

A Good Sports Bra Can Be Uplifting

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October is right around the corner and it happens to be National Breast Cancer Awareness month. With the increased awareness in breast health, it's important to think about how we support our girls inside and out, especially when running or working out. While we runners and walkers love the simplicity of our sport, there are a few critical pieces of equipment that you need to stay injury free and well supported. This includes a pair of good running shoes, moisture-wicking socks and apparel, and a properly fitted sports bra.

About 80% of women are wearing the wrong-sized bra. Weight loss or weight gain, pregnancy and breastfeeding are only some of the factors that can change your breast size or shape. If you've had any of these changes and haven't upgraded your bra wardrobe, chances are you're in the wrong-sized bra. In addition, just like running shoes, sports bras do wear out over time due to repeated washings and extended use. Sports bras should be replaced every 6-12 months. Take a look at your sports bras. If you can stretch them out excessively, maybe even fling them like a rubber band, chances are they're not giving you the support you need ☺

The wrong-sized or worn-out sports bra can cause a host of problems, from neck strain and back pain to sagging breasts. I recently came across a study conducted by Joanna Scurr, a biomechanics professor at the University of Portsmouth in England, which emphasizes just how important it is to have a proper-fitting bra while exercising.

Scurr analyzed 70 women with bra sizes ranging from A-cup to extra-large (including cup sizes over DD). Each woman walked, jogged and ran while wearing different bra types. During the exercise, the amount of breast movement in three directions was measured: up-and-down, side-to-side and in-and-out. As women increased their exercise intensity, their breasts moved proportionally more in some directions than others: More than 50 percent of the total movement was in the up-down direction **(with movements measuring 8 inches in the up-down direction!)**, 22 percent side-to-side and 27 percent in-and-out, regardless of breast size. The overall pattern of the movement resembled a figure-8. I don't know about you, but that hurts just thinking about it.

In addition, a wrong-sized or worn-out sports bra that doesn't control the bouncing during exercise **(remember, 8 inches of movement!)**, may lead to a condition called Cooper's droop. Cooper's droop is where the connective tissue strands in the breasts called Cooper's ligaments are stretched leading to permanent sagging of the breasts. Sagging breasts aren't just an inevitable factor of getting older; you can do something to prevent it.

Don't just pick a bra out because it *might* be the right size for you. Let us help you. We have a Personal FIT process for not only our footwear, but our sports bras as well! We take your measurements, recommend the best bras for you and show you how a good bra should actually fit you. A good sports bra will provide superior breast support, comfort, breathability and moisture control. Notice I said "a" sports bra - not two (or more). Yes, it's true, when you find the right sports bra, you'll only need to wear one at a time! We have a fabulous selection of sports bras for all shapes, sizes and support levels. No matter what your needs and preferences are, size A-DDD, racer back or not, we have what you need.

Take the time to take care of yourself. You're already trying to live a healthy, active lifestyle by working out and exercising. Give yourself every chance to be successful by wearing the right equipment. When you feel good, chances are you'll continue challenging yourself and reaching new heights, no matter what you do!

Happy running!

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