

SUNSENSE – PROTECT YOUR SKIN

UPF Clothing: Worth it or Worthless?

Clothing is our first line of defense against the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. Fitness and swim wear with an Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) rating on the label often comes with a higher price tag—but is it worth it?

What does UPF mean?

UPF indicates the fraction of the sun's UV rays that can penetrate the fabric. For example, a shirt with a UPF of 50 allows just 1/50th of UV radiation to reach the skin. Only clothes with a UPF of 15-50+ can be labeled as sun-protective. The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) rating used for sunscreens is specifically for cosmetic products.

What factors affect the UPF rating of a workout garment?

The tighter the knit or the weave of a fabric, the less UV is allowed to get through to the skin. Synthetic fabrics (polyester, lycra, nylon) are more protective than natural fabrics like cotton or linen. Other factors that affect UPF are:

- **VIVID COLOURS**—protect better than white fabrics
- **THICK FABRICS**—protect better than light, sheer ones
- **DRY VS. WET**—a white cotton t-shirt has a UPF of 7; when wet, only 3
- **PROPER FITTING VS. STRETCHED OUT**—stretched out fabric loosens the fibers, making it less protective

Does this mean everyone should buy UPF labeled clothing?

There are many regular clothing options that offer excellent sun protection:

- Denim offers the highest protection
- Long sleeves, collars, sunglasses and a hat with a wide brim will protect exposed skin
- Long sleeved breathable rash guards for swimming offer better protection than a white cotton t-shirt

Where to find UPF Clothing?

Look for UPF fitness clothing at the following retailers:

- Coolibar.com
- Eddie Bauer
- Mountain Equipment Co-op
- Underarmour.com

Sun-protective active wear can be fashionable and bright! Find pieces you love and make dressing for your workout a breeze. But whatever clothing you choose, remember to apply sunscreen and avoid sun exposure between 10am and 4pm.

Share your best sun protection strategies on social media [#TriFitSkinSense](#)



Mental Health Week: May 2-8, 2016

Get ready to **#GETLOUD** in support of Mental Health Week!

- Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. It is a state of well-being.
- Maintaining your mental health is a lot like being physically fit—it requires a little effort each day.
- Mental health isn't about being perfect. It's having the tools to cope with life's challenges.

Click [here](#) for more information on Mental Health Week 2016.

Sources:

Skin Cancer Foundation: <http://www.skincancer.org/prevention/sun-protection/clothing/protection>

<http://www.skincancer.org/prevention/sun-protection/clothing>

Government of Canada new releases: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?crtr.sj1D=&mthd=advSrch&crtr.mnthndVI=&nid=343439&crtr.dpt1D=&crtr.tp1D=&crtr.lc1D=&crtr.yrStrtVI=2008&crtr.kw=&crtr.dyStrtVI=26&crtr.aud1D=&crtr.mnthStrtVI=2&crtr.yrndVI=&crtr.dyndVI=>



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