

By Lisa de Speville

# WRAPPED UP

COMPRESSION GARMENTS ARE ALL THE RAGE THESE DAYS. HERE'S HOW THEY WORK (OR DON'T WORK!) AND WHICH ONE'S ARE BEST FOR RUNNERS.

Compression stockings surfaced in medicine years ago to reduce swelling, maintain circulation and reduce the risk of blood clots forming in the leg veins of high risk and post-operative patients. In recent years the fear of long-haul flight-induced deep vein thrombosis (DVT) drove people to clear store shelves of compression socks.

Compression is again a buzzword, but this time it is associated with performance enhancing sports clothing.

Worn as underwear or outerwear, during or after exercise, there are five key properties associated with compression garments that you should consider.

» **Muscle Support** By applying pressure and reducing vibration on muscles, compression garments focus muscular efforts to reduce muscle damage and increase strength and control.

» **Circulation Stimulation** Compression garments worn post-exercise (for at least 2-hours or overnight) aid recovery by reducing inflammation and accelerating muscle repair as a result of artificially improving capillary circulation.

» **Moisture and Temperature Management** The technical fabrics of these skin-tight base layers wick and disperse moisture and accelerate evaporation to promote cooling or, to insulate in the case of winter garments).

» **Enhanced body Posture** Trussed up, your muscles are well supported. This enhances body posture. Studies have linked improved posture and core strength to an increase in power output.

» **Psychological advantage** Just pulling on a supportive garment makes you feel invincible and confident – provided you're body-image comfortable strutting around in very tight clothing.

## SNEAK PREVIEW

Adidas TechFit Powerweb (Men's), R799.00 (short sleeve tee), R899.00 (short tights)

In this get-up you'll feel like an indestructible Bionic Man. A web of strategically-placed TPU Powerbands hug your muscles, enhance your posture and increase explosive power.

Try a size down to benefit fully from the Powerband support. These garments are most suited to sprinters and track athletes. Also in women's style. Only available from July 2008.

**Stockists:** Adidas Concept Stores and major sporting retailers adidas (021) 442-6200 [www.adidas.com](http://www.adidas.com)



Great



**Canterbury Baselayer Cold, short sleeve (Unisex) R399.00**

Developed and tested in New Zealand - initially for rugby players - this range of long and short-sleeved garments is stretchy, comfortable and suited to all sports. They've got two weather condition options for cold and warm conditions. Although the garment has compressive properties, this top is more a body-hugging base layer rather than a tightly compressive garment. The Baselayer® hot fabric is quite thin and less compressive. Also in white and navy.

**Stockists:** Sportsmans Warehouse, Total Sports & other leading sports retail stores  
(021) 447-5228 or clientservices@canterbury.co.za



**Rugby Tech Body Plus 1 Compression, short sleeve (unisex), R215.95**

This multisport garment (not only rugby, despite the brand name) is designed for use when training, warming up and in competition. It is a fitted top that is meant to be right next to your skin. The fabric has a percentage of spandex to give comfort and stretch. As with other compression category products, moisture management is a big thing. Also available in long sleeve (R224.50) and in a blue/red colour way.

**Stockists:** General sports retailers country wide  
Rugbytech (021) 872-9903



**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

**Adidas TechFit OnField ClimaCool Seamless, sleeveless (Men's) R499.00**

This is a sexy body-hugging garment. The fabric is stretchy but firm and supportive without being constrictive. There are no side-seams. The silvery patterned zones are ventilation elements, placed in high-sweat areas to improve cooling and moisture management. Matching short tights complete the outfit. Not a flattering garment on those battling the bulge. Also in aluminium colour and short-sleeve style. Women's version also available.

**Stockists:** Adidas Concept Stores and major sporting retailers  
adidas (021) 442-6200 www.adidas.com

**Rockets Compression Garments, short tights (Unisex), From R355.00**

Of all the products these are the tightest compression shorts around. The back of the product box gives measurements and sizing recommendations. I should be a size 1, I tried the size 2 and judging from the high level of compression I'm fairly confident that there is no way I'd fit into a smaller size. While I'd be disinclined to wear these shorts in public, they'd fit the bill as a post-exercise recovery garment.

**Stockists:** Sport and cycling independents  
Nationwide Peak Performance Fitness  
(021) 913-5470 www.ppfitness.co.za



**Under Armour Men's UPF 30+ Heatgear Compression, long sleeve R399.00**

Constructed from Under Armour's patented PolyArmour microfibre fabric - to maximise moisture spread and evaporation - this garment's moisture management base layer properties dominate its compressive muscle support elements. Available in short sleeve and sleeveless. Also in ladies (R349.00) with a subtle v-neck.

**Stockists:** Sportsmans Warehouse, The Sweat Shop and Sports Horizons Under Armour (011) 405-3399  
www.underarmour.co.za

**Adidas TechFit ClimaCool Seamless, long sleeve (Men's) R699.00**

Although this garment is classified as compression, it would be better placed in a "tight top" category. The soft, seamless fabric offers little resistance and support compared to the adidas TechFit OnField products. Available in white and black and in short sleeve. Tights are also included in this TechFit ClimaCool range. Women's versions also available.

**Stockists:** Adidas Concept Stores and major sporting retailers  
adidas (021) 442-6200 www.adidas.com



**Under Armour Ladies Coldgear Compression, long sleeve, R499.00**

UA's Coldgear products are definitely more compressive than their Heatgear garments as a result of the thicker fabric, which is multilayered to move moisture away from the body and keep the skin surface dry. This top is great for really chilly winter mornings because it is snug but some may find it a bit claustrophobic because of the fabric thickness, skin-tight fit and high neck. Also in sleeveless and short-sleeve. Also men's (R599.00).

**Stockists:** Sportsmans Warehouse, The Sweat Shop and Sports Horizons, Under Armour (011) 405-3399 www.underarmour.co.za

**GEAR GAL SAYS...**

**COMPRESSION? IS IT REAL?**

I have reservations about running outdoors or in the gym in a skin-tight, curve-revealing, catsuit-like outfit. But I am swayed to consider compression clothing as technical pyjamas - worn overnight - to bolster recovery, especially after ultra-distance runs or multi-day adventure races. Using compression garments to improve my running performance? If I were a World-class athlete striving for Olympic gold I'd definitely grasp any opportunity to gain even a 0.6% performance boost. But, I'm not.

Research results are promising for explosive vertical jumps but are barely significant, inconclusive or not at all available for runs longer than 60 metres. I'd probably get more benefit from those hill training sessions I keep putting off.

Compression clothing is manufactured by most well known brands and promoted within all sporting disciplines. I need more convincing before jumping on this bandwagon; but I am prepared to reassess this opinion should research specific to running produce significant findings applicable to everyday runners.