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Intimate Apparel Glossary

Appliqué

A decoration or ornament made by cutting pieces of one material and applying them to the surface of another.

Baby Doll

A sleeveless, loose fitting that usually consists of formed cups with an attached loose fitting skirt falling in length between the hips and the belly button. A short gown about waist long usually with matching panties. This is not a fitted piece, and is mostly sold as a one size. Easy to fit, and gives a "cute" young girl look. Can be designed out of many various fabrics, including lace, charmeuse and opaque.

Balconette Bra

Also known as a shelf bra, Balconettes are a more revealing version of a demi bra. Offering little to no coverage, balconette bras include a little padding to create dramatic uplift and cleavage. The nipple and areola is often exposed in this bra style.

Bandeau Bra

An undergarment worn by women to support their breasts; usually styled in a straight horizontal line.

Basque

A long-line cupped bra reaching to the hips with garter hooks attached at the lower edge. The most famous Basque was the merry-widow. Basques are often incorrectly called a corset or a bustier.

Bikini Panty

Waist band rests below the navel, and on the hips; the rise is higher than a hipster and lower than a brief. The sides can be anything from a string to a thicker side panel. Back coverage depends on the style of the bikini.

Bloomers

Old fashioned form of feminine underwear consisting of loose fitting trousers or shorts.

Bodice

The fitted part of a night gown, dress or top that extends from the waist to the shoulder.

Bodysuit

A shapewear product that normally includes coverage for the bust to panty areas. Smooths body under all types of styles. Also comes in seamless, strapless and thong back styles. Is also referred to as a body brief or body girdle.

Boning

Rigid plastic or metal straps sewn in shapewear to give structure, support and body contouring.

Boy Leg Brief; Boy Briefs; Boy Shorts

Reminiscent of hot pants and men's underpants; this brief sits low on the hips, has full coverage bottom, with legs that come to the top of the thigh. Very sexy and stylish, may also offer a seamless look under fitting pants or skirts.

Bra

Close-fitting undergarment which is worn to support and give contour to the breasts.

Brazilian Panty

Triangular back that covers slightly more buttocks than a thong, but less than a full back panty.

Brief Panty

Offers the most front, side, and back coverage of any other panty. Full back coverage and a high-rise waist, its waistband rises to, or just above the navel. Ideal for those seeking maximum coverage.

Burnout

A design on fabric, such as velvet, that exposes the sheer, underside material. Similar in appearance to flocking.

Bustier

A long line cupped brassiere that stops at the waist and can be designed with or without straps. The bustier has grown in popularity as a garment to be worn on top of formal clothes. It is increasing being used as "club wear" made with fancy fabrics. Bustiers are often incorrectly called corsets.

Camisole Top

Gives very light control and is a perfect solution for sheer, form-fitting tops in order to reveal the least amount of lines or seams.

Cat Suit

A full-body stocking, generally long sleeved and made of stretchy, hosiery fabric or materials. Was made popular in the 1960's Avengers television series by actress Diana Rigg.

Charmeuse

A satin finished silk-like fabric.

Chemise

A woman's loose, shirt-like gown; a loosely fitting dress that hangs straight, sometimes worn with a belt.

Chenille

Fuzzy fabric, with "caterpillar" appearance. French in origin

Chiffon

A fabric of sheer silk or rayon.

Choker

Snug fitting necklace.

Clear Straps

Revealing fashions call for versatile undergarments! Clear Strap Liquid Lift Bra offers maximum versatility and provides comfortable support. Comes with removable inserts, reinforced clear straps and extra matching straps.

Control Camisole

With or without a built in bra and provides a smooth look under blouses, dresses, sweaters diminishing bulk under sweaters with some control. If it has a bra, the back does not have a closure and provides a smooth look with little back roll.

Control Slip

Great under your favorite dresses and gowns providing light control and smooth lines.

Convertible Bra

Strapless Bra is ideal as it can convert to 5 different styles including: halter top, racer back, criss-cross, regular and strapless. Offers great support.

