

# Stephanie Kwolek

## The Woman who invented. . .



## Kevlar

Stephanie Kwolek took a position at DuPont in 1946 so she could save enough money to go to medical school. In 1964, she was still there, researching how to turn polymers into extra strong synthetic fibres.

Stephanie was working with polymers that had rod-like molecules that all lined up in one direction. Compared to the molecules that formed jumbled bundles, Stephanie thought the uniform lines would make the resulting material stronger. She was right!

She had developed a fibre that was weight-for-weight as strong as steel. This material was dubbed Kevlar, and it's been used to manufacture skis, radial tyres and brake pads, suspension bridge cables, helmets, and hiking and camping gear. Most notably, Kevlar is used to make bulletproof vests, so even though Stephanie Kwolek didn't make it to medical school, she still saved plenty of lives.

# What will you invent?