

STYLE

With lingerie, less is more

Never wear the wrong size again

BY SHARON FEIEREISEN
Special to amNewYork

Finding a bra that fits is never easy. So we've enlisted New York designer Catriona MacKenzie for advice.

MacKenzie recently launched an at-home lingerie personal shopping service that provides intimate collections to customers based on their needs and preferences.

BAND SIZE

A bra should fit to be fastened on the outside or middle closing. The fabric will stretch over time, so you will need to be able to tighten it later, MacKenzie said.

You should be able to slip two fingers underneath the band, and if you can't, the band is too tight and you should make it looser.

To determine band size:

Using a measuring tape, take the circumference just under the bust (making sure the tape is snugly fitted around the body). Add 5 inches to that measurement. If the measurement is an odd number, round down one digit and that is your band size. If the measurement is an even number, that is your size.

CUP SIZE

"The band and the wires of the cups should sit comfortably against the ribs," MacKenzie said. "The band should not pull away from the skin and the wires should not sit on the breast tissue. If they do, the cups are too small."

If a larger cup size does not help, try a bra with a fuller cup. If the cup puckers or is baggy, or if you do not fill it, it is too large and you need a smaller cup.

To determine cup size:

Using a measuring tape, take your measurement around the bust. If the difference between the bust measurement and band measurement is less than 1 inch, your cup size is AA. If the difference is 1, the cup size is A, 2 = B, 3 = C, 4 = D, etc.

GET A BARGAIN

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Sometimes, it's the little things that make you feel the most confident. For the holidays, pick out something sexy for yourself to wear underneath the heavy sweaters and jackets you'll be sporting all winter. Here are our top lingerie picks to suit various budgets, lifestyles and sizes.

Gillian and O'Malley 'Favorite Fit' bra, 10.99; at Target

Between checking out Target's latest GO International designer line and buying household essentials, leave time to pick up finds from Gilligan & O'Malley (\$1.0 and up).

The bras not only have great cup molding, they have no-poke underwire.



Flingwear 'Flingz' underwear, \$7.50 each or \$18 for a three pack; at flingwear.com

Designed for women on the go, Flingwear's Flingz comes individually folded into a small, reusable polybag, so you can store it in your handbag, clutch, sports bag, glove compartment, coat pocket, luggage or carry-on.



Warner's 'Elements of Bliss' wire-free bra, \$30; at warners.com

If you prefer to avoid underwire, Warner's is known for its comfortable wire-free collection. This style, made of nylon/spandex, comes in black, white and butterscotch.



Affinitas Intimates 'Ella' padded bra, \$25; and hipster, \$14; at herroom.com

For bras that go beyond simple and comfortable, Affinitas Intimates' styles have fashion-forward designs with lace, bows, trims and vibrant colors, all the while retaining comfortable bra cups and budget-friendly prices — nothing in the entire line retails for more than \$45.



TREAT YOURSELF

The Lake & Stars romper, \$210; bra, \$110; underwear, \$44; and garter, \$55; at Journelle, 3 E. 17th St., 212-255-7800

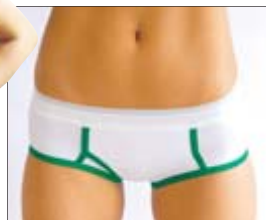
You can tell the designer duo behind The Lake & Stars, named after a Victorian term for a woman who is skilled in the bedroom, have a cheeky sense of humor. The brand's pieces are simple and comfortable, but accented with flirty touches like shredded print satin panels or feathers.



(SARI WYNNE)

Hanky Panky thongs, \$18 each; at hankypanky.com

Even women who cringe at the thought of wearing a thong can't help but delight in a colorful and comfy stretch-lace pair from Hanky Panky. Panty-lines are invisible even in the tightest of outfits, thanks to their wide elastic lace bands.



American Apparel boy briefs, \$13 each or \$30 for a three-pack; at American Apparel

Any brand that can make tighty whities cool is a winner in our book. These boy briefs are sexy in an "I'm not trying to be sexy, I just am" kind of way.



Spanx 'Bra-llelujah' bra, \$62; at spanx.com

When it comes to the best undergarment innovation, we turn to Spanx for its 'Bra-llelujah!' front-close underwire bra. The style boasts shoulder and back straps that conform to your body (i.e. no visible bra-lines) and minimize back fat.