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## Gear trends: 2015/16 Baselayers



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Today's 'long underwear' not only performs better, it has style to show off. Check out the new baselayers slated for retail in 2015/16.

By **David Clucas** - April 2, 2015

Throughout the next month, SNEWS will recap its coverage of Outdoor Retailer Winter Market 2015 with select stories from the O.R. Daily we published at the show Jan. 20 – 24. It's an opportunity for you to catch up on stories you might have missed in O.R.D., and for us to update and upload the articles to our searchable archives.

Baselayers have come out to play — shedding their sole status as “long underwear” — becoming dynamic pieces that can be worn on top, too. And it's not all about fashion. These flashy pieces are big performers with less itch, more wicking power, greater durability and higher insulation at lower weights.

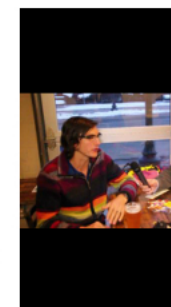
Merino wool continues to dominate on the performance side of baselayers, and practically every brand — it's not just Icebreaker, SmartWool and Ibex anymore — has entered the field.

“We counted 140 brands in the U.S. now with some kind of merino wool product,” said Icebreaker vice president of product Mark Koppes. “Natural fabrics, in general, continue to have a lot of leg with consumers.”

That being said, the definition of wool is getting muddled with a flood of wool/synthetic mixes. Purists say that's damaging wool's natural thermal-regulating and body-odor-fighting properties. Newcomers say synthetics help boost wicking, reduce itch and increase the strength of the pieces.

On those mixes, be sure to talk with brands about the construction methods and their strategies for placing what material, where. They're all different. **Ibex**, which focuses on 100-percent wool pieces, for example, is experimenting with some mixes, wrapping the wool around a nylon core for strength, but keeping all the merino on the outside and next to skin.

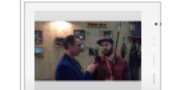
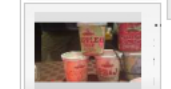
On the flip side, the Akeleie (MSRP \$75) from **Bergans of Norway** — another brand with 100-percent wool options — presents an 80/20-percent merino/synthetic mix, but with all the synthetic material next to skin for wicking more moisture and reducing itch. There's a similar story with a bit more synthetic in **Terramar's Thermawool** pieces (MSRPs \$50-\$70), which employ a plaited construction of microfiber polyester against the skin with a durable merino/poly mix on the outside. In the middle, there are pieces like **Montane's** Primino Merino Baselayer (MSRP \$149), blending merino and synthetic PrimaLoft



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