

# What moves you

As beloved activewear brand Athleta launches in Canada, three active women test-run styles that every body can feel good about

Activewear is about so much more than working out now. However you move your body in a day, nothing beats a great pair of leggings—or bike shorts. They look good, feel great and take us places, whether we’re doing an endorphin-pumping workout, walking the dog or running errands. Leading this expansive approach to activewear is Athleta, making its grand entrance into Canada this fall. This marks the first time the Gap Inc.-owned brand has branched out beyond the U.S., and it’s going large, with plans to open up to 30 stores a year across North America (first up: Park Royal Shopping Centre in Vancouver and Yorkdale Shopping Centre in Toronto this fall). Canadians can shop [athleta.ca](http://athleta.ca) as of the end of August. “We are excited to expand our community of empowered and confident women and girls to Canada and bring them a differentiated and inclusive

offering in the performance lifestyle category,” says Mary Beth Laughton, president and CEO of Athleta. When she says inclusive, she means it: Athleta will be your one-stop-shop for size-inclusive workout wear (offering sizes from XXS-3X) as well as lifestyle staples to take you almost anywhere. They’re also built to last, and be gentler on the planet. Athleta is a certified B Corporation, meaning it meets the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability. Today, over 70 per cent of Athleta products are made from sustainable materials with a long-term goal of achieving 100 per cent sustainability and zero waste. But how do they feel? We enlisted three Canadian movers and shakers to take Athleta pieces for a spin and share their own approach to wellness.

**Brynta Ponnuthurai,**  
body positivity advocate

**What inspires you to do the body acceptance work you do?**

“Growing up, I was never able to open a magazine or turn on the television and see anyone who looked like me when it came to body type or culture. Social media is a game-changer when it comes to what we are exposed to. I wanted to positively impact this space—I don’t want to repeat that cycle of negativity, bullying and boxed-in beauty standards. I want the younger generation, especially young girls, to know that it is possible to accept and be at peace with your body, no matter what you look like or where you come from.”

**What’s your favourite way to move your body?**

“I take the time to stretch—I spend most of the day at a desk, so taking the time to undo all the damage sitting has done to my body feels incredible. I also celebrate my body every day through joyful movement, but in a way that I enjoy and not as an obligation or as a means to change it. This usually involves walks with my dog, Penny, or an embarrassing attempt at a TikTok dance trend to the latest Doja Cat song.”

**Does stylish gear motivate you to be active?**

“Absolutely! I spent years depriving my body of cute clothes because I felt as though it didn’t deserve it, or that I couldn’t pull it off. As I learn to fall back in love with movement, I’m leaning into this idea of using outfits as motivation for it. It reminds me that moving my body isn’t a chore and has turned the sidewalk into my runway when I go for walks.”

**What do you love about the outfit you are wearing today?**

“As a bigger, darker-skinned woman, I used to shy away from tight clothes and anything colourful. I love that this outfit is both of those things because it accentuates and compliments things I thought I needed to hide about myself. The material is like butter but also perfectly hugs my body in all the right places so I can feel comfortable and supported at the same time.”



**BRYNTA WEARS**  
CONSCIOUS CROP D-DD+ IN ABYSSINIAN YELLOW, \$69; SALUTATION STASH POCKET II 7" SHORT IN CANYON RED, \$69, [ATHLETA.CA](http://ATHLETA.CA)



**OSOB WEARS** FARALLON JACKET IN MOCHA LATTE, \$139; RENEW RACERBACK TANK IN BALLERINA GOWN, \$59; KINETIC MINI CROSSBODY IN MUTED LILAC, \$75; BROOKLYN TEXTURED ANKLE PANT IN ABALONE GREY, \$109, [ATHLETA.CA](http://ATHLETA.CA)

**ALINA WEARS** GIRL POWER UP TEE IN BALLERINA GOWN, \$49; GIRL GIVE IT A WHIRL CAPRI IN ANTIQUE ROSE, \$54, [ATHLETA.CA](http://ATHLETA.CA)



**Osob Mohamud,**  
content creator, and her daughter, Alina  
**What makes you feel strong?**

“Being a single mom. I feel strength in knowing I can really do anything myself. But literally strong too, like carrying my sleeping daughter inside the house with bags of groceries in both hands.”

**What’s your favourite way to move your body?**

“I love to walk. I have a habit where I’ll walk anywhere that’s less than two hours away from home. Pre-pandemic, I would go to spin class a few times a week—I can’t wait to go back.”

**How about your daughter, Alina?**

“Alina loves sports; she plays soccer and really enjoys dancing. We love exploring new parks and trails together on our bikes. Currently, she’s learning how to roller-skate.”

**How do you bring activewear into your everyday wardrobe?**

“Since the transition to working from home, I’ve come to live in my leisure and activewear. It’s hard to find activewear in neutral colours without a lot of patterns and slogans but that’s what I gravitate towards. I love the colours and the simplicity of the items I’m wearing; it makes it easy to transition from home to the gym to hanging out with friends. Alina hasn’t wanted to take the clothing off since it arrived! She’s really into the sensory feeling of her clothing and she thinks the material is so soft and comfortable.”



**Nariko Chaffe,**  
fitness instructor

**How do you like to move your body?**

“I grew up playing sports like rugby and hockey, intense full-contact sports. Nowadays, I prefer shorter workouts—I like to get in and get out. I teach high intensity interval training (HIIT) classes, and if you do one of my classes you can expect a lot of burpees!”

**As a fitness pro, what do you look for in your activewear?**

“Comfort and proper fit and support. When I’m in class, there are so many things running through my head that the last thing I need to worry about is if my bra is falling down or if my leggings are bunching in a weird way. But also, I want to look good. It takes a lot of confidence to command a room and some days you’re not feeling it, but if you look the part, it helps.”

**What do you love about this outfit?**

“The colour, the style, but most of all the material on these leggings—I feel like I’m not wearing any pants at all! They’re so soft! I’ve been an Athleta fan for years. Whenever I would go to the States pre-pandemic, my first stop was always an Athleta store, so I could stock up, so I’m really happy it’s in Canada now.”

**How important is it to you to buy sustainable activewear?**

“A big chunk of my wardrobe is performance-wear, so I want to be mindful of what I’m adding to it. It’s great that Athleta uses sustainable materials and manufacturing methods, but they also make clothing that lasts, and I can say that from experience. My favourite pair of leggings are from Athleta: they’re five or six years old and in near-perfect condition.”



**NARIKO WEARS** CINCH LONGLINE BRA IN SAGE, \$69; SALUTATION STASH POCKET CINCH 7/8 IN SAGE, \$119; BREEZE REVERSIBLE BUCKET HAT, \$58, [ATHLETA.CA](http://ATHLETA.CA)