Cotton

A natural fiber that comes from the cotton plant. Cotton allows the skin to breathe and it wears and washes well.

Corselette

A tubular garment incorporating a brassiere, girdle, and garter belt. These corselettes have to use nylon stockings to keep them down when the wearer is walking. You could not wear pants over this garment. Despite its apparent bulk under clothing, the corselette is still popular today. Closely related is the "all-in-one" with legs built into the design.

Corset

A stiffened garment which shapes and supports the torso to the hip; often worn to correct posture. A corset does not separate the breasts; rather it supports them from underneath and often pushes them up and over the neckline edge. In the last two centuries, corsets have been known more for the damage they have caused to internal organs when laced too tightly, than for their ability to create the "ideal" figure when worn correctly. A corset is related to the waist cincher, which stops below the breasts.

Crop Top

Very short top extending to just below the breasts.

Crushed Velvet

Velvet with crinkly looks; not shiny.

Demi Cup Bra

This style bra means a contoured underwire design with a large portion of the upper half of the cup cut away to expose the upper part of the breasts; normally just covers the lower portion of the breast. These bras offer less coverage than a full cup and more than a balconette. Demi bras cover the nipple and approximately half to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the breast; with the shoulder straps set further apart. But if it seems like you're "spilling out" of your demi cup it's probably the wrong size. Can be also called a shelf bra.

Denier

A unit or fineness for rayon, nylon, and silk fibers, based on a standard mass per length.

Embroidery

An embellishment of a fabric or garment in which colored threads are sewn onto the fabric to create a design. Embroidery may be done either by hand or machine.

Eyelet

A type of fabric with patterned cut-out designs, around which stitching or embroidery is applied to prevent the fabric from raveling.

Faux Leather

Imitation, man-made leather-like fabric.

Flocked

Design or pattern on fabric that is not intricately part of the fabric.

Flutter Panty

Panty styled like short shorts or a boy leg but with a small flair at the hem.

Footless Pantyhose

Replaces panty and allows great control and smooth shape under pants, longer dresses and skirts since the leg ends about mid calf on this pantyhose.

French Cut Panty

Another name for high-cut brief.

Front Closure Bra

A bra that closes in the front, instead of the back. Easier ability to add or remove bra. Great for those that have discomfort with bras with back closures.

Full Cup Bra

A full cup bras completely covers most of the breast, offering both more coverage and more support than a demi cup bra.

Full Figure Bras

Full figure bras consist of any styled bra specifically available for larger breasted women. These are cup sizes D or above, but is not discriminatory in the size of the wearer. Often offers better support and comfort for larger breast.

G-String Panty

A panty with a string (less than 3/4") back and sides. The panty typically has a front panel with string sides and back. Often worn to prevent panty lines under tight-fitting garments. Less coverage than a thong.

Garter

Strap hanging from a garter belt or bustier to support stockings.

Garter Belt

Normally used with stockings and is worn around the waist with four clips or garters to keep the stockings up and in place. Garter belts are often attachable with some bustiers and other lingerie styles.

Girdle

A tubular garment giving a smooth line from the waist to below the hips. Once again, stockings were a necessary part of this foundation. Later, the girdle evolved into the panty girdle which allowed the wearer the freedom to wear pants, and without the necessity of wearing hose.

Gown

Gown types include baby dolls, negligees, nightdresses, and peignoirs. Used for night or lounge wear. Often made of silk, cotton, or polyester, and sometimes includes adjustable shoulder straps. Sometimes worn with matching outer robe.

Gusset Closure

Name given to a hook and eye or snap crotch closure.

Halter

A bodice for women that ties behind the neck and across the back, leaving the arms, shoulders, and back bare.

Invisible Panty

New, patented product that is seamless in design, backless and extremely sexy. The adjustable leg straps and cotton-crotch makes it irresistible to all women.

