side and back of the bra – a bad look under a fitted top!

HOW WIDE SHOULD THE BAND BE?

Wide enough to support the weight of your breasts. If it is too narrow it will not support the weight of your breasts properly and it will cut into you, making it uncomfortable. Follow the general rules below for correct band width.

Remember: The width of the band at the front is as important as the width of the band at the back.

| CUP SIZE | MINIMUM HOOK NUMBER | PICTURE |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------|
| A CUP | 1 | A |
| B - C CUP | 2 | B |
| D - E CUP | 3 | C |
| F CUP AND ABOVE | 3-4 | C |



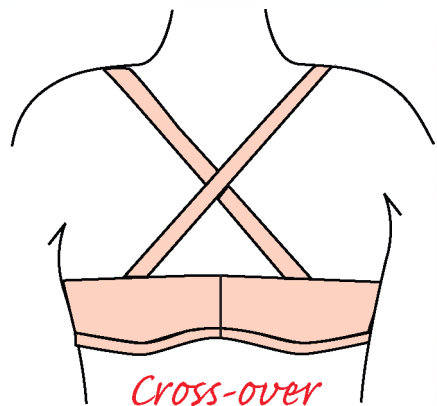
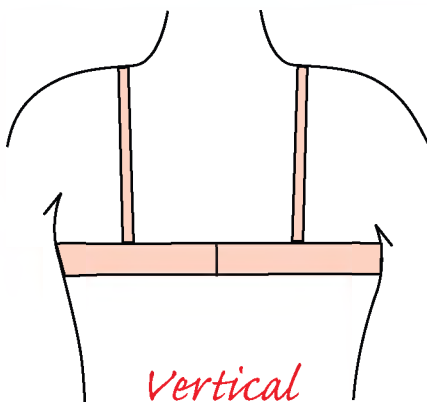
Tips for *straps*

HOW LONG SHOULD BRA STRAPS BE?

Adjustable enough so that you can tighten them as they wear and loosen them as you change shape.

WHICH STRAP DESIGN SHOULD YOUR BRA HAVE?

Comfort is the key! Most bras have vertical straps to reduce vertical breast bounce. Cross-over, T-bar and racer back straps can help prevent the straps from slipping off your shoulders (and can pull your shoulders back). However, if they are made of flimsy material they might not support your breasts enough. Make sure the straps are wide or padded so they don't dig into your shoulders. It's really what you feel the most comfortable in!



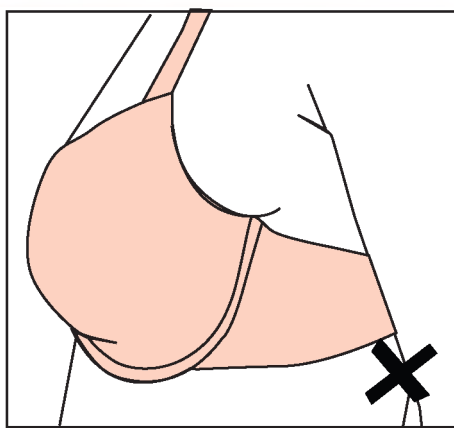
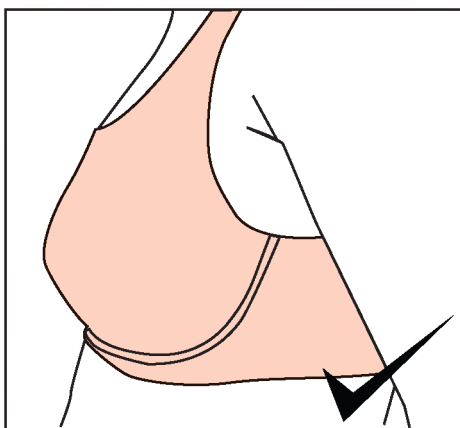
Quick fix for *underwires*

PROBLEM: *Underwire cutting in?*

CAUSE: There can be many causes such as the bra cup might be too small or the band too tight. The underwire shape might not suit your breast shape or the underwire might have lost its shape or be cutting through the fabric.

SOLUTION: Underwires come in different shapes so it is important that the underwire fits your breast shape. As breast tissue and the surrounding lymph glands are soft and deformable, underwires that dig into your sides can damage your breast tissue. Make sure that the underwire sits on your ribs, not your breasts. Underwire can help shape and support your breasts, but it is not essential in a bra. Some females feel more comfortable in a non-underwire bra, especially if the underwire cuts in despite every other part of the bra fitting properly. If the underwire has gone through the material, it is time to buy a new bra!

Bra Brawl? There is no scientific evidence that wearing a bra with underwire leads to breast cancer!



How should I *care* for my bra?

HOW LONG SHOULD MY BRA LAST?

Manufacturers say that bras that are worn often (more than every second day) should last about 3-6 months if they are cared for correctly. So make sure you look after your bras properly!

CAN I PUT MY BRA IN THE WASHING MACHINE AND DRYER?

The more you sweat during sport, the more often you should wash your bras as sweat can eat into the bra fabric. Ideally, bras should be hand-washed or machine-washed using the gentle cycle. If you use a washing machine, put your bras in a washing bag with the bra hooks done up so they don't get tangled. It's best not to put your bras in a dryer or hang them on the line from their band as they will stretch. Your bras will last longer if you dry them flat or hang them from the centre front band.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN MY BRA IS PAST ITS USE BY DATE?

Signs to look for that a bra is too old:

- The material of the bra is breaking down.
- The bra has lost its elasticity and seems too big.
- The bra does not support your breasts, your breasts hang down or you need to keep tightening the straps to lift them up.
- The band has become very loose, even when placed on the tightest hook.
- The bra does not reduce your breast motion or exercise-induced breast discomfort anymore.

About my *bra*

MEASUREMENTS:

Under breasts: _____

Over breasts: _____

Calculated Bra Size: _____

Bra Purchased: _____

Date: _____

Location Purchased from: _____

Style: _____

Size: _____

**HAVING TROUBLE BUYING A COMFORTABLE BRA TO WEAR DURING SPORT?
THIS BOOKLET HAS BEEN DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND. READ THROUGH
FOR HELPFUL HINTS ON BUYING A BRA THAT FITS, IS COMFORTABLE AND
PROVIDES YOU WITH GOOD SUPPORT DURING SPORT.**

*No project is ever achieved alone! We would like to thank the
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Community
Foundation



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