

EAT SMART BE FIT LIVE WELL

Cooking Light

65
tasty
top-rated
recipes

MARCH 2009

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everyday
pasta
delicious, quick & healthy

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Find a supportive sports bra

A SPORTS BRA THAT fits properly is one of the most important workout tools you can buy, since it will allow you to move with comfort and confidence, says LaJean Lawson, PhD, a sportswear consultant and sports bra researcher. Use these guidelines to shop for, test, and maintain a good sports bra.

In the store

■ **Search for a functional design.**

The bra should remove pressure from your back and shoulders and minimize bounce. Look for a wide back and thicker shoulder straps. “The straps should be thick and comfortable because they hold the majority of your breast weight,” says Kim Lyons, CPT, and *The Biggest Loser* co-trainer.

■ **Seek moisture-resistant fabric.** Opt for a bra with wicking material for moisture control, and avoid cotton bras, says Jenny Hadfield, MS, CPT, and author of *Running for Mortals*. Moisture can cause chafing.

■ **Select an exercise-appropriate bra.** Choose a stretchy garment that moves with your body for low-impact activities like Pilates and stationary biking. For high-impact activities like aerobics and running, aim for maximum support.

In the dressing room

■ **Try multiple sizes.** Use your everyday bra size as a starting point, but know that one manufacturer's 34C may fit like another's 36B.

■ **Beware of wrinkles.** A supportive sports bra should have no extra material. If you notice wrinkles or folds in the cup or the band, it's too big, Lawson says.

■ **Don't mistake tight for “just right.”** A sports bra should be more snug than your everyday bra, but not tight or distracting, Hadfield says.

■ **Take a test run.** Simulate your workout by running in place and stretching. This will show you if the bra stays in place, minimizes bounce, and feels comfortable in action. “You've found a perfect fit when the rib band stays put when you raise and lower your arms, your breasts are enclosed in the cups, the straps neither cut into nor fall off your shoulders, and any underwire is lying comfortably on your chest wall instead of on your breast tissue,” Lawson says.

In the laundry room

■ **Handle with care.** Wash bras after every wear to remove body oils and dirt. Use your washer's delicate cycle or hand-wash in cool water with a gentle detergent, then air-dry. Chlorinated detergents and dryer heat can break down fabrics and elastic.

■ **Keep extras on hand.** Don't wear the same bra during every workout. Instead, rotate between a few. This will also allow time for you to launder and air-dry bras between use, Lawson says.

—Laura Nathan