Jacquard

Any fabric that has a pattern woven into the fabric rather than printed on it. The name comes from Joseph Marie Jacquard who designed a loom attachment capable of weaving patterns into fabric. This attachment provides versatility in designs and permits individual control of each of the warp yarns. Thus, fabrics of almost any type or complexity can be made. Brocade and damask are types of jacquard woven fabrics.

Keyhole

Material forms a teardrop shape hole that is normally in the front, usually at or near the top of the fabric.

Kimono

A loose robe worn chiefly by women. A Kimono is usually short with larger arm openings.

Leg/Thigh Shapers

Replaces panty and controls the tummy and thighs for a smooth look under pants, dresses and skirts. Just make sure the leg opening is not too tight. Great for bulges that show when you sit, stand or walk.

Lining

The name given to material sewn into the inside of a garment to make it more opaque or more comfortable against the skin. Frequently lining is used in a bra to add structure or provide a pretty background to sheer and/or lacy fabrics.

Long Line

Replaces bra and smoothes below the bra to the waist for a slim look under dresses or clingy knits. Best worn with bottom shapewear piece.

Long Leg Brief

Replaces panty and great control and shape under pants, longer dresses and skirts since the leg ends about mid-calf. Long leg brief is shapewear fabrication but similar in shape to footless pantyhose.

Low-Rise Panty

Any panty that sits lower on the waist. A good choice with today's low-waist jeans and skirts or other styles that sit lower on the waist.

Lurex

A trademark used for a yarn made of plastic-coated aluminum filaments.

Lycra

A trademark of the spandex fiber owned and produced by DuPont. It is lightweight and soft, but stronger and more durable than rubber. It is often blended with other fabrics to produce a lightweight freedom of movement in foundation garments.

Marl

A term applied to a yarn or a fabric that is made up of more than one fiber. In blended yarns, two or more different types of staple fibers are twisted or spun together to form the yarn. Polyester/cotton is an example of a typical blended yarn or fabric.

Maternity Bra

Maternity bras offer support and comfort during pregnancy. They do not have underwires, since they can be very uncomfortable during pregnancy. Also see sleep bra.

Merry Widow

Another type of corset that is often strapless and comes to a point in the center front.

Microfiber

The name given to both ultra-fine manufactured fibers and to the technology of developing these fibers. The fabrics made from these extra-fine fibers provide a superior texture, a gentle drape, and incredible softness. It is a man-made fiber that looks and feels good on the skin as it forms to the body's shape.

Minimizer Bra

A minimizer bra reduces the appearance of the bust by up to one cup size.

Moisture Wicking

Moisture wicking fabrics draw moisture away from the skin. This is a great feature to look for in a sports bra.

Molded Cup Bra

Molded bras have cups, which are machine molded. The cups mirror the natural shape of a woman, for shape and comfort. Molded bras are generally unlined and may be either soft cup or underwire.

Nursing Bra

Post-natal bras that offer cups that open to make it easier to breastfeed. These bras are underwire-free for comfort.

Opaque

When used in the lingerie industry, opaque means the body cannot be seen through the garment.

Padded Bra

Bra made with padded fiber-filled cups which lift and support the bust. This creates a more noticeable look which is ideal for smaller breasted women.

Panne

A velvet-like fabric that has been flattened to achieve a desired design or look.

Panty Brief

Replaces panty and gives tummy and derriere support and control under most garments. If too tight and bulges at the leg, do not wear under clingy knits. Choose a thigh slimmer instead.

Peignoir

A longer informal gown that is classic in style and use. A customary gown worn on the wedding night or special occasions.

Pique

A medium-weight fabric, either knit or woven, with raised dobby designs including cords, wales, waffles, or patterns. Woven versions have cords running lengthwise, or in the warp direction. Knitted versions are double-knit fabric constructions, created on multi-feed circular knitting machines.

Polyamide

The basic fiber-forming substance for nylon. It is also the European term for nylon.

