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Patagonia Makes the Perfect Wool Baselayer for Summer



Patagonia just announced the release of its new Merino Air line, a collection of what the company is calling "the world's most advanced base layer."

The claim stems from the new development process that the famously eco-conscious brand is using to create the Merino Air apparel. During manufacturing, the sustainably harvested wool is treated with an air-jet process, where the yarn is exposed to a high-pressure air gun and expanded to construct a special fabric that creates more fullness in each thread. The result is yarn that has all the insulation, warmth, softness, and stretch that you would expect from a merino base layer, but does it with a fraction of the material. After the air-treatment process, Patagonia blends the wool with 100 percent recycled Capilene polyester to reinforce the fabric without increasing its weight. The company claims that each garment produces less than four grams of waste, compared to the average 20 grams of waste per garment coming from what is currently on the market.

But research and development made sure that the differentiating factors with the Merino Air line were just as good for the wearer as they are for the environment. The thinness of the material is meant to allow it to contour to your body and have more stretch than base layers of merino wool past. And the fact that it's seamless is good news for anyone who has ever had a hem or stitch that rubbed them the wrong way. Additionally, the expansion of the wool fibers creates tiny gaps between each of the threads, so even though you can't see through it, the fabric is much more breathable than it appears since it's full of tiny holes. The Merino Air products are now available in stores and online, starting at \$129.

Because Merino wool is known for its ability to wick away moisture, and with companies designing apparel that also breathes well when it's warmer out, debuting wool-based performance-wear in the middle of the hottest season of the year might not be as crazy as it seems. Beyond Patagonia, brands such as Outlier are taking the go-to wintertime layering fabric and repurposing it for next-level active wear. Outlier's Openweight Merino is comparable to the Merino Air line — blended with polyester and designed with open eyelets to let air in, but is reprising the role of performance fabrics (because we all know that "Dri-Fit" doesn't really always mean "dry fit."). The reduced weight, airiness, and anti-



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bacterial properties of the fabrics allow for year-round benefits, from keeping the stench away through multiple wears and keeping you dry during sweat sessions, to trapping warmth in the winter months and being lightweight no matter what the season.



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