

SHIVPRIYA TEXCHEM · KNOWLEDGE SERIES

Wool. Nature's performance fibre.

Fleece to top. Top to the fibre that manages heat, moisture and odour better than anything engineered since. A working guide to wool — its grades, its process and its Indian market.

Merino

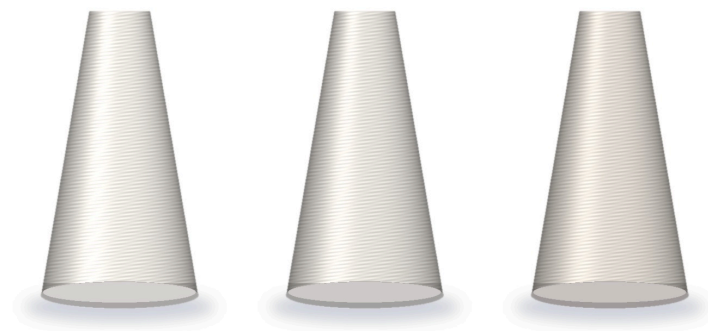
the fine-wool benchmark, led by Australian fleece under 19.5 micron

30%+

stretch and full recovery — the most resilient natural fibre

100%

protein fibre; renewable, biodegradable, naturally flame-resistant



Bridging world-class spinning mills and your needs, since 2003.

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CHAPTER 01

What exactly is wool?

Wool is a protein (keratin) fibre grown by sheep. Its crimped, scaled structure traps air, absorbs a third of its weight in moisture without feeling wet, and springs back from deformation — a natural performance system no synthetic fully copies.

GRADE	MICRON / SOURCE	WHAT IT SIGNIFIES
Superfine merino	<17.5 µn;, Australia	Next-to-skin luxury knitwear and super-number suiting
Fine merino	17.5–19.5 µn;	The commercial premium band for apparel
Medium wools	20–25 µn;	Knitwear, blankets, tweeds and blends
Broad / carpet wools	28+ µn;, incl. Indian	Carpets, felts and industrial uses — most Indian clip sits here
Speciality hair	Cashmere, mohair, camel	Adjacent luxury fibres traded alongside wool

Buyer's note. Micron is price. A one-micron difference in fineness moves fleece value more than any other parameter — and determines whether a yarn can touch skin. Specify micron, length and vegetable-matter limits explicitly on every wool contract.

Raw material

Sheep fleece, shorn annually; scoured to remove grease and dirt.

Structure

Crimped, scaled keratin — the source of bulk, warmth and felting.

Supplied as

Greasy wool, scoured wool, combed top, or spun yarn (Nm counts).

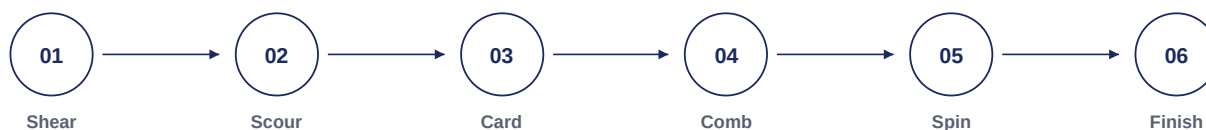
End of life

Biodegradable; wool garments also lead the resale and recycle economy.

CHAPTER 02

Fleece to yarn: two spinning worlds

Wool splits into two systems: worsted (combed, parallel, smooth — for suiting) and woollen (carded, jumbled, lofty — for knitwear and blankets). The choice defines the product.



01 Shearing and classing

Fleece is shorn and classed by micron, length and contamination — value is set in the shed.

02 Scouring

Hot detergent washing removes grease (lanolin, recovered and sold) and dirt.

03 Carding

Fibres are opened and formed into sliver; for woollen yarns, spinning follows directly from here.

04 Combing

For worsted, combing removes short fibre and aligns the rest into top — the traded intermediate.

05 Spinning

Worsted frames spin smooth, fine yarns; woollen mules and rings spin lofty, airy ones.