Polyester

This is both the name of a fabric and a fiber and is second only to cotton in worldwide use. Its ability to stretch and resist wrinkling makes it a popular fabric for lingerie. Polyester has high strength (although somewhat lower than nylon), excellent resiliency, and high abrasion resistance. Low absorbency allows the fabric to dry quickly.

Plunge Bra

By revealing the top part of the breasts, this bra shapes and lifts the bust for a fuller sexy neckline. Straps are usually set wider apart making them excellent for wearing with low cut styles.

Push-up Bra

Bra made with additional padding at the bottom portion of the cup to lift the breasts to create cleavage. Pushes breasts up and together; thus, repositioning the bust for added size, a look achieved through removable inserts such as liquid and air bags or other cookies. This style is ideal for low and plunging necklines.

Racer Back Bra

A back silhouette, which curves in between the shoulder blades. Many convertible bras can also be worn as racer back.

Rayon

A synthetic, silk-like fabric, but less expensive than silk. Does not trap heat against the body, and absorbs moisture. It is a comfortable fabric against skin, making it popular for lingerie.

Satin

A smooth fabric, such as silk or rayon, woven with a glossy face and a dull back.

Scallop

A decorative border on fabric or lace made up of a series of half circles.

Scoop

U-shaped curve at the neckline. May be a variety of sizes or depths.

Seamless Bra

Very comfortable (good everyday bra), seam-free cups make the bra discreet under a tight fitting shirt. There may be seams in other parts of the bra and still be considered seamless. Seamless bras are a great choice for pairing with clingy knits, t-shirts and lightweight fabrics, since they are virtually invisible under clothing. Also see T-Shirt Bra.

Shelf Bra

Another name for a Demi Cup Bra.

Shirring

A decorative effect created by material being gathered into lines.

Sleep Bra

The sleep bras offer selections that are comfortable to sleep in. Sleep bras are extremely comfortable after some bust surgical procedures, during pregnancy, larger breasts women and those that require a bra that is comfortable for sleeping and everyday wear.

Spandex

With the same attributes as Lycra but not registered, spandex is often blended with other fabrics to give stretch and softness to a garment made from a polymer containing polyurethane.

Soft Cup Bra

Soft Cup bras do not have underwires for a more comfortable fit, but may be molded, padded or lined.

Sports Bra

Sports bras are specifically designed to offer the appropriate amount of support during moderate to intense physical activity.

String Panty

A style of panty that consists of less side coverage than a regular panty. Features a string of fabric at panty's sides and full back coverage. The String Panty is available in Thong, G-String, Bikini or Brief styles.

Teddy

A one piece lingerie style that is a combination of a camisole and panty. May vary in look and style, some styles offering more coverage, while others leave little to the imagination.

Thong Panty

The most comfortable open-back panty. This panty has a narrow strip of fabric in the back that begins as a "V" shape at the waistband and then tapers to a thin strip by the time it reaches the gusset. Features more side and back coverage than a g-string or triangle string thong. Ideal for those seeking a smooth seamless silhouette beneath clothing.

Thong Shaper

Provides smooth look eliminating visible panty lines under slim pants.

Tricot

A soft fabric that is resistant to runs. Often porous knit. Satin tricot has a lustrous finish.

T-Shirt Bra

Designed to appear invisible under even the thinnest fabrics, t-shirt bras are seamless, generally made of micro-fiber with contour cups.

Under Wire

Sewn-in wire molding that runs underneath the breast in each bra cup, this lifts each breast and gives it definition, ensuring a natural contour. Gives shape to smaller busts and offers great support to larger busts.

Velvet

A soft fabric, such as silk, rayon, or nylon, having a smooth, dense pile and a plain underside; something suggesting the smooth surface of velvet.

Waist Cincher; Waspie

Perfect to create an hour glass shape under snug or slim fitting garments. Use this if your tummy is larger in proportion to the bust and hips. Have you ever tried on a pair of pants and they fit except in the waist? This is the shape wear piece for you.