



Stepping Stones to a better posture: Bra Fitting

It really is what's underneath that counts.....

Contrary to popular belief, **a quarter of UK women would actually like to make their breasts smaller** (according to a 2008 survey by figleaves.com and the British Chiropractic Association).

The main reason is that larger breasts are a real 'pain in the back' with 70% of the women surveyed admitting to having suffered from back pain at some point in their lives and nearly half (47%) claimed their breast size affected their posture.

Tim Hutchful from the British Chiropractic Association comments: "It really is quite shocking how many women still place how a bra looks over how much support it gives. Bras are like suspension bridges, you need a well engineered bra so your shoulders don't take all of the strain and end up doing all of the work, spreading the load is important. Bras that don't fit will affect the shoulders and chest and will almost certainly cause back pain as you get older."

He continues: "Back pain continues to rise in Britain and we want to educate people on the simple, everyday lifestyle changes people can make to prevent problems later in life. It is so important to make sure a bra gives you enough support as possible. Wearing the wrong size bra can lead to a number of problems including back pain, tingling in the arms, restricted breathing, abrasions, breast pain and poor posture."

According to the research, the average British bra size measures in at a substantial 34DD, so support should be the key priority when buying a bra, but women continue to place fashion over well being with 83% in the survey admitting that the appearance of a bra is a key factor when purchasing one, whilst a mere 1% consider how supportive a bra is to be an important variable.

Despite the long term consequences of wearing the wrong size bra, women do not get properly measured because they are embarrassed or just don't have the time. In the same survey, 77% of those women who got professionally measured discovered that they had been wearing the wrong sized bra!

Kate Horrell, figleaves.com's fitting expert recommends looking closely in the mirror at your bra and discloses the tell-tale signs that indicate you are wearing the wrong size.

The underband is riding up

Lift up your arms to see if the underband is tight enough. Check that the underwire is still fitting on the body. If you are still unsure, here's how to judge: the underband should fit firmly against the body so that it does not slide around or move away from the chest as you go about your daily activities.

- **The shoulder straps are digging in:**

The underband of a bra provides the majority (80 per cent) of support for the breasts, with the straps providing just 20 per cent. If the bra straps are digging in it could be because the underband is too loose and you are over adjusting the straps to feel supported. When you do this the straps pull the bra up at the back, which is another tell-tale sign that the band is too loose – so in this case we recommend that you try a smaller band size. Alternatively, you may just need to loosen the straps.

- **The centre fold is lifting away from the body:**

The centre front should lie flat against the body. If it doesn't, this could be a sign that the cups are too small, causing the breasts to push the centre front away.

- **The back band is over stretched:**

Look at your back straps: they should either be parallel to each other, or converge in a slight V-shape at the back. If they are too far apart at the back (an upside down V), it could mean that your bra band is too small and overstretching. (It is possible, however, that this is simply the design of the bra, so look for other clues such as the back band digging in uncomfortably.)

Further information about chiropractic treatment can be obtained by contacting:

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