06 Finishing

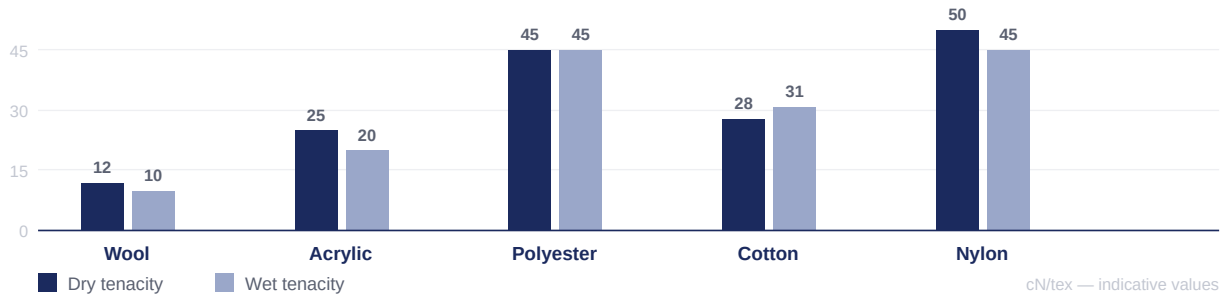
Fabrics are milled, decated and pressed; knit yarns may be superwash-treated for machine washability.

SYSTEM	CHARACTER	BEST FOR
Worsted	Smooth, compact, defined twist	Suiting, formal trousers, fine knitwear
Woollen	Lofty, airy, fuzzy surface	Sweaters, blankets, tweeds, shawls
Superwash	Scale-treated, machine washable	Modern knitwear and socks
Wool blends	Economics + easy care	PV-wool suiting, acrylic-wool knits

CHAPTER 03

What the fibre actually does

Wool's numbers look modest until the elastic recovery and moisture buffering are read together — comfort in wool is a system property, not a single figure.



PROPERTY	TYPICAL VALUE	COMMERCIAL MEANING
Tenacity	10–14 cN/tex	Weakest major fibre — but elasticity compensates in use
Elongation	25–35%	Stretches and fully recovers; garments shrug off deformation
Moisture regain	14–16%	Absorbs up to a third of its weight while feeling dry
Thermal	Outstanding	Crimp-trapped air insulates warm and cool alike
Odour	Naturally resistant	Absorbs and locks odour compounds; fewer washes needed
Flame behaviour	Self-extinguishing	Naturally FR — specified in uniforms and transport
Felting	Scales interlock	The shrinkage risk — and the basis of felt and milled fabrics
Dyeing	Acid dyes	Rich, deep shades with excellent fastness

Process caution for your mill. Wool felts — heat, moisture and agitation together shrink it irreversibly. Wet processing must be gentle and pH-controlled, and machine-washable claims require genuine superwash treatment, not optimism. Moth-proofing and storage discipline protect inventory.

CHAPTER 04

Wool against the alternatives

A like-for-like view of the fibres competing for the same programme. Ratings are indicative and read horizontally, not as absolute laboratory values.

PARAMETER	WOOL	ACRYLIC	CASHMERE	POLYESTER	WOOL / POLY
Origin	Sheep fleece	Petroleum	Goat down	Petroleum	Blend
Warmth / weight	Excellent	Good	Best	Moderate	Very good
Moisture buffering	Best in class	Poor	Excellent	None	Good
Odour resistance	Natural	Poor	Natural	Poor	Partial
Easy care	Needs care / superwash	Easy	Delicate	Easy	Easier
Price	Premium	Value	Luxury	Lowest	Mid
Biodegradable	Yes	No	Yes	No	Partial
FR behaviour	Naturally FR	Melts / burns	FR	Melts	Improved

The honest trade-off

Wool is the most expensive mainstream fibre, the weakest in tenacity, and it demands care in both processing and laundering. Its case rests entirely on comfort physics no synthetic matches — and on the premium buyers pay for it.

