

Exclusive

HEAD TO HEAD WITH *Melissa Stewart*



Pamela Scott speaks with Melissa Stewart, Director of Innovation Strategy at The Lycra Company, who is also the global technology leader for LYCRA® FitSense™ technology. LYCRA® FitSense™ Technology was launched for swimwear at the end of 2019 and we catch up with the science behind the innovation and ongoing garment development. Already employed successfully in activewear and underwear, thanks to its support and targeted compression, it is now being adopted for swimwear and beachwear. It heralds a whole new generation of compression and supportive swimwear.

PLEASE TELL US WHAT LYCRA® FITSENSE™ IS AND WHAT ARE ITS KEY ATTRIBUTES?

LYCRA® FitSense™ is a patented water-based and solvent free LYCRA® polymer dispersion technology that brings lightweight, highly targeted compression, support and lift to garments where it's needed, eliminating the need for bulky sewn-in or laminated panels. The performance qualities, including the product's excellent recovery power, are permanent.

HOW IS IT APPLIED? DO MANUFACTURERS NEED TO ADAPT EXISTING OR INSTALL NEW EQUIPMENT?

LYCRA® FitSense™ is applied to fabrics and garments by standard screen-printing processes and using standard equipment.

SO HOW DOES IT ACTUALLY WORK?

LYCRA® FitSense™ technology is presented as a dispersion that includes the same molecule as LYCRA® fibre. When the solution is screen printed directly onto specific areas of a garment made with LYCRA® fibre, increased modulus and recovery power are achieved. The performance benefits are durable wash after wash. It can be used to be invisible on the inner side of the garment or to be visible which can be part of the design process. This works well on activewear and indeed swimwear. Garments move easily from 'beach to street, gym to swim' – there are few limitations.

WHAT PROMPTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF LYCRA® FITSENSE™?

The LYCRA® Company prides itself in its consumer insight driven innovations. LYCRA® FitSense™ was initially developed for and applied to activewear to offer the hard-to-achieve combination of tailored performance with outstanding comfort, and to intimate apparel to address the consumer's desire for shape and support without having to sacrifice comfort and style. Similarly, when it comes to swimwear, consumers are looking for balanced, comfortable and flattering swimwear without trade-offs. They want shape and lift, comfort and durability, as well as elegant, on-trend designs. For this reason, we developed LYCRA® FitSense™ for swimwear, which we first launched at Mare di Moda, in November 2019.

HOW DOES LYCRA® FITSENSE™ ADDRESS THE MODERN CONSUMER'S EXPECTATIONS?

LYCRA® FitSense™ optimises comfort as it offers the wearer targeted support with shaping and lifting where needed, without the addition of bulky sewn in panels, and potential to reduce the need for lining or padding. It is lightweight and offers a natural looking, highly functional swimsuit. Additionally, it is durable with the performance benefits lasting wash after wash, and the same chlorine resistance as LYCRA® XTRA LIFE™ fibre.

WHY SHOULD DESIGNERS AND MANUFACTURERS CONSIDER USING LYCRA® FITSENSE™?

LYCRA® FitSense™ can help to free up designers to explore new styles and ideas, not previously possible or thought too impractical due to production or cost constraints. LYCRA® FitSense™ is also highly flexible and offers designers and manufacturers the ability to customise print designs, patterns or colours, so they can feel free to explore new designs all while delivering functional performance. It also simplifies and optimises garment manufacturing process due to the elimination of additional sewn-in panels. Last but not least, the use of this new technology can help to create a strong point of difference that consumers can see, feel and experience and stand-out on the shelf with unique on-trend looks.



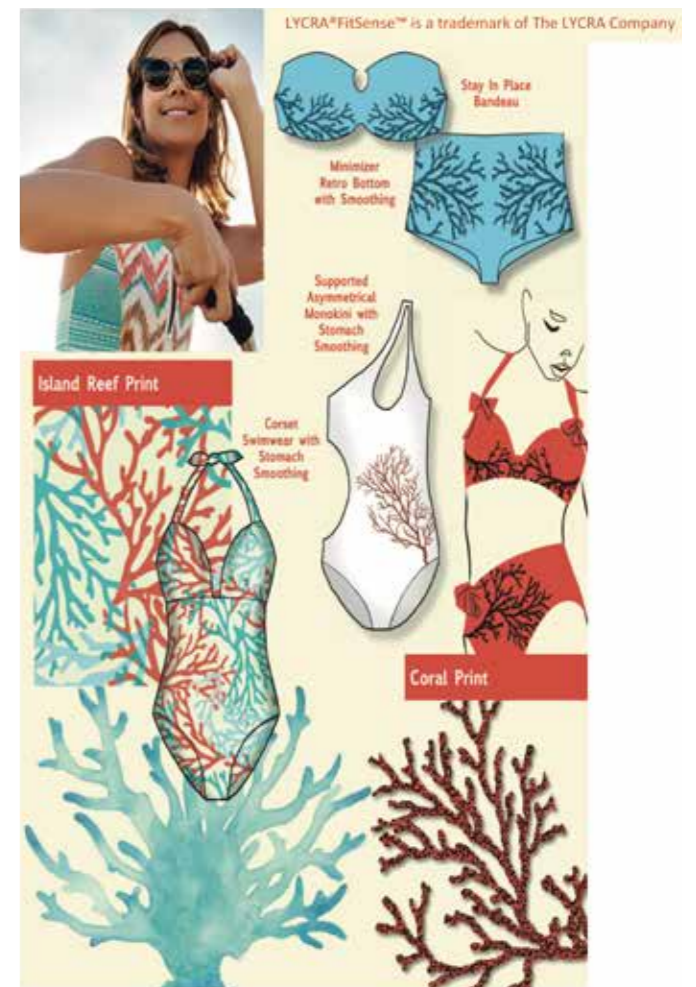
LYCRA® FitSense™ is a trademark of The LYCRA Company

This technology is a wonderful opportunity for creativity as well as offering fit and support solutions. LYCRA® FitSense™ technology can be visible or invisible, printed in colour and in your chosen design.

