

Welcome to the spring addition of the Micrex Newsletter. For previous newsletters please see: www.micrex.com/newsletter.htm.

Stretch Nonwovens:

How to make your roll goods fit your customers better.

Why you should be thinking about stretch Nonwovens.

Getting a 10 meter sample to prove the point!

Very little of the world is flat including the people who live in it and most of the things we use. Yet, almost all Nonwovens are flat, have poor stretch and are often a little stiff. This represents both the problem and the opportunity. The problem is that the products we make and sell aren't always what customers want to buy! The Micrex Process will make your Nonwovens less stiff, less like paper and more comfortable.

At the Index Show in Geneva, Micrex introduced a variety of stretch Nonwovens made on our pilot lines. The new grades that had most interest were made with a normal Polypropylene spunbond base fabric then Microcreped for stretch. We noticed customers pulling on samples, wrapping them on their hand or arm to see how well they fit then watching them spring back. Many visitors seemed surprised that ordinary, low cost Nonwovens could stretch so well, were soft, and didn't use expensive elastomers or exotic polymers. It became clear that visitors didn't know that 100% Polypropylene could stretch as much as 300%. They liked the samples so much we decided to continue developing this new technology that now allows customers to add controlled stretch to spunbond and several other high-volume, low cost Nonwovens.

The majority of products made using Nonwovens are sold to and used by people who value comfort. One way to have a competitive advantage is to use a Nonwoven that feels like cloth and provides a comfortable fit. If your Nonwovens feel like paper and aren't as flexible as your customers require, we invite you to request a Microcreped 10 meter sample of a PP stretch spunbond with 25%, 50% or 100% stretch. Having a sample you can touch and pull on is a good way to decide if the Micrex Process for stretch Polypropylene could be useful to you and your customers.

A few ideas to consider:

- 1) Stretch composite adhesive tapes and pipe wrap that fit better and stay in place.
- 2) Sheets and mattress pads that stretch to fit better, might be faster to put on, and could benefit patients that require pressure relief.
- 3) Medical bandages and wraps that stretch to conform without feeling too tight.
- 4) Softer, more comfortable garments (work wear, scrub suits, etc.) that flex as the wearer moves.
- 5) Stretch vinyl backing that adds both flexibility and is tougher (greater TEA).
- 6) Moldable, stretch auto headliner substrates.

- 7) Filter media that stretches to help discharge contaminants when flow is reversed.
- 8) Adult incontinence composite back sheet and leg cuffs that stretch to allow the article to fit better and are quiet.
- 9) Stretch hospital tray covers that fit the tray and the instruments better.
- 10) And even a cosmetic face mask that stretches comfortably over the users nose.

Most Nonwovens can be Microcreped for stretch. Carded webs are especially good for recovery from stretch. Mixtures of fibers (ex. Polyester and pulp) can be made to stretch and recover. Nonwovens with some cross direction stretch inherent in their design (carded spunlace is an example) already have some CD stretch and Microcreping to add MD stretch, the built in CD stretch of carded fibers and the MD stretch from creping combine to simulate the two way stretch properties of knits. While not yet tested, we think the MD fiber orientation of carded Polypropylene webs may provide an advantage in recovery (regain) from stretch compared with randomly oriented spunbond.

If you're wondering what a Microcreped Polypropylene spunbond looks like, see page 62 of the June issue of Nonwovens Industry Magazine which has before and after microphotographs. Also see our website at <http://micrex.com/stretch.htm>. If this looks interesting, contact us for a free 10 meter sample.

Micrex offers free pilot line trials for those interested in adding stretch to their product. Most nonwoven samples can be creped including hand samples if that is all that is available. A small roll 25 cm (10 inches) wide is preferred and is usually enough for us to provide you with several Microcreped samples for evaluation. Your only obligation is for the cost of shipping.

As always, if there is anything we can do to help your company better utilize the Micrex Process to impart softness, bulk, stretch, hand improvement, absorbency, drape and decorative effects in paper, textiles, films and nonwovens, please contact us.

Richard.Walton@micrex.com, President
Peter.Smith@micrex.com, Vice President
Drew.Horn@micrex.com, Product Development

Micrex Corporation
17 Industrial Road
Walpole, MA 02081 USA
800.660.1915
508.660.1900
Fax: 508.660.1818
www.micrex.com

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