The direction of travel

Two currents: super-number worsted suiting holds its formalwear franchise, while merino performance knitwear — base layers, socks, travel wear — is the global growth story wool has waited decades for.

CHAPTER 05

India's wool economy: Ludhiana and beyond

India consumes far more apparel wool than it grows fine — the domestic clip is mostly carpet grade, so apparel wool arrives as imported fleece and top, and is converted in one of the world's great wool clusters.

THE SUPPLY BASE

Australian merino

IMPORTED TOP

The fine-wool source; auction prices in Melbourne set Indian suiting economics.

Raymond

WORSTED FLAGSHIP

India's marquee worsted spinner-weaver and among the world's largest suiting producers.

Ludhiana cluster

KNITWEAR CAPITAL

The hub of Indian woollen and acrylic-wool knitwear, hosiery and shawls.

Indian clip

CARPET GRADES

Domestic broad wool feeds the carpet belt — Bhadohi, Panipat — and felts.

Formalwear franchise holds

Suiting, uniforms and occasion tailoring keep worsted demand steady.

Performance merino is the growth

Base layers, socks and travel knits re-position wool as technical, not traditional.

Winterwear is a fixed season

North Indian winters underwrite a permanent knitwear and shawl market.

Blends manage the price

Poly-wool suiting and acrylic-wool knits deliver wool character at commercial prices.

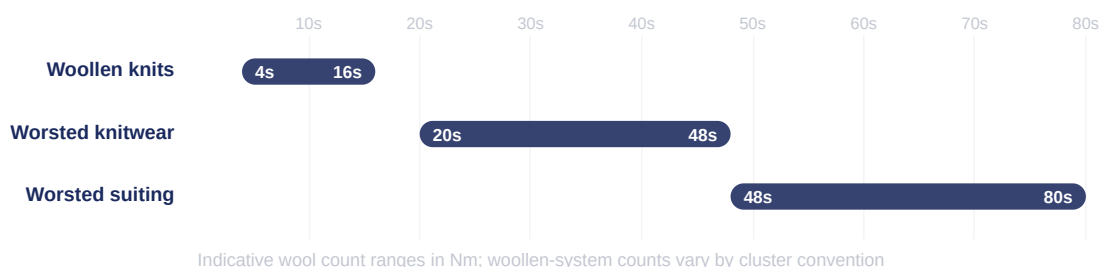
What this means for the yarn trade. Wool buying is micron literacy plus timing against auction cycles. We help buyers specify correctly — micron, length, system, superwash — and source from spinners with genuine wool discipline.

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CHAPTER 06

100% wool yarn: worsted and woollen counts

Wool yarn trades in metric count (Nm) on the worsted side and in woollen counts or tex for the woollen system — know the system before comparing numbers.



YARN TYPE / SYSTEM	USUAL RANGE	WHERE IT FITS
Worsted suiting	2/48 – 2/80 Nm	Super-number suitings and formal trousers
Worsted knitwear	2/20 – 2/48 Nm	Flat-knit sweaters and fine gauge knitwear
Woollen spun	4 – 16 Nm	Lofty sweaters, blankets, shawls, tweeds
Superwash merino	Programme based	Machine-washable base layers and socks
Hand-knitting yarn	By ply	The retail yarn market — Ludhiana's speciality

Specification to order

- Micron band stated (e.g. 19.5 µn; max) — it is the price and the hand
- Fibre length / Hauteur for worsted evenness
- Superwash certification where machine-wash is claimed
- Mulesing-free / RWS certification for export programmes

Processing discipline

- pH and temperature control through every wet stage
- Anti-felting handling — minimise agitation when warm and wet
- Moth-proofing and dry storage for fibre and yarn inventory
- Relaxed finishing to preserve loft and recovery

CHAPTER 07

Blends: wool character at commercial prices

Most Indian wool consumption is blended — the blend keeps wool's hand and warmth while fixing price, strength and easy-care.