CONSUMERS NOWADAYS ARE VERY AWARE OF THE ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES SURROUNDING APPAREL MANUFACTURE. HOW DOES LYCRA® FITSENSE™ MEASURE UP? IS THERE ANYTHING THAT MANUFACTURERS NEED TO BE AWARE OF? LYCRA® FitSense™ uses water-based and solvent free LYCRA® polymer dispersion. It has been granted authorization according to ECO-PASSPORT by OEKO-TEX® to use the OEKO-TEX® mark. Additionally, we recommend that LYCRA® FitSense™ technology is used on swimwear fabric containing LYCRA® XTRALIFE™ fibre which lasts up to 10 times longer than unprotected elastane – durability is recognised as having a sustainable attribute.

WHERE IS THE TECHNOLOGY CURRENTLY BEING USED AND HOW?

LYCRA® FitSense™ for swimwear was launched less than a year ago and has already been incorporated into key lines of some of the industry's best-known brands. Most recently, the Riedl Group launched a line through its Olympia brand, incorporating LYCRA® FitSense™. We are also partnering with Fookwah, a large swimwear manufacturer, for expansion in swim with several brands and retailers globally.



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HOW DOES LYCRA® FITSENSE™ HELP TO ADD VALUE?

We have done extensive consumer research to help us develop a consumer facing positioning as well as a range of marketing support tools that will help our customers and brands to explain and sell the technology, successfully, to consumers. LYCRA® FitSense™ technology provides consumers solutions for shaping and performance without sacrificing comfort. They can see, feel and experience the benefits of this innovative technology on the garment. Ultimately it is about empowering the consumer and letting them know that they have options by telling the LYCRA® FitSense™ technology story, and we can help our customers to tell that story in the right way.

AND WHAT OF MEN'S SWIMWEAR?

The same freedoms and opportunities apply – comfort and support without extra seaming are to be welcomed in a garment that can offer both stretch and support.

P.T.O. to see the swimwear brand collection created by Olympia (Riedl Group) using LYCRA® FitSense™

OLYMPIA® Goes Next Level!

OLYMPIA® (ONE OF THE BRANDS OF LEADING SWIMWEAR COMPANY, ADOLF RIEDL GMBH & CO KG) HAS JUST LAUNCHED AN ENTIRELY NEW COMMERCIAL LINE WITH LYCRA® FITSENSE™ - OLYMPIA® GOES NEXT LEVEL.



The six-piece capsule collection has incorporated the pioneering technology in its Spring-Summer 2021 launch. The base fabric chosen for the range was VITA fabric by CARVICO with LYCRA® XTRA LIFE™ fibre, a proven fabric choice that has enjoyed great success in the swimwear sector for many years. The line comprises a one-piece swimsuit, a beach legging, bikini bottom with a choice of two differently styled tops in either black or a flattering petrol colour.

Dr Klaus Wührl-Struller, Marketing & PR Manager for the Riedl Group, commented: "We wanted our new line, OLYMPIA® GOES NEXT LEVEL, to be fashionable, innovative and sustainable. Combining VITA fabric by CARVICO with LYCRA® XTRA LIFE™ fibre, complemented by the LYCRA® FitSense™ technology, was the perfect fit for this new range. It enables a sustainable product that is light, quick-drying swimwear



with targeted support that is sporty, offers a long-lasting fit with comfort and unrestricted freedom of movement."

"fashionable, innovative and sustainable"

"Sustainability, innovation and cooperation are more important than ever, in order to successfully stand out in the marketplace. This exceptional swimwear collection, OLYMPIA® GOES NEXT LEVEL with LYCRA® FitSense™ technology, is an ideal example of the combination of these elements," says Christine Wahle, Senior strategic account manager, The LYCRA Company. "Thanks to the collaboration with the Olympia® brand we have played a key role in the creation of an innovative, sustainable beachwear collection that offers precise shaping, printed on CARVICO's base fabric VITA, made from

recycled polyamide and chlorine resistant LYCRA® XTRA LIFE™ fibre for the next generation of swimwear", continues Wahle.

The new collection is due to hit stores in March 2021 and Adolf Riedl and The LYCRA Company have collaborated to develop impactful consumer marketing – to support retailers and inform consumers. These marketing tools include individual hang tags to ensure the products are immediately recognisable as well as branded POS material and a dedicated shop window competition with the LYCRA® FitSense™ innovation from Olympia®.

You can find out more about the possibilities and benefits of LYCRA® FitSense™ technology on:

<https://connect.lycra.com/en/Technologies-and-Innovations/Print-Technology/FITSENSE>