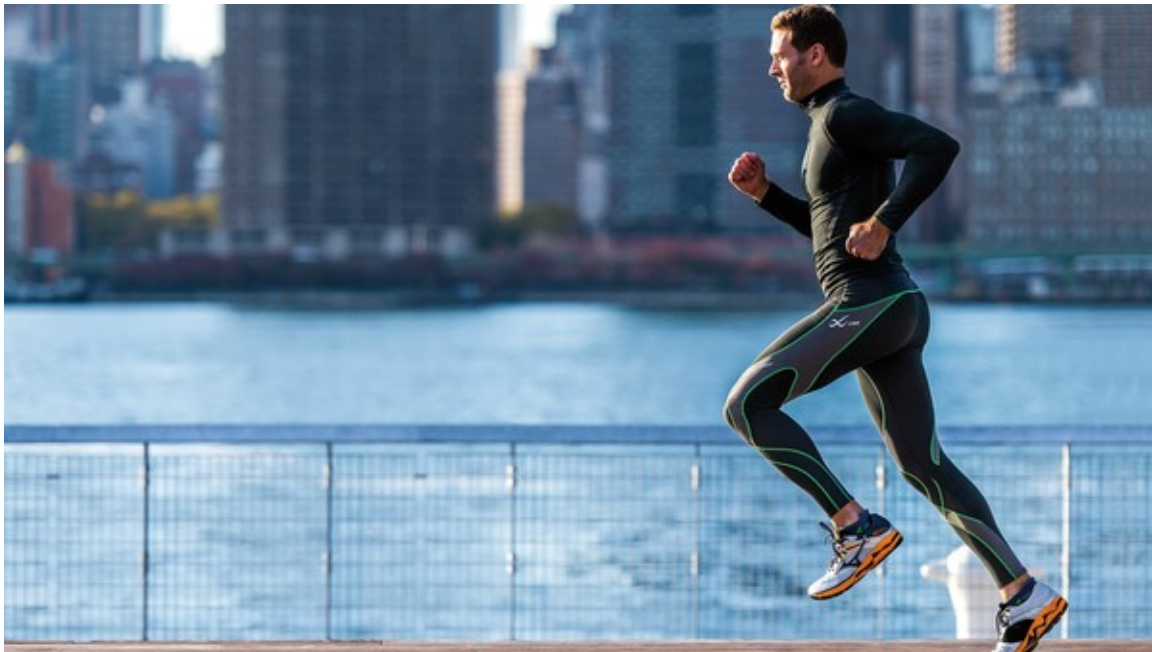


# When wrapping up warm and tight helps you work out better

Charles Wallace



High-tech running tights and socks replicate the benefits of the taping favoured by Olympic athletes

Fit Exec

As temperatures grow chillier in the northern hemisphere, many athletes add base layers to their workout clothes to continue exercising outdoors. Thanks to new clothing technology, you can now add some of the benefits of Olympic-style taping when you pull on a pair of tights, not only keeping warm but adding a measure of muscle

compression and knee stability.

I have recently been trying out a pair of [CW-X running tights](#) (\$105), made by Wacoal Sports Science, a subsidiary of the famed Japanese lingerie company, and [CEP running socks](#) (\$80) from Medi, which is headquartered in Bayreuth, Germany.

One thing these socks have in common is that they are incredibly snug and they are designed to fit that way. CW-X uses a combination of height and weight to find the correct size, while CEP requires you to measure your calf. All the new high-tech tights are aiming to replicate the [benefits of Kinesio taping](#), a system of brightly coloured adhesive tape applied to upper and lower body muscles that was invented by a Japanese chiropractor named Kenzo Kase. Kinesio taping has become a familiar sight at summer Olympic Games as athletes try everything legal to boost their performance.

While there is [not a lot of research](#) backing up the scientific claims behind taping, many athletes swear by the system for improved comfort and performance.

“In my experience athletes are reporting better performance from taping,” says Gary Guerriero, co-owner of New York’s US Athletic Training Center and a physiotherapist who has worked with the New York Rangers hockey team and New York Knicks basketball squad. “It assists muscles in motion, provides compression and so by the end of a workout muscles will be less sore.”

The tights attempt to mimic the Kinesio taping by putting seams over the muscles in the same pattern as the taping would, but are obviously a lot easier to put on and take off (although still a lot harder than with typical running pants). “It’s essentially an exoskeleton that also increases circulation and allows for less movement of the knee,” says John Wilson, a British former track and field athlete who heads Wacoal

Sports Science in New York. “They provide support to the key muscles of the body and joints, keeping everything stable.”

For the support and compression to work properly, Mr Wilson says the tights should be put on at least 20 minutes before exercise and left on for another 20 minutes after the workout. Not only do they help muscles cool down after a race, but the compression helps the body remove the build-up of lactic acid from muscles that accumulates during a workout.

After a few weeks of experimenting with the tights, I had a consistent feeling that my leg muscles were less tired, especially after a long distance run of more than 10km. I found the CW-X tights easier to get on and off than the CEP stockings, which felt vacuum-sealed to my calves after a long run.

Since most runners, cyclists and skiers put on some form of base layer at this time of year, it makes a lot of sense to add these therapeutic tights to boost performance, which, except for skiers, generally slows in the cold weather.

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