

# Making Wool Cool Again

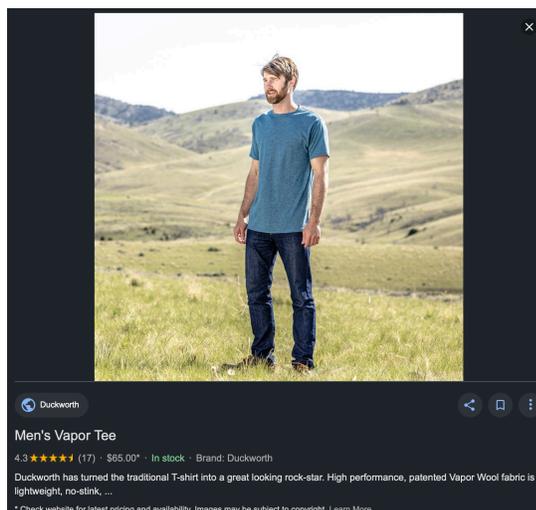
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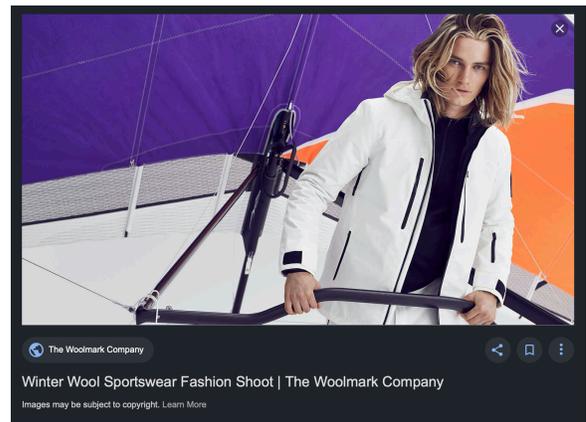
The wool industry is innovating, and a host of new products have been introduced, making wool cool again. Australian Wool Innovation Ltd. (AWI) and its sister company, Woolmark, are responsible for much of this success. These nonprofit, grower-funded companies have been working with brands and retailers to develop and introduce a host of new pure and blended wool products.

One of the most impressive of these is Allbird's all-wool sneakers. The impressive sneakers are cozy and dry in cold weather, they wick moisture inside and repel weather outside. The shoes breathe, minimize odor, have a low carbon footprint, and provide flexibility in movement. The sneaker also uses a foam made from Brazilian sugarcane.

Duckworth, based in Montana in the United States, has developed an entire line of wool performance apparel.



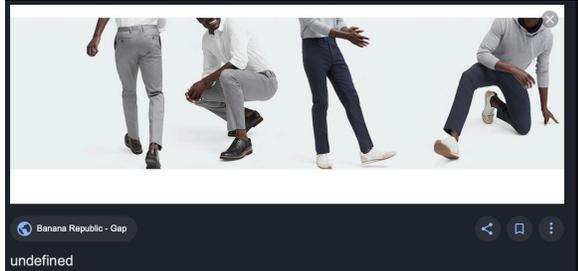
Woolmark and AWI have teamed up to develop a wool-focused, complete uniform collection for the America's Cup sailing contest that will include a waterproof jacket, soft shell jacket, polo shirt, T-shirt, wet jacket, blouson (blouson jacket), wetsuit, and base-layers.



American professional surfer Kelly Slater and designer John More have teamed up to produce the first 100% Australian Merino wool boardshort. Merino wool is being touted as the world's best natural performance fiber. The spinning technique used to produce the wool is unique. AWI CEO Stuart McCullough was quoted as saying the wool is, "soft on skin but tough enough to handle the elements. Wool is not only the world's oldest fiber but also the most technically advanced, with modern manufacturing techniques making the best even better."

A major US outdoor brand has reintroduced wool into its lineup this year, which will be distributed in 40-plus countries. AWI worked with the company's development team on a

new spinning technique that makes the wool fabric dry up to five times faster, while remaining 35% warmer, and providing 35% more stretch, with the seams being up to 120% stronger.



Houdini, a Swedish outdoor brand, has launched a line of 100% Merino wool pants and jackets. The same brand has launched the Menu Project, which grows vegetables in soils made from 100% composted wool garments.

Blends such as Merino wool with core-spun polyester or nylon are proving popular with

customers in the outdoor industry and getting a lot of buzz. Nagnata, a high-end fashion brand founded by Australian fashion leader Laura May that focuses on premium natural fibers, has launched a line of athletic apparel aimed at the yoga market.

World consumption of wool dropped by nearly half between the 1980s and 2009, falling from nearly 2 million tonnes per year to 1.1 million tonnes. As with all natural fibres, wool lost market share to manmade alternatives that were lower in cost and provided easy-care convenience to consumers.

The wool industry has had to innovate and get the message out about its inherent environmental advantages, and wool has begun to retake market share. The progress is slow, but world mill use of wool has climbed in the last ten years and now reaches nearly 1.2 million tonnes.