

What do I need to make a bra?

Prepared by Bra-makers Supply
www.bramakerssupply.com
905-538-1396

We allow you to print off and make copies of this document or to share it with friends, as long as our contact information (above) remains intact

Exactly what goes into a bra? If you are a first time bra-maker, the list of "stuff" can be quite intimidating. Let's go through the necessary bits for a basic bra one by one.

PATTERNS - Bras with a band that runs under the cups are called full band bras and may use optional underwires. Partial band bras, on the other hand, must use wires, as there is no band running under the cup, so the wire is needed for support. Our most popular patterns are the ones from Pin-up Girls. They fit well and they have a range of almost 100 sizes!



Pin-up Girls Classic Full Band Bra Pattern with optional wires

- 1225 is a full band bra sizes 30-40 AAA, AA, A
- 1230 is a full band bra sizes 30-38 A-D
- 1235 is a full band bra sizes 30-38 E-H
- 1240 is a full band bra sizes 40-48 A-D
- 1245 is a full band bra sizes 40-48 E-H

Pin-up Girls Partial Band Bra Pattern uses wires as its support system

- 8225 is a full band bra sizes 30-40 AAA, AA, A
- 8230 is a full band bra sizes 30-38 A-D
- 8235 is a full band bra sizes 30-38 E-H
- 8240 is a full band bra sizes 40-48 A-D
- 8245 is a full band bra sizes 40-48 E-H

FABRICS - you need two different fabrics: one for the cups and one for the band. The band needs to stretch to go around the body so the band fabric needs to have stretch. If it is too stretchy, the band will ride up, so choose *band fabrics* that are a firm stretch, such as a power knit. The cup fabric on the other hand, has no need to stretch, and is actually more supportive without it. So choose the *cup fabric* from no-stretch or low-stretch fabrics, such as Duoplex or the Simplex type of jersey knits. They do not contain spandex, and have only "mechanical give" which is a bit of give resulting from the knitting of the fabric.

BAND ELASTICS - two elastics are used for the band - one for the bottom of the band and one for the top at the underarm edge. The bottom band elastic is the one that provides the support for the cups, so that one is usually wider than the top one. Larger bra cups can use 3/4" elastic, medium cups can use 5/8" or 1/2" and smaller cups can easily use 3/8" elastic for the bottom band. The top band elastic is usually 3/8" wide but if you have larger cups, there's no reason why you can't use 1/2" at the top.

STRAPPING - There are literally dozens of combinations of materials for straps. Some are all elastic, some are totally non-stretch and some are a bit of both. You will find the best combination for you after you make a few. Here's what I recommend for your first bra. Use the fabric from the cups (the non-stretch fabric) to make the front part of the strap which attaches to the front of the bra. The strap elastic will be at the back and it will hold the sliders and rings which will allow the straps to be lengthened or shortened. Straps that are wider or padded are great for large bra cups (3/4" or wider), while a 1/2"-5/8" strap is good for medium cups. The smaller cups can use the 3/8" or spaghetti straps.

Bra-makers Supply - visit us at www.bramakers.com

WIRES AND WIRE CASING - Even if you don't use wires, you should use wire casing around the cup, to keep the bias edges from stretching out. Wire casing is also called 'channelling' or 'wire tubing', and it really is a tube. You always slide the wire inside the tube. If the wire is between the casing and the fabric, the wire will pop through the fabric. What wire size is the right one? Put a wire around your naked breast. The wire should sit there at the base of the breast with no space between the breast and the base of the wire.

HOOKS & EYES - Hooks and eyes are sold as pre-cut sets or as a continuous strip. Each format has its own merits. We name the hooks and eyes by their number of vertical (up and down) hooks by the number of eyes available for adjusting (we always use 3 at BMS). So a 2 x 3 hook and eye set is two hooks high and 3 eyes wide. Small cups can use 1 x 3, medium cups can use 2 x 3 and larger cups will feel supported in a 3 x 3 set. There are those who want 4 x 3 hooks and eyes and that is their choice.

NECKLINE TRIM - The neckline trim goes on the uppermost edge of the bra, the decollete, if you will. The neckline trim finishes off the raw edge and if a narrow strip of stabilizer is stitched in under the trim, it will keep that edge from stretching out, which is absolutely necessary for the larger cups. The neckline is an area to show off some pretty trim, too.

THE ADORNMENT - Yes, the bow! That's the finishing touch that makes the bra look like you just bought it. But it's there for more than just pretty. It also hides the stitching for the closing of the wire casing.

Now that you know what the basics are, here are the quantities of each that you need:

- PATTERN - one in your size and style
- CUP FABRIC (Duoplex/Simplex)- .5 metres will usually make 2 or 3 sets of bra cups, the front straps, and the front band
- BAND FABRIC (Power Knit) - .5 metres will do between 3 and 5 bras
- BOTTOM BAND ELASTIC - measure around your body, you won't need more than that. Usually 1 metre unless you have a large frame
- TOP BAND ELASTIC - usually takes 1.5 metres per bra to do the underarm edge and up the outer edges of the fabric strap
- STRAP ELASTIC - .5 metre will do the two straps (10" for each side)
- SLIDERS & RINGS - you need 2 sliders and 2 rings in a size to match the strap elastic
- WIRE CASING - 1 metre is enough, unless you have very large cups, then 1.2 metres is lots.
- WIRES - Check our printable wire chart to compare your wires with our sizes.
- HOOKS & EYES - You need one set, either 1 x 3, 2 x 3 or 3 x 3. If you want continuous tape, choose the number vertically that you need, either 1, 2 or 3.
- NECKLINE TRIM - 1.25 metres is usually enough to go around the neckline and up the inner edge of the front straps.
- THE BOW - just one!

OTHER ESSENTIALS

Thread -Regular polyester threads work fine! We carry mara 120 Guterman Industrial quality thread on 1000 spools. Great thread for making fine stitches at a great price.

Machine - A zigzag machine is a must, and one that is capable of a three-step zigzag is desirable. If a three-step zigzag is not available, regular zigzag will do.

Needle - Treat your machine to a new Schmetz needle. Use a ballpoint 70 on Simplex or jersey jacquard, or Duoplex (or other fabrics that are knitted but do not have spandex in them). If you have a problem with skipped stitches especially on Power net, switch the needle to a Universal 14. On spandex blend fabrics such as Raschels or tricot, you should always use the Stretch needle.