

A History of Socks

Socks have evolved over the centuries from the earliest models which were made from animal skins gathered up and tied around the ankles. In the 8th century BC, the Ancient Greeks wore socks from matted animal hair for warmth. The Romans also wrapped their feet with leather or woven fabrics. By the 5th century AD, socks called "puttees" were worn by holy people in Europe to symbolize purity. By 1000 AD, socks became a symbol of wealth among the nobility. From the 16th century onwards, an ornamental design on the ankle or side of a sock has been called a clock.

The invention of a knitting machine in 1589 meant that socks could be knitted six times faster than by hand. Nonetheless, knitting machines and hand knitters worked side by side until 1800. The next revolution in sock production was the introduction of nylon in 1938. Until then, socks were commonly made from silk, cotton and wool. Nylon was the start of blending two or more yarns in the production of socks, a process that still continues.

Socks can be created from a wide variety of materials. Some of these materials are cotton, wool, nylon, acrylic, polyester, olefins, (such as polypropylene), or spandex. To get an increased level of softness other materials that might be used during the process can be silk, bamboo, linen, cashmere, or mohair. Sock 'coloring' can come in a wide range of colors. Sometimes art is also put onto socks to increase their appearance. Colored socks may be a key part of the uniforms for sports, allowing players teams to be distinguished when only their legs are clearly visible.

The township-level district of Datang in the city of Zhuji in China, has become known as Sock City. The town currently produce 8 billion pairs of socks each year, a third of the world's sock production, effectively creating two pairs of socks for every person on the planet in 2011. [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sock>]



The earliest known surviving pair of cloth socks. Dating from 300-500AD these were excavated from Oxyrhynchus on the Nile in Egypt. The split toes were designed for use with sandals. On dis-

