

Sizing Guide: Competitive Swimwear

Selecting the correct swimsuit size can be challenging, especially for athletes new to competitive swimming.

We highly recommend trying on a suit from your team's sizing kit when possible. Sizing kits are provided in the exact brand and fabric of the team suit selection. If you are unable to try on the suit itself, or your team opted out of a sizing kit, this guide should help you in selecting the proper suit size.

Swimwear Sizing Challenges

Generally speaking, swimsuit sizing charts provide excellent guidance. Nonetheless, some challenges remain, regardless of size chart accuracy:

1. Athletes (especially younger ones) often times find a correctly sized/fitted suit uncomfortable, as they are intended to fit very **snug**! Sizing charts assume a correct, snug fit.
2. Athletes may be unfamiliar with what a good fit is supposed to feel like.
3. Swimmers may be unfamiliar with how to take measurements.

A (Very) General Starting Point

- **Women:** Your chest measurement in inches will be the closest size correlation to your suit size. For example, if your chest measurement is 30 inches, your suit size should be approximately a size 30. TIP: Think of the band size of your bra.
- **Men:** Your true waist measurement in inches should correlate to your suit size. For example, if your waist measurement is 28, this should also be your suit size.

How to Take Proper Swimsuit Measurements

- If possible, don't take your own measurement, have someone help!
- Take measurements on bare skin!
- Use a soft tape to measure.
 - Tip: If a soft tape measure isn't an option, use non-stretching string – and carefully match the string length to a reliable measurement tool.
- **Warning For Guys:** Gentleman, your measurements are less challenging – but be careful! Remember:
 - Measure 1" below your navel to determine your waist size. Waist measurement equate to the suit size, so a 32" waist should order a size 32 suit.

What Not To Do:

- **Don't reference a size from an old swimsuit!**
 - Old suits can be stretched out and will not index your current sizing needs.
 - Department store swimsuits and fashion swimwear brands are not designed or cut to fit like competitive swimwear, often times they have a looser/more leisurely fit.
 - Sizes can vary across different fabrics, brands & suit cuts can change over time.
- **Don't base your size on what so-and-so ordered!** The fit of your swimwear is a personal preference, and suits fit body types differently – don't let someone's speculation about sizing get in the way of basic swimwear sizing strategies.
- **Size/Order for "growing room"!**
- **Warning For Guys** – Do not use the pants size shortcut! Pants size is not an accurate equivalent, because it is often chosen by the look or style of the fit, instead of an actual measurement. Save yourself some frustration and measure your waist.

Suit Material: Polyester vs. Lycra

Polyester material has a tighter, more compressive fit and wears longer. This does not mean you should upsize for poly, but swimmers should consider sizing up if on the cusp on a larger size.

Lycra suits have more stretch, but may feel tighter/smaller in the beginning. Lycra will stretch out and fade over time, and therefore may need to be replaced semi-annually if being worn regularly.

OK, I have my suit on – does it fit?

Is it supposed to be *this* tight?

Things to keep in mind:

- The suit you are trying on is as tight as it's ever going to be and will loosen over time.
- The feel of the suit will change once you are in the water.
- **Bag = Drag!** Any bag or wrinkles will cause unwanted drag during your race or workout.
- **Women** if you find the suit feels like it's pulling on your shoulders, be sure to pull the hipline of the suit up nice and high, it should be up by your hip bone! This will give more length in the torso.
- Swimsuits are more than a means to cover your skin. Your suit is a piece of competitive equipment meant to aid in your performance. Wearing an over-sized swimsuit can cause discomfort and hinder athletic performance.

The fit is too big if –

- Suit material is wrinkled or bagging.
- For women, swimwear is too big if:
 - Scooping at neck occurs when holding a “streamline” position.
 - Suit straps can be raised above ear lobes when given a good tug.
 - The opening in the back of the suit lifts off the skin at any portion of the circle.

The fit is too small if –

- It restricts or limits athletic range of motion.
- Ouch, ouch, ouch – it hurts!
- It limits your circulatory system – blood flow and/or breathing!

Special Swimsuit Sizing Situations

All bodies are different, and women with greater variations between measurements may consider downsizing or upsizing as follows:

- Small Chest / Large Hips: Consider **upsizing** above chest measurement guidelines.
- Big Chest / Small Hips: Consider **downsizing** below chest measurement guidelines.
- Long torso: Consider **upsizing** above chest measurement guidelines.
- Short torso: Consider **downsizing** below chest measurement guidelines.

Still have questions?

Not a problem, don't hesitate to reach out!

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Some important notes on swimsuit care!

Pool chemicals (both chlorine and salt water) and oil residues can be particularly damaging to swimwear fiber. To prevent chemical damage to swimwear, rinse your suit in cold water immediately after each use. Do not wash suit with any detergent. Always hang-dry your suit in a well-ventilated space away from direct heat, as mildew will cause premature deterioration of swimwear containing fiber. Always hand wash your swimsuit. Avoid using the washing machine altogether even if on the gentle cycle or in a delicates bag. Also avoid using the spinners at the pool, as they can snag/tear your suit.

Gentlemen! When tying your swimsuit strings do not pull outward away from the center holes, this will cause the openings for the strings to tear. Instead, first tie your strings into a knot, then pull to tighten. This puts the pressure on the knot, rather than the seams of the suit.

Manufacturer replacements/warranties will not cover suits that are improperly cared for.