

WHAT IS WOOL?



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Wool is a **natural fibre** produced by sheep. Sheep grow wool on their bodies in the same way people grow hair.

As wool grows out from the sheep's skin, it forms groups of wavy fibres called staples. This natural crimp (wave) gives wool its elasticity (springiness).

Shearers remove the wool from sheep using specially-designed handpieces, which are like the hair clippers hairdressers use to cut our hair. This is called shearing.

Sheep can be shorn each year and their wool keeps growing back, just like our hair grows between haircuts.

After shearing, wool is processed and made into lots of products we use every day — **textiles**, clothing and furnishings.



Shearing: Shearers carefully remove the wool with an electric handpiece.

What does wool feel like?

Wool feels soft and slightly greasy before it is washed or processed. The natural oil in wool (lanolin) coats each fibre. Wool can keep things cool and it can keep things warm.

Wool is soft, strong, lightweight, water-repellent and fire resistant.

Did you know?

- People have been using wool for thousands of years to make clothing and textiles, furnishings and insulation.
- Australia produces ninety per cent of the world's fine apparel wool.
- Wool is a renewable natural resource — it's not only soft against the skin, but gentle on the planet, grown as part of a natural system from sunshine, water and grass.

FUN FACTS ABOUT WOOL

Merino wool:

- is a natural fibre.
- is soft to touch and comfortable to wear.
- keeps you warm in winter and cool in summer.
- is stain resistant, odour resistant and has natural anti-static properties.
- is easy to look after.



Glossary

Apparel wool — the highest quality wool, used to produce clothing, sourced from a breed of sheep called Merino.

Natural fibre — a fibre sourced from a plant or animal, not manufactured in laboratories (synthetic fibre).

Renewable — a resource that can be replaced or regrown after it has been used.

Shearer — someone who is specially trained to harvest wool from sheep.

Textiles — fabrics used to make clothing, furnishings and other products.

More information

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

- learnaboutwool.com
- Beyond the Bale magazine: beyondthebale.wool.com

