

# What to Wear Under Your Wedding Dress

The perfect fit for your bridal look often starts with the right undergarments. Here are some suggestions for finding them based on dress styles.

**By Ivy Manners**

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The undergarments you wear are the base of your wedding day look, and the right foundation can enhance the fit of your dress.

“Your underpinnings help form the shape and structure of your dress and how it drapes on your body,” said Lori Kaplan, the founder and owner of Bra Tenders in New York City.

Ms. Kaplan suggests choosing undergarments even before committing to buying your dress and taking them with you to your dress fittings. “I recommend first finding options of shapewear and foundation that will work with the dresses you’re eyeing.”

She added, “So many brides have dreamed about their wedding dress since childhood that when the time comes to pick their gown they may not have considered how their grown-up shape will fit into the dream dress, and whether, for example, that backless gown will work with 34H cups,” she said.

Getting a bra fitting to find your correct size and fit is also recommended. “Ask for professional help at a boutique while shopping for your bra and shapewear,” said Ms. Kaplan, who offers virtual appointments to help brides pick the right undergarments for their dress. “There are many options available, so don’t be afraid to try different shapewear solutions until you find the one that works for you.”

If you can’t make it to a lingerie boutique or you’re short on time, Wacoal’s mybraFit app can help you find the correct bra size by using measurements taken from scanned images of your body (which are deleted afterward for privacy) and answers to questions about your shape and size.

Comfort level is also important. Remember: You’ll be wearing your undergarments and dress for several hours of eating, dancing and celebrating. Gabrielle Hurwitz, a bridal fashion stylist based in New York and Los Angeles, recommends breaking in your undergarments by wearing them around the house before the wedding. “You should be able to put on your undergarments and forget you’re wearing them,” she said.

Here’s a guide to picking your bridal undergarments based on the silhouette or style of your wedding dress.

## Ball Gown and A-line



These classic silhouettes with a fitted bodice and full or flowing skirt allow the most options for undergarments and shapewear. Because both styles do a great job at concealing underpinnings you can wear a more structured foundation like a corset to lift your bust and cinch your waist for an hourglass shape.

“Corsets can take in your waistline up to two inches and give the support you need in a strapless dress,” said Liz Sellassie, the owner of Designer Loft Bridal in New York. “We like ones by Dominique because of their boning and support. We often stitch the corset inside the gown to ensure it won’t peek out, as well as make the bride feel more comfortable.”

If you want to accentuate your waist, a corset — like the Dominique **Colette** (\$79) — is a good choice. But, if you don’t need the extra shaping, try a long-line bra, which slims with less compression and stays up and supports better than a strapless bra because it ends at the natural waistline. Try the **Dominique Noemi Balconette Bra** (\$49), or **Parfait’s Elissa Bustier** (\$58) if you have fuller breasts.

The construction of your bodice will determine the corset or bra you choose. “You’ll want a foundation that mimics the neckline and back of your gown,” Ms. Hurwitz said. If your gown has a plunging neckline, try a long-line bra with a deep V, such as **Va Bien’s Marquise Plunge Bra** (\$109). For a dress with an open back, try a corset-style, strapless bra with a low back, like **B.Tempt’d by Wacoal’s Future Foundation Backless Strapless Bra** (\$55). Also keep the fabric of your gown in mind and look for underpinnings that fit seamlessly underneath without adding bulk.

## Mermaid and Trumpet



Spanx Power Capri

If you're wearing a fitted dress, pay attention to the seams of your foundation. "Undergarments like corsets and long-line bras don't suit mermaid and trumpet silhouettes because the lines of the shapewear can be seen under the fabric, so strapless bras are usually the better choice for these dress styles," Ms. Kaplan said. Wear a strapless bra that gives you enough lift and support, like **Wacoal's Red Carpet Strapless Full Busted Underwire Bra** (\$68). You can also consult with your seamstress about the possibility of adding boning or cups for structure and lift.

