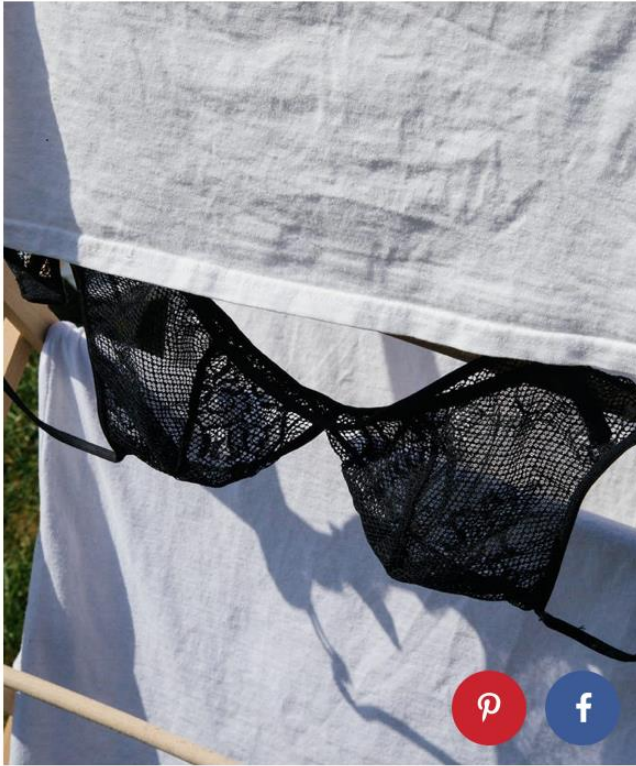


Ditching Your Bra Isn't Just Freeing — It Could Be Good For You



PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANNA JAY.

Yesterday, you may have seen the hashtag #NoBraDay floating around on social media. Apparently, it's a day when people are encouraged to shed their brassieres as a way to [raise awareness about breast cancer](#) during [National Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#).

Honestly, we're way ahead of things here. It's 2020, we're spending way more time indoors than ever before, and [every day is No Bra Day](#).

Well, for some people, anyway. While free-boobing is often touted as the most comfortable choice, for those with larger breasts, sometimes wearing a bra is preferable because going without causes back pain, says [Melissa Doft, MD](#), a cosmetic plastic surgeon and an assistant clinical professor of surgery at Weill Cornell Medical

School. Other people just like having some security, prefer the look of their chest in a bra, or want a soft layer between their nipples and their shirt.

When it comes to what you do with your chest, there is no wrong choice. But for those who choose it, going bra-free does have some benefits.

Going braless may reduce pain

Again, this isn't universal. But ill-fitting bras can cause [shoulder, back, and neck pain](#). Similarly, a cheap or lace-y bra might irritate the skin or nipples. Going without a bra can be better than that.

Going braless may help you breathe easier

Let's face it, 2020 is a year in which we constantly find ourselves needing to pause and [take a deep breath](#).

But Dr. Doft says that can be trickier to do if you're wearing a bra and it doesn't fit properly. "The underwire could be too compressive against your chest wall and rib cage," she says. If you ever feel like you can't take a full breath because of your bra, it's too tight. (The same is true for [compressive binders](#); they shouldn't be so tight as to inhibit breathing.)

Going braless may help you sleep

"Studies have shown that if you wear less restrictive clothing to bed, you'll sleep better," Dr. Doft says. In fact, [sleeping totally naked](#) could be the healthiest thing. It helps regulate your core body temperature, which can dictate [how quickly you'll fall asleep](#), and how deep your slumber will be, [the Sleep Help Institute](#) notes. Managing your temperature when you sleep is crucial — a [2012 study](#) from the National Institutes of Health found that your body temperature and generally the temperature in the room you're snoozing in impacts your ability to get quality rest.

Going braless may reduce body acne

"If you don't [wash your bra every single day](#), dirt and bacteria can build up and when you're sweating and in a hot environment, you could actually get fungal infections or a bacterial infection," Dr. Doft says. For a similar reason, it may prevent acne, she says. Of course, people with larger breasts might find that a bra helps reduce acne and chafing by preventing the skin from rubbing against itself, notes Constance M. Chen, MD, a board-certified plastic surgeon and breast reconstruction specialist.

Going braless saves money

[A decent bra](#) will cost you a pretty penny these days, and going braless more often means your old ones won't get worn out as quickly. A chunk of change you can take to the bank (or spend on a [chic new face mask](#)).

Going braless raises awareness for a good cause

If you participated in the #NoBraDay hashtag, anyway. But if you missed it (guilty), there are more impactful ways to observe Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Dr. Doft says. [Donate to breast cancer research](#), and if you're over 40 or at [a higher risk for breast cancer](#), [schedule a mammogram](#). Those are two things you can do whether you enjoy wearing a bra or not.