



OUR CHANGING BREASTS

Lift and shape—that's all we really want in a bra. Get those bosoms where fashion says they ought to be, or perhaps where they once were. But what about comfort? Knowing that women seek comfort and style in their foundations, the highly competitive bra industry attempts to meet this simple goal every year. And yet, truly comfortable and stylish bras seem to elude women everywhere. Why is this the case? First, your boobs are as different from the next woman's as your DNA. Even if you are the exact same bust size as the woman standing next to you, it's unlikely you wear the exact same bra. Nor should you. Breast fullness, softness, and tautness of skin (and where it falls) make bra fitting a true art form.

KNOW THY BREASTS, KNOW THY BRA

First, take off your bra and look at yourself in the mirror. Without being critical, take a good look at how your breasts hang. Certain types of bras will fit you better depending on where most of your flesh is located. If your breasts are more side-to-side (horizontal), you will want a bra that can gather up the tissue and bring it to the middle. Try a balconette, demicup or deep-plunge bra. (This style also works well for women who wear AA or AAA and find their girls swimming inside more full-cup-style bras.) If your breast tissue hangs more vertically, you'll want a bra that pushes up your breasts from below.

If you're a B cup, you have the advantage of being able to choose from a variety of styles—or choose not to wear a bra at all (lucky girls). Women with C cups may not feel as comfortable going braless. Whether the majority of your breast tissue rests higher up

Simple Dos and Don'ts of Bra Buying

- ✓ **DO** keep an open mind when choosing a bra, both in style and size.
- ✓ **DON'T** try on bras when you are premenstrual. You'll end up with too big a bra.
- ✓ **DO** ask for a new fitter if you're not comfortable with the person helping you.
- ✓ **DON'T** buy a bra out of frustration. Remember, there is a bra for every woman, no matter her shape or size.
- ✓ **DO** remember that "cutlets," or bra inserts, can even out any disparities.
- ✓ **DON'T** blame your breasts if the bra doesn't fit.
- ✓ **DO** visit www.booksonboobs.com for more bra and breast resources!



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on your chest or lower determines the bra that's best for your boobs. If you are a D cup or larger, consider wearing underwire bras for comfort and support.

#1 BIGGEST MISTAKE WE MAKE

What do professional bra fitters say is the number one mistake women make when buying a bra? We buy them too large in the band and too small in the cup. We often think our breasts are held in place by the straps of our bra. In fact, the band is specifically engineered to carry the weight of our breasts. Why do we squeeze our breasts into smaller cups? We don't like to think of our breasts as "fat" (even though that's exactly what they are), so we squish our girls into places too small to be comfortable. Most bra fitters agree that going up a cup size and going down one band size is usually the first step to take when you feel uncomfortable in your bra.

BASIC BRA RULES

Rule #1: Accept That Your Breasts Are Special

Accepting your size is the first step in finding a bra that not only fits, but fits well. Karen Bierwagen is a Le Mystère sales consultant who calls herself a "boobologist." Bierwagen believes most women need to face reality when it comes to their true bra size. Women might think if they wear anything larger than the B and C cups featured in fashion

getting personal

magazines, there's something abnormal about their breasts. "The truth is that DD is closer to the average size of most women. So if you're a DDD, you're not far from the norm," says Bierwagen.

Rule #2: Expect Differences In Bra Fitters

Some fitters take one or two measurements, others take three. Some department stores insist you wear a special "fitting" bra before you are measured. Some fitters have years of experience and are truly experts in their field. Selma Koch, who owned the world-renowned Town Shop in Manhattan and worked past her ninety-fifth birthday, only had to glance at a customer to determine her proper size.

Rule #3: Accept That Not All Bras Fit Alike

Finding a bra that fits you well is not just about your distinct physical qualities. "There is no standard size in bra manufacturing," says Bierwagen of Le Mystère. (There's not even a professional lingerie association that could endorse or enforce such standards!) This is why you should rely on the help of an experienced bra fitter. A pro will know. She'll be familiar with many manufacturers and their styles and be able to easily and quickly recommend the type of bra that fits your exceptionally beautiful and original breasts. **CW**

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