Wool — from farm to fashion

Unshorn fleece
Shearing
Wool bales
Top-making
Weaving
Wool garment
Wool — from farm to fashion

Wool production starts with sheep on the farm and finishes as woollen products used around the world.

**Sheep** — sheep grow wool, like we grow hair.

**Shearing** — shearer remove the wool from the sheep using specially-designed handpieces.

**Wool handling** — woolhandlers skirt the fleece and the wool classer grades the fleece.

**Baling and transport** — wool of the same grade is pressed into bales, loaded onto trucks and taken to the warehouse for sale.

**Auction** — wool is sold to the highest bidder and sent for processing.

**Scouring** — fleeces are washed to remove dirt, dust, sweat and wool grease.

The carded wool is ready to process through one of two routes: woollen or worsted.

In the **woollen process** the carded wool is split into many strips, which are rubbed into slubbings (delicate yarn-like threads) ready for spinning into yarn.

The **worsted process** forms the carded web into a sliver of fibres, which is made into top.

**Top-making** — worsted processing turns the carded wool into a ‘top’ or ‘combed sliver’.

The final product of top-making is called a top.

**Spinning** — spinning twists the yarn so it can be knitted or woven.

**Knitting and weaving** — knitting machines join yarns together with interlocking loops to form knitted fabric.

Weaving looms interlace yarns, usually at right angles to each other to form woven fabric.

**Making up** — individual panels of garments are cut from flat fabric and joined together to make clothes.

**Fabric finishing** — woven fabrics and knitted fabrics go through many different processes to wash, flatten, reduce or increase hairiness, stretch, consolidate and stabilise fabrics for end use.

**Ready for sale** — after pressing, the garments are ticketed and labelled so consumers know how to care for their Merino wool garment.

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**Glossary**

**Bales** — large bags of wool that have been pressed and ready for sale.

**Grade** — sort fleeces according to their quality.

**Skirt** — remove stained pieces from the fleece.

**Sliver** — A strip of loose untwisted wool fibres produced by carding.

**Top** — Stage of processing where wool is ready to be spun.

**Woollen processing** — uses shorter fibres, less stages and produces a thicker yarn than worsted processing.

**Worsted processing** — uses longer fibres, more stages and produces a finer higher-quality yarn than woollen processing.

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**More information**

To find out more about wool processing, take a look at:

- learnaboutwool.com
- www.woolmark.com/manufacturing
- the posters, fibre, yarn and fabric samples in the hardcopy Learn About Wool Kit.