

Female Athlete Education.

BREAST HEALTH: SPORTS BRA FIT



Breast health basics:

The female breast is a unique structure and is composed of three major components: **fibrous (connective)**, **glandular (mammary)**, and **adipose (fat) tissue**.

Cooper's ligaments are one of the **connective tissues** in the breasts, which are often described as the main supporting structure for the breast. But, these only offer **limited support** and most of the support is **provided instead by the skin** which overlays the breast

As the breast has limited support, even **small movements result in breast movement**, highlighting **the need for some level of external support**. This need for external support is **increased during sport and exercise!**

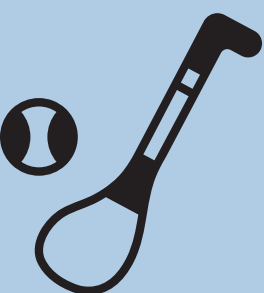
Approximately 85% of women/girls are wearing a poor-fitting sports bra!

This might be impacting both **participation** in sport and exercise, as well as **performance**. As such, it's important to be aware of the **different types of sports bras available** and how we can ensure **correct fit**.





Sports bra types:

There are **three** distinct styles:

- 1) Encapsulation** - work by lifting and supporting each breast separately (suited for larger-breasted women/girls e.g., >D cup).
- 2) Compression** - work by compressing the breast tissue to the chest wall (suited for smaller-breasted women/girls e.g., <D cup).
- 3) Combination** - incorporate both compressive and encapsulating features.



Five steps we can follow to ensure we get the best fit...

- 1 Underband:** The band should fit firmly around the chest. It shouldn't slide around with movement, but it shouldn't be too tight to be uncomfortable, affect breathing or make flesh bulge over the band. 
- 2 Cup:** The breasts should be enclosed within the cups, with no bulging or gaping at the top or sides. If the material puckers the cup size is too big. 
- 3 Straps:** The straps should be adjusted to comfortably give support without being too tight or loose. The main support should come from a firm band not tight straps. 
- 4 Front:** The front of the bra should sit flat against the body and not gape away from the chest - the closer that is to the body, the better the fit. 
- 5 Underwire:** Not all sports bras have this, but if it does it should follow the natural crease of the breast. 