

By Cid Cardoso, Jr.

## **2XU Compression Shorts: \$75.00**

The concept of fabrics providing muscle compression to improve performance has been around for quite some time. For triathlon it was in the late nineties that tri shorts came back in style, after Mark Allen's years of dominance racing in Speedo briefs. Initially, manufacturers focused on short inseams with the goals of reducing leg chafing and providing more butt coverage, while leaving the thighs mostly exposed. DeSoto was the first company to address this problem by introducing a "Powerlycra" tri short. This short not only utilized a finely ribbed material designed to provide additional compression, but also had a much longer inseam, reaching just above the knee cap. The thought was that more fabric meant more compression and that more compression meant better performance. Years later, after more research, further advances in materials and the success of brands such as Under Armour, compression pieces of apparel are finally getting mainstream attention.

The **2XU Compression Short** is one of the best pieces of performance apparel that I have ever used. The fabric is different than other manufacturers are using, having a rating of 50 Denier, which makes it stronger and more durable. The way the fabric is woven in a circular knit structure is designed to evenly distribute the compression throughout a full 360 degree stretch, making it the most compressive fabric in the market. In addition, the fabric goes through an anti microbial treatment, to keep smell and bacteria away during severe exercise

I have been a firm believer of the benefits of compression from performance apparel for quite some time. For years I have been running Marathons and Ultra marathons (where there is no biking or swimming involved) in tri shorts. My fellow runners think that it's because I'm just a tri geek at heart but the truth is that after 20 miles of pounding, my thighs just feel better with the additional support. I first noticed the improvement in performance when I made the switch from running the marathon at an Ironman in a Speedo to a pair of tri shorts, circa 1998. I had less cramping and felt like the legs "held together" better, late into the run. Even today, in experimenting on long training runs, the difference between regular, loose fitting run shorts and the **2XU Compression Shorts** was significantly noticeable.

The **2XU Compression short** has the following benefits: Reduction of fatigue by reducing unnecessary muscle vibration by supporting the quadriceps, hamstrings and posterior thigh muscles; Improvement of circulation by facilitating blood (and oxygen) flow between the heart and muscles and by flushing by products away; Quicker Muscle Recovery by providing additional pressure which research shows speeds up muscle repair. In fact, there have been rumors in the industry that pro athletes are now boarding planes after races wearing compression tights for faster recovery and to protect against "DVT". Deep Vain Thrombosis, or the pooling of blood at the extremities, occurs when an individual stays in a static position for prolonged periods of time, and is magnified at higher altitudes.

The **2XU Compression tights and socks** will further promote circulation in those situations therefore preventing foot and ankle swelling on those long plane rides.

Other claimed benefits of compression include increase agility by enhancing stability and reduction in muscle damage in contact sports. However, these are less applicable to triathlons therefore my experience is more limited. For some reason, most compression pieces of equipment also look really good, even though many can be worn under other clothes. Maybe it's because they tend to be black with few lighter accents. The **2XU Compression Short** is no exception...solid black with soft grey stitching and a dotted reflective logo on the left leg. Since they are not technically a tri short, they do not have any padding in the crotch and butt area. For me this is actually a benefit since I use it primarily as a running short. At my next Ironman event, I plan to swim with a good pair of bike shorts and use that on the bike as well. I will then make a quick change to these compression shorts for the run at T2.

The same compression concept applies for other areas of the body and so **2XU** (as well as other manufacturers like Skins) have compression tops, tights, socks and even calf guards. Some pros and top age groups have been sporting knee high (compression) socks at Ironman races around the world to reduce fatigue on the calf muscles and help prevent shin splints. For me, \$75 for a **2XU Pair of Compression Shorts** is well worth the cost. The compression (and associated benefits) on my thighs and hamstrings can be the difference between an Ironman PR and PW (Personal Worst).

