

Backed by academic research

This information guide is based on a study conducted by Dr Jenny Burbage, of the University of Portsmouth, and Lorna Cameron, of Sparsholt College, Hampshire, and endorsed by the British Equestrian Federation. Headline findings from their large-scale survey of female riders in the United Kingdom include:

- 40% of the 1,324 riders surveyed experienced breast pain, which was significantly related to increasing cup sizes.
- Most breast pain was experienced during sitting trot and 21% of participants who suffered said that it affected their riding performance.
- At least one bra issue was reported by 59% of participants.
- Participants with larger breasts reported experiencing all bra issues more frequently than those with smaller breasts.



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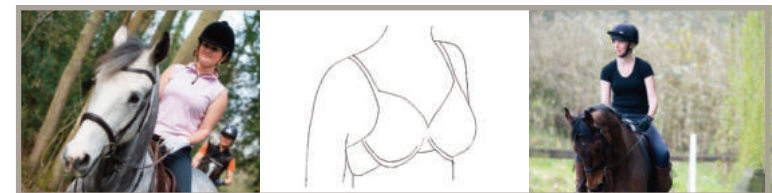


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The Horse Rider's Guide to Bras



Photographs: British Equestrian Federation

#banishthebounce



Finding the right support for female horse riders

Did you know that wearing a correctly fitting bra can help to reduce breast pain and might improve your riding posture? More than 900,000 women take part in horse-riding activities at least once a month and a recent survey suggests that many of them experience exercise-induced pain when doing so. Surprisingly, less than 35% ride in a sports bra!

Appropriate breast support has been shown to reduce breast movement and pain significantly in a range of sports, but choosing the right bra for horse riding can be difficult because few are specifically designed for this purpose.

Bra fit can also be a challenge. In fact, more than 70% of women are reported to be wearing the wrong size. Selecting the most appropriate and best-fitting sports bra for horse riding can be extremely beneficial, but the problem is that no one type fits all!

To get the best possible bra for your needs, make sure that you shop around and try out a few designs before you find your perfect choice. There are three common types of bra designed exclusively for sports:

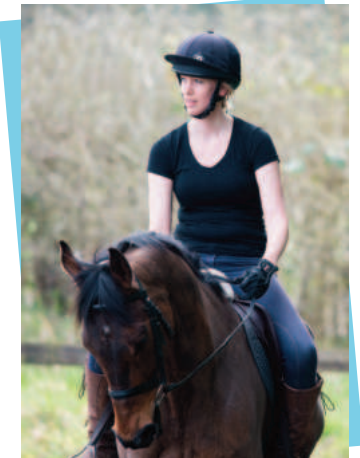
- Encapsulation:** Encapsulates left and right breast separately
Does not compress
Good motion control for larger breasts
- Compression:** Squashes the breast tissue to the chest wall
Works well for small breasts
- Combination:** A combination of both
Usually encapsulating inside added compression on the outside

THE PERFECT FIT

Horse riding is a vigorous activity that might cause excessive breast motion and breast pain. Wearing an appropriate sports bra can help to reduce this, so it is important when buying one to make sure that it is both suited to this rigorous activity and a good fit.

The sports bra should have wide, padded – and fully adjustable – shoulder straps, a high neckline and a strong, elastic underband allowing for a wide range of arm movement. When trying on a new sports bra, jump up and down in the changing room to check the level of support it provides.

There are lots of sports bras out there, so you should be able to find one best suited to your needs. Remember, just as with clothes, you will not be the same bra size in every shop. Here are five steps to the correct fit...



1. STRAPS: The shoulder straps should be adjusted to provide comfortable breast support. They should not be too tight or dig into the skin.

3. UNDERBAND: This should sit firmly around the chest. It should not slide around as you move, be too tight and uncomfortable, affect breathing or cause flesh to bulge at the edges. The underband should be level all the way around the chest.

4. FRONT: This is the lower edge under the breasts and between the cups (if a separate piece exists). It should sit flat against the body and not gape away from the chest. If the front of the bra lifts away, you might need to increase the cup size.

2. CUPS: These enclose the breasts, with no bulging or gapping at the top or sides. If the cup material puckers, the bra's cup size is probably too big.

5. UNDERWIRE: Not all sports bras are underwired but, if they are, the wire should follow the natural crease of the breasts and not rest on any of the breast tissue (in the centre, underneath the bra or under the arms). If the underwire rests too far down the ribcage, the band size might be too small.

