

## ABOUT "UPF" CLOTHING

### Why UPF Clothing?

As the sun gets stronger and our skin gets older, we become more susceptible to skin damage due to harmful rays from the sun. It has been well proven that the best form of protection is to cover up and block harmful rays by wearing clothing. As a result, the demand for UPF clothing is steadily increasing.



Although sunscreen is an important defence, there are disadvantages to relying on sunscreen. Sunscreen is often applied incorrectly i.e. too late; too little; not often enough; spots get missed and it can wear off. People wearing sunscreen often think they are protected but due to human error often they are not. Clothing on the other hand is either on or off, resulting in fewer 'surprise' sunburns. In addition, sunscreen does not block the UV-A rays which, although they do not cause sunburn in the same way as UV-B rays, they can result in other types of skin damage such as wrinkles and aging.

### What does UPF mean?

UPF stands for "Ultraviolet Protection Factor" and measures the effectiveness of fabrics in blocking the sun. The UPF indicates how much of the sun's rays are absorbed by the fabric, thereby not allowing them to pass through to your skin. For example, clothing with a UPF rating of 50 only allows 1/50th of the sun's UV radiation to pass through it. This means that the fabric will reduce your skin's UV radiation exposure by 50 times which provides a block of 98% in areas where the skin is covered by the fabric. A UPF of 30, blocks 1/30<sup>th</sup> of the sun's rays which is a block of about 96.6%. The UPF system for clothing is well tested but is still relatively new and is adopted on a voluntary basis by manufacturers.

OMNI-SHADE™  
**UPF 50**

### What happens when the sun's rays strike a fabric?

When the sun's rays strike a fabric, the ultraviolet radiation is broken down. A portion is reflected away from the fabric, another portion is absorbed by the fabric and the remaining portion reaches the skin.

Because clothing is a physical barrier, UV rays are naturally blocked but there are vast differences in the effectiveness of various fabrics to keep out harmful rays. These are some of the factors which determine how well a fabric blocks out the sun:

- **type of fibre** - cotton, linen, rayon don't block as well as wool, polyester or blends. In fact 70% of wool and polyesters provide a natural UPF of 30 or greater. Only 30% of cottons, linen and rayon provide a UPF of 30 or greater.
- **thickness of fibre** - thicker fibres block more rays than thinner fibres



- **tightness of the weave** - tighter weaves block better than looser weaves
- **stretch** - stretchy fabrics don't block as well as non-stretchy
- **colour of the fabric** - dark colours absorb more light, offering better sun protection than light colours
- **moisture** - dry fabrics offer better protection than wet fabrics



### Useful Tips to Know:

- Some UPF garments are treated with compounds, fluorescent brighteners or resins that help to absorb UV rays. A garment with such treatment must undergo 40 simulated washings and withstand the equivalent of 2 years of sunlight exposure in order to be approved. Not only is the garment guaranteed when you buy it but it has been tested to last over time.
- old worn out clothing offers less protection than new clothing. Your favourite old cotton T-shirt can have a UPF rating of only 6 (1/6<sup>th</sup> of the rays are allowed through or only 83.4% of the rays are blocked).
- Not all manufacturers display a UPF tag. Just because a garment does not have a tag does not mean it doesn't offer a UPF. Most retailer catalogues will give this information if it is not displayed on the article of clothing.
- If a manufacturer makes one garment in several colours, the UPF rating reflects the colour that offers the minimum protection. For example if a white garment has a UPF of 30, the same garment in black will have a higher UPF but will still be labelled with a UPF of 30.

### What do Labels Mean?

<u>UPF LABELS</u>	<u>PROTECTION CATEGORY</u>	<u>APPROX. UV BLOCKED</u>
UPF 15 and 20	Good Protection	93.3% - 95.8%
UPF 25 - 35	Very Good	96% - 97.4%
UPF 40 - 50	Excellent	97.5% - 98.0%

Tumblehome carries many brands of clothing that offer a high UPF rating. The same fabrics that are quick drying, wrinkle resistant and light weight are also the ones that offer a high UPF rating, making them a perfect choice for outdoor activity and travel. Our knowledgeable staff can help you find what you're looking for when it comes to UPF clothing.