



What do I need to make a Bra?

Patterns

The pattern I recommend for your first bra is a Classic Full Band Bra. A full band bra always has a band that runs under the cups. Full band bras can be made without underwires. Just for your information, a partial band bra, on the other hand, must use wires, as there is no band running under the cup. Underwires are needed for support. Our "Pin-up Girls" bra patterns are our most popular bra patterns. The patterns fit well and are available in a range of 90 sizes! "Pin-up Girls" Classic Full Band Bra Pattern with optional wires is available in four size ranges, with 90 unique bra sizes in all. Each size range has its own colour-coded packaging, with the Pink containing 30 sizes and the others each containing 20 sizes. On the other hand, partial band bras such as the "Linda" below, must use wires as there is no band running under the cup.

Exactly what goes into a bra? If you are a first time bra-maker, the BIG LIST of "stuff" can be quite intimidating. Well you've come to the right place, this materials list will give you all the guidance you need to get started. Let's go through the necessary bits and your Bra-making Supply List one by one. Once you understand why these materials are all needed, it makes the list seem shorter.



Linda - underwires necessary



Classic - optional underwires



Classic - optional lace trim

Bra-making Kits

We offer kits including the fabrics, elastics and other findings-enough to make one bra (sometimes 2 depending on your size). The kits are available in 14 colours, which makes shopping much easier the first time around! Colours include White, Ivory, Pink, Red, Beige, Brown and Black. Everything on your bra-making supply list is in the kit, except for the underwires.

Cup Fabrics

The cup fabric on the other hand has no need to stretch. It is actually more supportive without it. Choose a cup fabric with no-stretch or low-stretch, such as Duoplex or the Simplex type of jersey knits. These fabrics do not contain spandex, have only "mechanical give" which is a bit of give resulting from the knitting of the fabric. Once the fit of your bra is perfected, you can experiment with different fabrics.

Band Fabrics

The band needs to go around the body and hook up in the back, so the band fabric needs to have stretch. If it is too stretchy, the band will ride up. Choose band fabrics that have a firm stretch, such as a power net or firm stretch spandex. There are several options and your choice will depend on your size or colours that are available.

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 $\frac{3}{4}$ " elastic, medium cups can use $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{1}{2}$ ", and smaller cups can easily use $\frac{3}{8}$ " elastic for the bottom band. The top band elastic is usually $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide, but if you have larger cups, there's you can use $\frac{1}{2}$ " 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 bras. We recommend what is included in the Classic bra pattern. The fabric from the cups (the non-stretch fabric) will make the front portion of the strap, which attaches to the front of the bra. The strap elastic will be at the back and it will include 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), a 1/2" to a 5/8" strap is good for medium cups. The smaller cups can use the 3/8" or spaghetti straps.

Hooks & Eyes

Hooks and eyes are sold as pre-cut sets or as continuous strips (such as found in a bustier). 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. 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 with a 3 x 3 set. Some women want 4 x 3 hooks and eyes for more support and that is their personal preference.

Wires and Wire Casing

Even if you don't use wires, you should use wire casing around the cup. It will keep the bias edges from stretching out. Wire casing is also called 'channelling' or 'wire tubing', as 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 poke through the fabric. See our website for more information to determine about choosing a wire size.

Neckline Trim

The neckline trim is applied to 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 stabiliser is stitched in under the trim, it will keep that edge from stretching out. It is absolutely necessary for the larger cups. The neckline is an area to show off some pretty trim, too.

The Adornments

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 to look pretty. It also hides the stitching for the closing of the wire casing.



1 x PATTERN
(one in your size and style)

.5M x CUP FABRIC
(Duoplex/Simplex .5 metres will usually make 2 or 3 sets of bra cups, the front straps, and the front band)

.5M x BAND FABRIC
(Power Knit) - .5 metres will do between 3 and 5 bras

1M x BOTTOM BAND ELASTIC
(measure around your body, you won't need more than that. Usually 1 metre unless you have a large frame)

1.5M x TOP BAND ELASTIC
(usually takes 1.5 metres per bra to do the underarm edge and up the outer edges of the fabric strap)

.5M x STRAP ELASTIC
(.5 metre will do the two straps 10" for each side)

2 x SLIDERS & RINGS
(you need 2 sliders and 2 rings in a size to match the strap elastic)

1M x WIRE CASING
(1 metre is enough, unless you have very large cups, then 1.2 metres is lots)

2 x WIRES
(1 pair for each bra - Check our printable wire chart to compare your wires with our sizes)

1 x Set of 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)

1.25M x NECKLINE TRIM
(1.25 metres is usually enough to go around the neckline and up the inner edge of the front straps)

1 x THE BOW
(yup just one!)

How much do you need to get shopping and be sure you have everything to make your bra? Well here's your easy to print and clip shopping list for all the bra-making supplies and quantities you will need.

Other Essentials

Thread

Regular polyester threads work fine! We carry mara 120 Güterman industrial quality thread on 1000 metre 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 tricots, you should always use the Stretch needle.