



# *The Look of a Champion*

The latest in practical and great-looking athletic wear

Team BFS athlete Chloe Van Tussenbroek, ready to train in customized athletic wear.

One thing is obvious from watching the Olympics – it’s not only important to perform well, you’ve got to look good while you’re doing it.

With the eyes of the world watching, Olympians from every country from Aruba to Zimbabwe arrived in London wearing athletic clothing designed to convey the look of a champion and to enhance performance. In the 2008 Summer Olympics 25 world records in swimming were broken by athletes wearing new high-tech, low-drag bodysuits. However, for the 2012 Olympics those suits were banned, and the return to the traditional textile suits resulted in swimmers breaking only nine world records in the London Games.

Although swimming resisted the change and reverted to conventional swimwear, many companies are working on new compression suits that promise to help athletes in other sports. If you want to run faster, jump higher or pedal faster, there’s a compression suit on the market that will help. As for strength, the super suits allowed in many powerlifting federations have made 1,000-pound bench presses commonplace – even Paul Anderson’s monstrous 1,206-pound squat has been exceeded by several men.

In the pioneer days of weightlifting and bodybuilding, the attire of choice was a tank top and shorts for summer and, for cold weather, a cheap gray or blue sweat suit. Then came “clown pants,” which were loose,

baggy-pant sweats that had an elastic waistband and elastic at the ankles and were extremely loose at the thigh like those worn by MC Hammer in his “Can’t Touch This” video. These were usually made of cotton, and thus very breathable, and were loose so as not to restrict the athlete during squats and lunges. From there we saw an obsession with spandex tights and shorts, making the gym look like a Comic-Con convention.

That brings us to the here and now, where compression clothing is all the rage. Does it really give athletes an edge?

## **Getting Ready to Sweat**

One possible benefit of compression garments is reduced muscle soreness. A study published in the

May 2006 *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine* looked at the effects of wearing compression garments after eccentric exercise. The study involved 11 men who were considered recreational athletes. The subjects wore a specially designed compression garment on just one leg, and the task consisted of walking downhill for 30 minutes.

According to the researchers, “The data suggests that wearing compression garments in the recovery from eccentric exercise may alter the inflammatory response to damage and accelerate the repair processes inside of the muscle.” Two other studies, one published in the June 2001 *Journal of Orthopedic Sports and Physical Therapy* and another in the January 2009 *Journal of Science Medicine* offered research on the effects of compression garments on reducing perceived muscle soreness.

Another theory about compression garments is that they fight fatigue by



A behind-the-scenes look at the next *Spider-Man* movie? Nope, it's strength coach Paul Gagné trying out a new compression bodysuit.

reducing muscle vibration. In a study on cyclists conducted by the Australian

Institute of Sport, researchers found that after 30 minutes of cycling those subjects using compression garments experienced decreased swelling in the thighs, lower heart rates and blood lactate levels while cycling, decreased muscle soreness, and improved performance during a second workout the same day. There is also a belief that the compression these garments provide reduces the pain of injuries such as iliotibial band syndrome.

Other types of sports performance garments are made of unique polyester-blend fabrics that help wick sweat off the body, pushing it to the surface so it can evaporate. Of course, athletes still need to be careful about dehydration, especially if they are exercising in the heat.

Specialized athletic wear will not take the place of hard work, but it can give an athlete an edge – and make them look good while doing it! BFS



BFS offers an extensive line of functional athletic clothing that performs as great as it looks.

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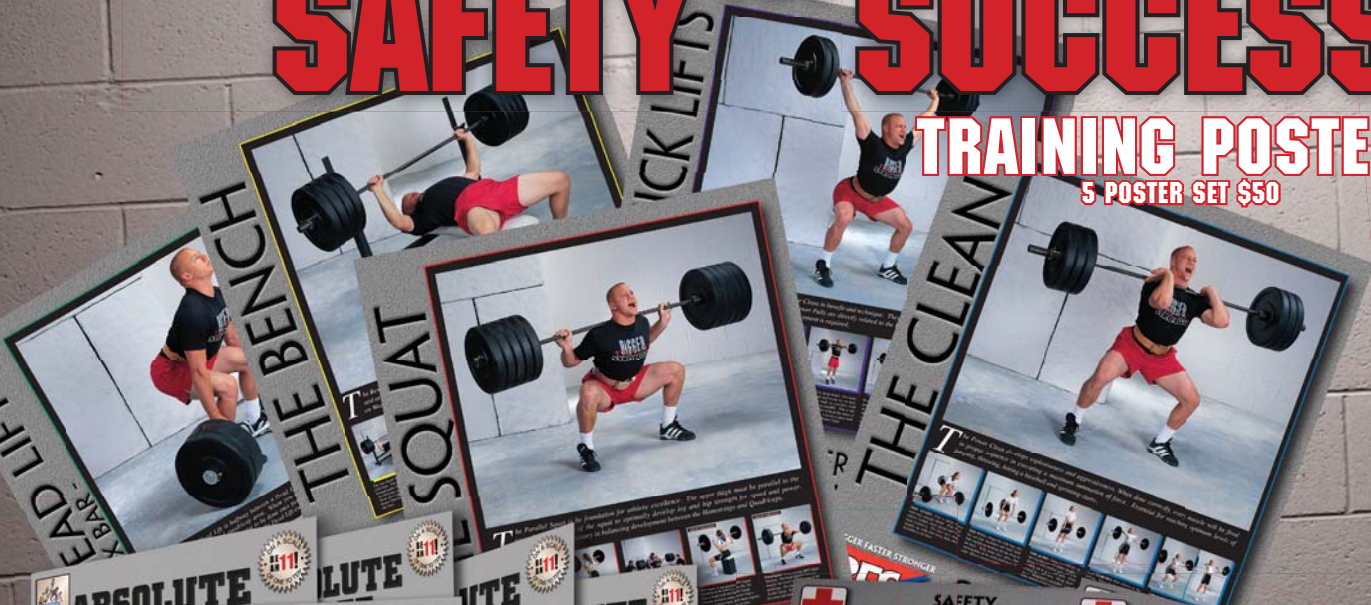
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60	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200
65	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210
70	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220
75	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230
80	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240
85	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250
90	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250	260
95	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250	260	270
100	190	200	210	220	230	240	250	260	270	280

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