

BRAND PROFILE: EQUMEN

Comprehensive compression at Equmen

Gavin Jones, a former journalist, first came up with the Equmen idea when he became less active in his 40s. He noticed that there were many figure-improving and bulge-disguising baselayer garments on the market for women, and decided that there was a gap in the market for men.

Mr Jones had been fairly active during his 20s and 30s but was starting to feel the effects of middle age. He and co-founder Corie Chung, a former investment banker, spent around a year researching and developing a new product line. The aim was to come up with a product range that would be suitable for the ordinary man on the street as well as for professional athletes.

Although there were other compression underwear garments on the market for men, the products available were really aimed at elite athletes. The two men could see how successful mainstream compression garments were for women and wanted to recreate this within the male market. They found a manufacturer in Israel who could produce a high-elasticity blend of seamless, flexible fabrics and its first range launched in 2009.

Equmen claims that all men will benefit from improving their core alignment, core stability and core temperature. When the skeleton is correctly aligned, the bones support the weight of the body with minimal stress. This ensures that muscles hold very little excessive tension and they can then efficiently initiate and sustain movement. Proper core alignment also facilitates oxygen flow for enhanced energy.

According to the New South Wales company, core stability allows the wearer to maintain a solid foundation and transfers energy from the centre of the body out to the limbs. Ergonomic support in the trunk area is essential for the maintenance of upright posture, back pain minimisation and injury prevention. Equmen insists that its products can help all men improve in these areas, as well as keeping their core temperature at the optimum 36.8 degrees Celsius.



The undergarments can be worn for everyday use as well as during and after sport.

 Equmen

Supporting the body

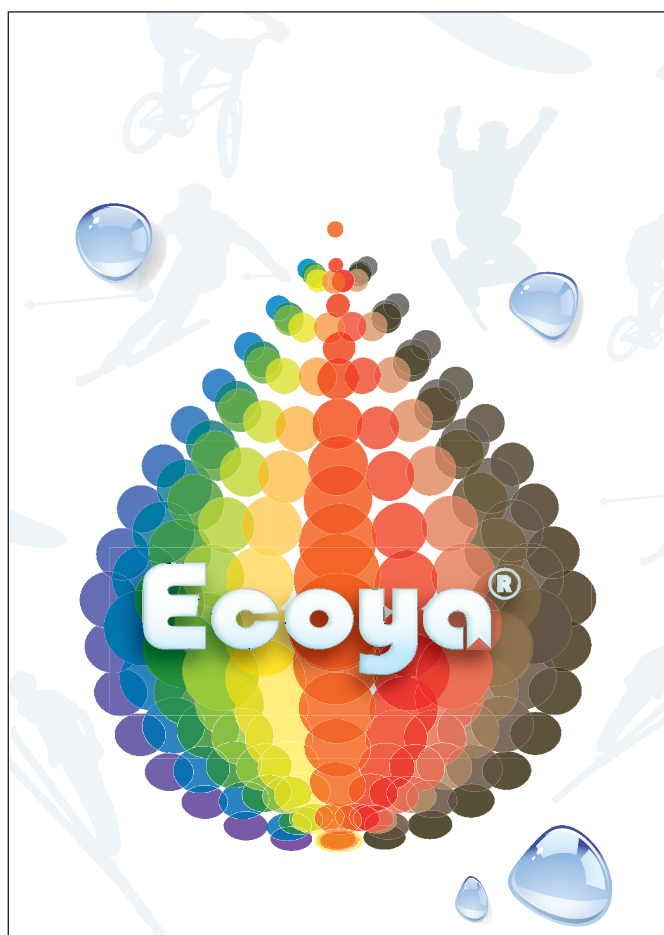
Its Core Precision undershirt is engineered with Helix-Mapping technology and builds in physiotherapy taping techniques to sculpt, tone and improve body mechanics. Its seamless stitching and targeted ventilation is designed to make the undershirt feel like a second skin. In addition to helping clothes fit better, the company claims the undershirt can help improve posture, supports core muscles, streamlines and slims the body, helps reduce back pain, controls body temperature and promotes circulation. It can be worn for work, sport or leisure.

Not only can the undershirts be worn during exercise, they can also be worn after exercise to reduce the effects of post-exercise muscle soreness. They provide enhanced venous return (blood flow back to the heart) and upper body muscle support, as well as warming cold muscles and cooling working muscles. This helps to clear lactic acid build-up and reduce post-exercise muscle damage and pain.

"Developed in conjunction with physiotherapists, ergonomic consultants and athletic garment engineers, Equmen Helix-Mapping is a unique body-mapping system that builds physio taping techniques into every garment to

Equmen garments use a Helix-Mapping system to reinforce and support the body's natural structure.

 Equmen



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reinforce and support the body's natural structure from the core," Mr Chung says. "Crisscrossing the upper and lower back, compression on the shirt gently pulls the shoulders back to support an upright posture.

"The Helix-Mapping system is built in using seamless manufacturing technology. This allows for a more comfortable, better fitting garment that will adjust to your unique body shape without rubbing or chafing. The garments are made of a spandex, nylon, polyester blend in various percentages. They are ultra-breathable weaves treated with moisture-wicking and anti-microbial treatments in order to improve comfort and performance."

Equmen's Precision underwear also uses Helix-Mapping and offers seamless, body-enhancing fit, while providing targeted muscle support. It has a ventilated, precision-fit pouch and uses moisture-wicking fabric. One of the company's latest product ranges is a compression sock line. Again, the Precision socks use Helix-Mapping technology to wrap around the arch for extra support while the fabric used applies pressure to help improve the flow of oxygen in the blood and to remove toxins from the muscles, relieving fatigue and cramping. The sock's ventilated, moisture-wicking fabric keeps the wearer cool, while an anti-microbial treatment keeps feet fresh.

"Whether you are sitting at a desk all day, out on the golf course, travelling or simply on the go, often times your feet will feel achy or even swollen," says Mr Jones. "There is an easy solution: compression socks. Wearing compression socks on a daily basis can help increase blood flow, more evenly distribute muscle strain and help legs feel less fatigued."

Focus on men

According to the Australian company, its target consumer group is men between the ages of 30 and 55. The reason for this, Mr Chung says, is that middle aged to older men tend to appreciate the health benefits even more than younger men. And its core customer base is usually found in urban settings, where people tend to be under more physical and mental stress, he suggests.

"We had a very successful first year, achieving distribution in some of the world's top luxury retailers, recognition across high-profile international media and incredible customer feedback," says Mr Jones. "This year it is about strengthening our foundations and expanding our reach." The company expects sales for 2010-11 to rise to approximately \$12 million compared with around \$7 million in 2009-10.

Mr Chung adds: "That although there is not currently a sport-specific line, but we are looking at developing one. The company is also working on a range of women's fit wear, Equfem, which is expected to hit the market early 2012. However, its main focus will continue to be on professional men.

One of the first moves made by Equmen's new CEO, Alister McColl, since joining the company has been to grow Equmen's brand ambassador profile by signing NFL star Josh Bidwell, a player for the Washington Redskins. "Our garments are designed to bring sport insights to improve the life of the every man with ergonomic support," Mr McColl said. "Sportsmen get it immediately."

Mr Bidwell said he thought the company's products worked well, whether for working out or just for casual wear. He also said they were helping him improve his game in another sport. "I play golf regularly, and since wearing Equmen I've noticed a real improvement in my core stability and rotational power," he says.