

## THE BEST

*noun*

1. that which is the most excellent, outstanding, or desirable.  
"buy the best you can afford"

*Adjective*

1. of the most excellent, effective, or desirable type or quality.  
"the best pitcher in the league"

Synonyms for "The Best" include finest, greatest, top, foremost, leading, preeminent, premier, incomparable, ideal, perfect.

If you'd like to know how to pick out the best sports bra in just a few minutes, then read on.

Being the best requires innovation. The best has to be greater than any of its rivals. The best has to reinvent the solution to problems in a way that is new. When asked about how innovation makes something "the best," Tina Judic, Managing Director at Found said, "Innovation is borne out of a passion to deliver something different, unique and something that also awakens others' inspiration and interest."

What does a sports bra do? It provides support during heavy activity. It has to be strong enough to minimize bounce, without causing friction. It has to be comfortable, because no woman has time to constantly readjust a sports bra. And let's face it: it has to look good.

Therefore, finding the best sports bra is about recognizing innovation in key areas. Sports bras combine a variety of factors: cups, fabric, straps, and seams. All of these components need to work together to provide the support, strength, and comfort women need, all in a functional and marketable package.

Let's start by looking at the sports bra as a whole. Some bras use compression to hold and support breasts, pressing them against the body to prevent movement independent of what the body does. This works particularly well with smaller breasts or low-impact activities. For compression bras, you'll know the best by the fabric used. These bras should not stretch a lot. They should have wide straps and thick backs to help distribute the weight of the breasts as they press them into place.

Other bras are considered "encapsulation" bras. These bras have separate cups for each breast, and in many ways, look and fit like regular bras. With these bras, it's important to look at the band and the straps, many of which are adjustable. Is there padding beneath the closures, or is there a chance a hook can stab you in the back while you're working out? What about the straps- if they're adjustable, do they have the opportunity to chafe you or slide off the shoulders? If an

underwire is used, how is it separated from the skin, and what's the likelihood of it popping out during high-impact activity?

Many sports bras implement a combination of compression and encapsulation, and that's where innovation comes in. Anyone can build a bra, but what makes a sports bra, "the best" sports bra?

It starts with the fabric. The fabric should stretch, yes, to let you move. This is not a corset, and it should move and bounce with you- to an extent. You'll need to be able to lift and wave your arms and breathe through the rib cage. When you're inspecting a bra, pull on different areas of the fabric. Does it snap back into place, or does it just stretch and wilt? This will give you a sense of how supportive the bra actually is.

Fabric technology is not exempt from innovation, either. Moisture-wicking and anti-microbial factors can be found in a lot of sports bras. You want to be able to sweat in a sports bra. It needs to be able to retain its shape and support when wet, which cotton compression sports bras simply will not do. Chafing is also a huge consideration when it comes to sports bras- you don't want a pool of sweat around the base band, which can cause rubs in delicate places. Alo is an example of a brand that uses fabrics that are moisture-wicking and anti-microbial to ensure your skin is chafe-free, not irritated, and dry, offering very fashion-forward bra options for smaller sizes and lower impact activities.

Consider coverage. Yes, you'll want your sports bra to look good, but you're also going to be moving in it- a lot. Sports bras should rise high enough and provide enough coverage on the sides to prevent breasts from escaping, no matter what activity you choose. Many sports bras with high levels of compression will lift your breasts a bit, so make sure you're not going to pop out of the top. This extra coverage also provides support- breasts move not only up and down, but side to side during activities such as running, so having a higher neckline and full-coverage sides prevents any superfluous movement that can cause strain on the back and neck.

To racer back or not racer back: that is the question. There are pros and cons to both. Racer back bras are usually not adjustable, but they typically don't need to be. This means you don't have to worry about sliding adjusters digging into your shoulders or giving way with movement. This can also mean sore trapezius muscles, depending on your body. If you go with standard adjustable straps, look for straps that are wide. Look for straps that are padded, too, as these tend to slip less during exercise. The Panache sports bra line, for example, has wider, padded straps that won't dig into shoulders or slip around while exercising. Brooks Juno has introduced bras with straps that are Velcro adjustable. Both of these brands have used innovation in strap styling to earn ratings amongst "the best" in sports bras.

Lastly, consider seams. Most sports bras are going to have seams, and you'll need to be sure they're in a place that works. This can be different for a lot of bodies, depending on your form and activities you plan to do in your sports bra. Those who participate in sports with a lot of movement- think volleyball or softball- will want to be very cautious about where things rub, as they experience a great range of motion. Seams on the straps can usually pass the chafe test, but some sports bra manufacturers put the seams directly on the cups. Does that work for your activity? Champion is a brand that really pays attention to seams, going so far as to offer a seamless sports bra. There's intelligent padding to prevent seam chafing from every angle, which is an innovation nearly every woman can appreciate!

While it's important to read the reviews of a sports bra when shopping, keep in mind some of the things you've read in this article. If someone says it felt too restrictive, does that sound like they have the right size? If someone says it "feels like wearing nothing," is that the level of support you need for your sport? The best bra can go on and come off quickly. It shouldn't be a soaking wet, shapeless rag at the end of your exercise. There should be no chafing, no pinching, and no pain associated with wearing your bra. You should be able to move normally, stretching, reaching, and breathing with full range of motion. The best bra has your best interests in mind- it doesn't lose its grip, it doesn't poke or rub, and it provides support. In this day and age, it is possible to find a sports bra that does all of these things AND looks cute. With these key pieces of information in mind, you should be able to successfully shop for what you'll soon be telling your friends is "the best" sports bra you've ever worn.