The most important thing to note when looking at shapewear for a mermaid or trumpet dress is how the foundation fits around your waist, hips and legs and where your gown flares out from. “The seams should lie flat and the shapewear should extend past where your gown’s skirt flares from,” Ms. Hurwitz said. “If your dress flares out at your knees, you need shapewear that goes beyond that so you won’t see the break between the undergarment and your dress.” Try **Spanx’s Power Capri** (\$26).

Be sure to check how you look in your dress from all angles. Notice how the skirt of your dress feels when you walk; if the fabric gets caught between your legs as you move, you can wear a slip to keep your dress from bunching up, as well as help smooth and enhance your figure, Ms. Hurwitz said. Try **Spanx’s SmartGrip Half Slip** (\$68). To avoid the dreaded visible panty line, wear a seamless, raw-cut edge thong in a shade close to your skin tone or the hue of your dress, like **Commando’s Classic Solid Thong** (\$22).

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## Sheath and Slip Dress



The allure of a sheath or slip dress is the way it skims, rather than hugs, your curves. That said, you don’t need to feel pressured to slim every inch with your undergarments. “I think there’s a misconception that because it’s your wedding day you have to wear shapewear and suck everything in,” Ms. Hurwitz said. “Whether or not you wear shapewear under your wedding dress



is a personal choice.” Because your dress won’t be form-fitting, you can usually get away with wearing a foundation with less compression, like a slip that offers shaping without being too restrictive. Try **Maidenform’s Built-In Bra Slip** (\$68).

Depending on your sheath gown, you may also be able to wear a strapless bra with high-waisted shapewear that seamlessly flattens your stomach and smooths your thighs. “Have the shapewear start just beneath your bra and end right above your knees, so that you don’t have any lines showing under your dress,” Ms. Sellassie said. Try **Va Bien’s Smooth Couture Tights** (\$75). If you prefer to forgo the shapewear, wear seamless underwear in a nude shade.

Slip dresses tend to be the least forgiving dress silhouette when it comes to shapewear. This style is often better sans restrictive foundation, but if you want coverage look for shapewear that can smooth you all over in one complete line, such as a seamless bodysuit like **Ender Legard’s Seamless Backless Shapewear bodysuit** (\$349) or **Spanx’s Suit Your Fancy Medium Control Strapless Bodysuit** (\$148).

## Strapless, Thin Straps and One Shoulder



Sculptresse Dana Strapless Bra

According to Ms. Kaplan, a strapless bra is one of the essential pieces every woman should have in her wardrobe. Look for one with deep enough cups to hold you securely, side boning for shaping and a wide, comfortable band that won’t slide. “A strapless bra in your current favorite bra brand is a good place to start,” said Maradee Wahl, the creative director of Dear Maradee Bridal Styling,

based in Los Angeles. “One with minimal details and seamless construction is best for a wedding dress, so that it doesn’t show under your gown.” Try **Simone Pérèle’s Essential Strapless Bra** (\$79), or **Sculptresse’s Dana Strapless Bra** (\$83) for fuller sizes.

## Backless and Open Sides



A gown with a sexy back calls for a foundation that discreetly offers lift, shaping and support. “A strapless bodysuit or bra with a low, open back can help fill out the bust and prevent gaping in the bodice of your backless dress,” Ms. Sellassie said. “Although your seamstress may be able to add cups to your dress, they don’t usually offer as much lift or support as true underpinnings can.” Try **Va Bien’s Backless Thong Bodysuit** (\$85).

Adhesive bras and breast lift tape have become popular foundation alternatives for brides. The **NuBra Feather-Lite Stick-on Bra** (\$35) is a great option for lift and support without being seen in a backless dress or gown with open sides. This backless and strapless adhesive bra ingeniously offers coverage and cleavage control, and goes up to a G cup. And **BrassyBra** (\$38) breast lift tape, which was partly inspired by a red carpet wardrobe hack, lets you go totally braless but still have lift and support. Made of disposable, medical-grade adhesive, it comes in a variety of shades to match your skin tone, goes on like second skin for lift and support and comfortably stays in place all day. You can also add **BrassyBra’s That Little Extra** (\$12) adhesive strips for more shaping and support and to customize your coverage.

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