

## Product Comparison

### Electrostatic Vs. Capillary Action

Wickers' patented Akwatek fabric, which is utilized in the Wickers garments below, is unique within this group in its reliance on electrostatic, rather than capillary, action. Whereas capillary action requires contact between the garment and the moisture accumulated on the surface of the skin, Akwatek's electrostatic action is claimed to operate more efficiently by maintaining a constant layer of humidity between skin and fabric. In hot conditions, water vapor is transported through the fabric without the need for direct contact with

wet skin. In cold conditions, this humid layer serves as additional insulation. According to Wickers, this makes their product superior to those of competitors relying on capillary action. In actual use, all of the garments below were noticeably superior to cotton in managing moisture, but with relatively little differences noticeable between them. The biggest contrasts within this group had to do with airflow, fit and texture. Thus, we can't vouch for the electrostatic advantage (over capillary action) on the basis of direct experience.

### Note:

Lightweight synthetics like these tend to be easily snagged by the "hook" side of Velcro fasteners. In fact, their appearance can be degraded dramatically by a single encounter. So, *do not* throw them in the washer or dryer with other riding gear that has hook-and-loop fasteners, or you will likely ruin the look of your fancy, expensive, synthetic clothing.

### Briefs:

Although boxers are comfortable in a lot of situations, riding usually isn't one

### Ex Officio Men's Briefs

\$18



Appearance	●●●●●	Durability	●●●●●	Value	●●●●○
Cut/Comfort	●●●●●	Effectiveness	●●●●●	Total	24

**Notes:** Made of 94% Nylon and 6% Spandex, Ex Officio's trademarked Give-N-Go Stretch fabric is very light and thin and its diamond-pattern mesh also allows for impressive airflow. This anti-bacterial material has a very high-tech appearance and delicate (but strong) feel. Numerous wear/wash cycles produced no pilling. Sizing is generous, so those on the border of two sizes might find the larger option too loose. The leg openings are moderately large, but without any sacrifice in crotch width, the latter of which is likely to be fully adequate for most riders in the seated position. Available in black, gray, white and blue. We recommend these highly for riding and feel they're worth the extra money in terms of fit, function and engineering.

Ex Officio—[www.exofficio.com](http://www.exofficio.com); Gateway North Corporate Park, 3314 South 116th St., Tukwilla, WA 98168; (800) 644-7303.



Appearance	●●●●○	Durability	●●●●●	Value	●○○○○
Cut/Comfort	●●○○○	Effectiveness	●●●●○	Total	15.5

**Notes:** Capilene is Patagonia's registered name for their wicking/quick-drying base-layer fabric. The version used in these briefs is composed of 81% polyester, 12% Nylon, 6% Spandex, and 1% Polypropylene. No pilling was evident after a half-dozen wear/wash cycles. The Capilene is woven continuously in several different patterns, utilizing both ribbed and mesh designs to provide different stretch and airflow characteristics in different zones, without seamed boundaries. This makes for a high-quality appearance and supple, silky feel. However, there is no fly opening. Although sizing is average, the seamless waistband hugs rather weakly, and may leave these briefs feeling a bit insecure on some wearers. The legs are *very* generously cut, leaving precious little width in the crotch panel—and what's left is apt to be inadequate coverage for many in the seated position. Available in black, gray, white, blue and green. We cannot recommend these for riding because of the extremely narrow crotch.

Patagonia—[www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com); 8550 White Fir St., P.O. Box 32050, Reno, NV 89523; (800) 638-6464.



Appearance	●●●○○	Durability	●●●●○	Value	●●●●○
Cut/Comfort	●●●●○	Effectiveness	●●●●○	Total	18.5

**Notes:** Of the three options here, the anti-bacterial Akwatek material used by Wickers looks and feels the most like cotton; it's made of 92% polyester and 6% Lycra. It does become slightly fuzzy from pilling after a few wear/wash cycles, but not excessively so. Sizing is definitely on the small side, so you may want to order one size up from your usual. However, there's plenty of stretch built in, and—if you don't mind a snug fit—your usual size might still be okay. The crotch panel is the widest, and the leg openings are the smallest. The extra crotch width is apt to be a desirable feature for most riders in the seated position, but the leg openings could be problematic for those with extra-large thighs. Available in black, gray and white. We can recommend these for riding as a good value, especially when bought in bulk (\$13.50 if you buy three or more).

Wickers America, Inc.—[www.wickers.com](http://www.wickers.com); 340 Veterans Hwy., Commack, NY 11728; (800) 648-7024.