BLEND	COMMON RATIOS	WHAT IT DELIVERS	PRIMARY END USE
Wool / Polyester	45:55, 30:70	Suiting stability, crease recovery and price	Suiting, uniforms, trousers
Wool / Acrylic	30:70, 50:50	Warm, washable, affordable knitwear	Sweaters, caps, school knits
Wool / Viscose	55:45	Drape and economy in soft suiting	Blazers, winter ethnic
Wool / Nylon	80:20	Strength and abrasion for socks and knits	Socks, outdoor knitwear
Wool / Cashmere	90:10	Touch of luxury at accessible premium	Premium knitwear
Wool / Lyocell	70:30	Lighter, cooler tailoring	Transitional suiting



The commercial logic in one line. A 45:55 poly-wool suit and a 30:70 wool-acrylic sweater are how most Indians actually wear wool — the blend is the market, and pure wool is the aspiration it sells.

CHAPTER 08

Where wool is being used

Wool's applications split cleanly by system: worsted dresses the office, woollen dresses the winter — and performance merino is building a third market between them.



Suiting

Worsted suitings from all-wool supers to poly-wool workhorses — India's formal uniform.



Knitwear

Flat-knit sweaters and cardigans; Ludhiana's core trade.



Socks and base layers

Superwash merino performance wear — the global growth story.



Shawls and blankets

Traditional woollen weaving from Ludhiana to Kullu.



Carpets

Indian broad wool feeds the Bhadohi-Panipat carpet export economy.



Activewear merino

Odour-resistant training and travel apparel.



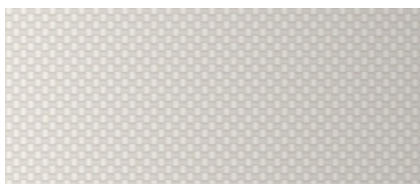
Uniforms and FR

Naturally flame-resistant fabric for defence, transport and hospitality.

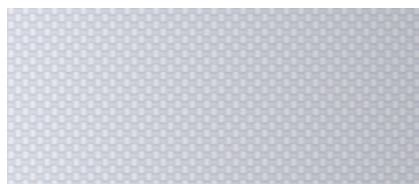


Felts and technical

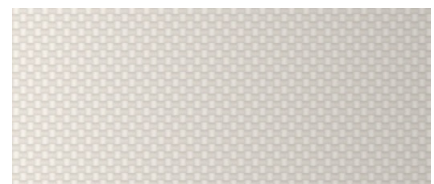
Industrial felts, piano hammers, polishing — wool's oldest technical trade.



WORSTED · SUITING



WOOLLEN · KNITWEAR



MERINO · BASE LAYER

Segment to watch in India. Superwash merino knits. Machine-washable performance wool converts wool's biggest objection into a non-issue — and premium Indian activewear is discovering it.

CHAPTER 09 · OUR VIEW

Wool holds premium ground — and finds a second life in performance

Wool will never compete on price. Its future is exactly where its physics are unmatched: formal tailoring, winter comfort and technical performance wear.

01 Formalwear demand is loyal

Weddings, corporate and uniforms keep worsted suiting a stable, premium franchise.

02 Performance re-brands the fibre

Merino base layers and socks recast wool as technical gear for a new generation.

03 Winter is a guaranteed season

North India's climate underwrites knitwear, shawls and blankets every year.

04 Certification adds value

RWS and mulesing-free sourcing open export programmes and premium shelves.

05 Blends keep the base broad

Poly-wool and acrylic-wool keep wool character within mass-market reach.

What to be realistic about

India's fine-wool dependence on imports is structural; currency and auction cycles sit inside every wool quote.



HOW SHIVPRIYA TEXCHEM CAN HELP

Authorised agent and strategic partner to India's leading spinning mills since 2003, trusted by **2,500+ customers** across polyester, viscose, cotton, PC/PV, fancy and recycled yarns. For wool and wool-blend programmes we support mill identification and capability matching, count and blend development, sampling and trial lots, mill-direct commercial terms, and delivery through our pan-India network.

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