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Res Sports Med. 2024 Mar-Apr;32(2):302-315. doi: 10.1080/15438627.2022.2102922.
Epub 2022 Jul 20.

Understanding experience, knowledge and perceived challenges related to bra fit for sports participation: a scoping review

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PMID: 35856556 DOI: [10.1080/15438627.2022.2102922](https://doi.org/10.1080/15438627.2022.2102922)

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Abstract

The breasts are reported as the fourth largest barrier to participation in physical activity (PA). This scoping review provides a comprehensive understanding of experiences, knowledge and challenges relating to bra fit and sports participation. The search strategy was adopted by the Preferred Reporting Items for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines and multiple databases were searched. All research was in English and within the last 20 years. Exclusion criteria excluded reviews, male participants and the inability to locate or access full-text articles. The JBI critical appraisal tool assessed methodological quality. Twenty-three studies were included. Key themes from the studies are breast motion during PA, sports bra design, perceived barriers to participation in PA and education/knowledge of breast support and bra fit. Increasing breast support reduces breast movement during PA yet breast motion and bra fit are still the most common breast concerns for females. This is likely influenced by poor breast knowledge, leading to poor breast support choices. Future research should explore to what extent breast motion, knowledge and bra fit influences sport participation, and this research should include a more diverse range of adult ages, cup sizes, ethnicities and PA levels to provide a wider understanding.

Keywords: Bra fit; barriers; breast support; sports participation; women's health.

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