

Running on Plenty

Mar 1, 2009 12:00 PM, By Steven Averett (steven.averett@penton.com)

Reclaiming waste to make Earth-friendly athletic wear.



It is ironic that an activity as quintessentially primeval as running has become so encumbered with modern trappings, most notably an endless wake of plastic water bottles and disposable, chemical-infused athletic wear. It was a revelation visited upon runner Jeremy Litchfield after he donned a brand new, expensive, high-tech running top on a hot and humid day, only to find himself covered in red chemical dye after his run.

“I started doing some research into performance apparel in general and the apparel industry and realized how the whole model is based upon the disposability of apparel,” says Litchfield. “The materials that are used are not only harmful to the environment, but have a lot of chemicals that can be harmful to people.”

Certain that there had to be a better way, he founded [Atayne](#) in Arlington, Va., naming himself “chief pace setter.” The company produces high-performance running and athletic gear that is sensitive both to the athlete and the environment under the mantra “Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. Run.” The base fabric in most of Atayne's products is recycled polyester made from plastic bottles, effectively reclaiming perhaps the biggest waste byproduct of sport. But as the company developed, Litchfield says he latched on to a broader philosophy. “We decided our whole company was going to be oriented around creating athletic gear that's made from what most people consider trash.”

Thus, he says, while recycling conserves energy and resources, reusing and repurposing materials in their existing state conserves even more. So Atayne attempts to incorporate as much reclaimed material as it can. It is developing prototype bags and packs made from reclaimed textiles. Moreover, it is experimenting with natural waste byproducts to fortify its products. Cocona, activated carbon made from coconut husks, is infused into the fabric to improve its ability to wick away sweat from the body. Chitosan, a material derived from mollusk and crustacean shells, fights bacteria and odor.

Atayne practices what it preaches, attending marathons and other athletic events to promote waste

reduction and ensure that the waste produced is collected and handled properly, with all recyclable and compostable material diverted. “Think about a marathon that might have 30,000 runners and the number of plastic bottles that don't get recycled,” Litchfield says. His company also is pushing for broader acceptance of clothing and textile recycling and the infrastructure necessary to support it.

While Atayne currently produces running wear exclusively, it plans to unveil a cycling-specific top later this year and expand from there, while staying true to Litchfield's vision.

“We want to get out the message that hey, we love trash and this is what we make our products out of,” he says.

Related Links

[Atayne](#)

Find this article at:

http://www.wasteage.com/Recycling_And_Processing/trash-used-make-athletic-wear-200903/index.html

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)



Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.