

# US textile industry returning to life

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After years of losing market share to overseas manufacturers, American textile and fiber makers say their industry is turning around. A story in *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, explores how advancing technology in the field is allowing the U.S. textile industry to gain new ground.

Senior C&EN Correspondent Marc S. Reisch reports that American [textile](#) companies, long crowded out of the market by low-cost overseas labor, have developed new niches for hi-tech fibers and textiles. These advanced products include antimicrobial fabric, fire-retardant finishes, sensor-imbued "smart fabric," and polyester made from recycled plastic bottles. Thanks to technological advances, automation and productivity improvements, the U.S. textile [industry](#) is finally growing more competitive, experts say.

Despite the increase in business, and even favorable domestic policies enticing foreign manufacturers to open plants in the United States, employment in the industry may continue to falter in the face of automation. But the high-tech nature of modern textiles and a drive for productivity has increased the demand for experts, including polymer chemists and dye specialists. For example, the North Carolina State University College of Textiles reported its largest-ever graduating class this year. And if the past is any indication, most are likely to find jobs within three months of earning their degrees. In a field once marked by rampant job loss, stability is returning with a new focus on advanced specialty products.

**More information:** "U.S. textile makers look for a revival,"  
[cen.acs.org/articles/95/i25/US ... rs-look-revival.html](https://cen.acs.org/articles/95/i25/US...rs-look-revival.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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