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# Looking for the perfect bra

A proper-fitting bra is vital as it can alleviate the strain on a woman's back and shoulders.

## WOMEN'S WORLD

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EVERY woman loves shopping – but when it comes to buying a bra, shopping can suddenly seem like a chore. That's because finding the perfect bra can be an almost impossible mission – almost, but not entirely.

You can find the right bra, but it's going to take more effort than buying a handbag. The effort is worth it though, as a proper-fitting bra can alleviate the strain on your back and shoulders, providing a lot more comfort.



**A good bra supports breast tissue, and this is important because breast tissue that is not properly supported will break down and lose its firmness.**

A good bra also supports your breast tissue – remember that breast tissue that is not properly supported will break down and lose its firmness.

Finally, why would a woman spend so much time and money looking for the perfect bra? Because it makes her look sexier, of course!

**A, B, C, what?**

According to experts, 75% to 80% of women wear the wrong bra size. We've all been victims of this mistake, suffering because our bras are gaping between the cups, pinching our flesh or cutting off our circulation.

Many women wrongly assume that their bra size is the same as it was 10 or 20 years ago. This is a mistake because your breasts get fuller when you reach your 20s, but succumb to gravity as you get older.

And in between, your bra size also changes if you get pregnant, breastfeed or experience weight changes.

Your bra size has a number, followed by a letter. For example, if you are 36C, 36 is your band size, while C is your cup size. To find out what your size is, you have to measure yourself.

First, put on your most comfortable bra, preferably one that has no padding.

To get your band size, measure the diameter of your rib cage just below your breasts and around your back. Add four or five inches to this number to get an even-numbered measurement, and you have your band size.

Now, put the tape measure around the fullest part of your bust. Then subtract your band size from your bust size; the result is your cup size. If it is one inch, you are an A cup, two inches a B cup, and so on.

### **The right bra for the right body**

Every woman has experienced moments of insecurity about her bust size. If you've been tempted to go for breast enlargement or reduction surgery, you might want to consider that maybe it's not the size that matters, but the bra.

A good bra can do wonders. For example, if you have a voluptuous bust, you may suffer back pain because of the uneven weight distribution. You need a bra that will properly support the weight – so that instead of looking like you're in pain, you can look good!

For breasts that have succumbed to gravity, underwire bras can do wonders at lifting the sagging. For small breasts, demi bras lift and shape breasts to create the illusion of voluptuousness.

### **What to look for when trying on a bra**

You've probably tried on countless pairs of bras over the years – but did you know that there is a right way of doing it so that you can ensure a better fit?

First, when putting on the bra, put your arms through the straps and bend over, letting your breasts fall into the cups. The cups should contain your breasts and should centre your nipple in the fullest part.

Clasp the bra using the middle hook. It should fit snugly; you should be able to slip two fingers beneath the band in the back, and one in the centre in front.

If it is too loose or if it cuts into your rib cage, try adjusting the clasp before going a band size up or down. Then, adjust the straps so that the band fits comfortably under your breasts and around your rib cage.

If the straps keep falling down, or if it feels as if your breasts are falling out of the bottom of the cups, then you should go down one band size.

To check your cup size, look at the fabric between your breasts – it should lie flat on the breastbone. If it sticks up or pokes you in the breastbone, go up one cup size. If the fabric puckers, go down one size.

Also go down a size if you notice wrinkles in the cup material.

Now, you've settled on the right size. But is the shape and design comfortable and flattering?

Try moving around the fitting room. The bra should be comfortable when you sit down, stand up, reach up and bend over. It shouldn't dig into your skin, poke you, ride up or feel like it's falling off.

And finally, your new bra should make you look good! Here's a tip: try on bras while wearing a T-shirt, as it's the best way to see whether the bra flatters your shape.

You know you've found the perfect bra when your breasts feel like they're "sitting" in the cups, the underwire does not pinch and the bra supports you well.

Finally, I will leave you with three important things to remember.

Firstly, sizes vary among brands, so be prepared to spend some time in the dressing room of the lingerie department.

Secondly, bras stretch over time, with washing and wear. You should hand wash your bras or put them in a mesh bag and run the delicate cycle of a washing machine. Do not tumble-dry them, but hang them out instead.

The third thing to remember is that your body shape changes, so don't expect your bras to last you a lifetime. Check the fit of your bras regularly; you may have to change them if they're not providing the support you need.

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