



## Products We Like: Skins Performance Tights

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I'll never forget when Lance Peters, chucking convention out the window, showed up for high school track practice one day wearing bright silver-colored running tights. The silence as he walked onto the track was deafening. In this Midwestern, early-1980s era, our lower-body clothing options were limited to two: shorts or baggy gray sweat pants.

Times changed quickly as running tights matured from eye-popping pastels and cosmic Spandex to performance-oriented apparel. Moisture-wicking fabrics and other functional features have taken the garment into the 21st century.

Some manufacturers have taken yet another step in the evolution of tights, especially companies who tout compression technology and its benefits for athletes. A new player on the scene, Skins, has challenged all comers, backing up marketing claims with reams of scientific research in support.

We took Skins up on their challenge and tried the tights ourselves, and not just on a run around the neighborhood. We threw just about every workout at the tights we could think of: Trail and road running, cycling, weight lifting, kayaking, and even a brutal orienteering race. The results, as you'll discover soon, were astounding.

The first thing you'll notice when you don a pair of Skins tights is that the fit is...well, rather snug. That's what we found, at least. But we never found any binding, pinching, or loss of circulation due to an ill-fitting garment. Nor was our movement restricted in any way.

The next thing you'll notice is a bit harder to explain. The compression of the tights, which features the company's "BioAcceleration Technology," actually helps you work at a higher rate for a longer period of time. According to company representative Jon Graff, the improved oxygenation of the muscles and enhanced circulation given by the tights helps you perform better at your chosen sport. But the biggest benefit might not be during the workout itself. Skins help to vastly reduce the build-up of lactic acid immediately after exercise, which means a faster return to action for you and your (normally) tired legs.

Graff claims that circulation is increased by as much as 30% and recovery times are reduced anywhere from 60 to 80%. Now, we're not sure about any of those statistics, but what we did observe when wearing the Skins tights is that we felt pretty good after a number of tough workouts. Still, are they worth the \$99 price

tag? It comes down to your desire for feeling better both during and after your exercise routines.

Of course, looking good is part of the equation, right? Don't expect your daddy's straight black tights when you put on a pair of Skins. The model I tried was black with yellow seams and the company name screened broadly on the side of each leg. Despite the bold color scheme, the Skins carry a certain classiness and sporty look that belies their Australian heritage.

If you do decide to grab a pair, you've made a good decision. Based on our experience with Skins, there are a lot worse ways to blow a hundred bucks (and not many that can improve performance and decrease recovery as much as these tights). Welcome to the future of sports apparel—a time when your clothing doesn't just cover you up or keep you warm, but also helps you improve your performance.

Visit them on the web at [www.skins.net](http://www.skins.net)