



Supreme sock takes to the hills

With approximately 250,000 sweat glands in the feet—which have the ability to produce up to a pint of sweat a day—it's vitally important in terms of comfort, that this extra fluid has a means of escaping from the sock. Beyond that, issues of skin irritation, muscle fatigue and cramp, overheating, burning feet, bruising, and blistering mean that a great deal is expected of a sock.

So it would not have come as a surprise when Hilly Clothing in the United Kingdom used this year's London Marathon as the opportunity to launch its new highly technical Mono Skin Supreme Sock on to the market.

Sports-specific socks were pioneered by ThorLo in the early 1980s and since then we have grown accustomed to steady develop-

ments in 'sock technology'. The Hilly sock demonstrates this admirably with a plethora of technical features including anatomical design with cushioning placed exactly where required on each foot, left and right. Blister resistance is provided through the incorporation of Profilen, an anti-friction fibre, into the heel and toe area, where this problem normally occurs. The factors necessary to create friction which causes blisters include shear force, pressure and moderate levels of moisture, all of which can be mitigated by wearing a technical sock system. Profilen is a coated PTFE fibre from Lenzing with superior gliding properties. It is non-flammable, repels dirt and water and is physiologically neutral.

The risk of blistering has also been reduced through the new key design feature of repositioning the flat, almost seamless, toe

Putting the new sock through its paces is Dr Ron Hill, a triple Olympic runner (1964,68,72) and also a European and Commonwealth marathon gold medallist. Where others have long since hung up their running shoes, Hill has continued to run everyday for the last 40 years and has found the stamina to clock up more than 145,000 miles (233,000 km), considered an undisputed world record. His personal best time for the marathon is 2:09:28, set in 1970, the first time 2hr 10min was broken by a British athlete and only the second runner to do so.

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construction. The usual upper seam, which is often an area liable to cause blisters, has been eliminated and replaced by a flat seam construction under the toe area, placed to fit within the gap between the toes and the ball of the foot. In addition to this, features such as the arch grip section, 'Y' heel and Lycra ensure optimum fit and comfort.

The main body of the sock is manufactured from 100% Dri-release Wool, enabling the socks to dry quickly and thus keep the feet drier and more comfortable. Dri-release is a patented, intimate blend of synthetic (hydrophobic) and natural (hydrophilic) fibres from Optimer Performance Fibres that accelerates the water release rate of wet fabric. Rather than spreading the moisture across the surface, Dri-release pushes it to the outside of the sock, to expel water and perspiration rapidly. It also provides the added thermal properties of wool, without the weight or itch.

"Hilly chose Dri-release Wool as it fits well with our company philosophy of 'Comfort through fibre technology'. As a company we test all our products to ensure only the best quality for our customers and we like the fact that Optimer also tests and certifies its technology in every product before being released into the market," says Dr. Ron Hill, the company's technical consultant.

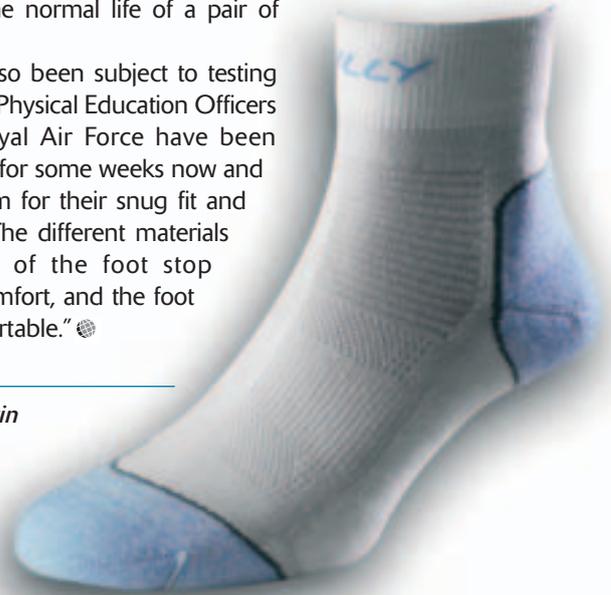
Road tested

All Hilly products are tested to the extreme, initially by Hill, who has run more than 145,000 miles to-date. He sets the rigorous criteria that need to be met prior to approving a sock for production. The socks then go for external testing and are initially submitted to 250 miles of running, returned to Hilly for inspection, and then submitted to a further 250 miles. Hilly uses 500 miles as the benchmark for its socks, which equates to the normal life of a pair of running shoes.

The socks have also been subject to testing in a less formal way. Physical Education Officers with the British Royal Air Force have been wearing these socks for some weeks now and speak highly of them for their snug fit and constant comfort. "The different materials on different parts of the foot stop bunching and discomfort, and the foot stays dry and comfortable." 🌐

Hilly's new Mono Skin Supreme Sock with cushioning and blister resistance in the heel and toe areas.

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DESIGNER TEXTILES ??