

CLAIM(S):

1. A method of preparing a polishing pad, which method comprises:
 - (a) providing a polishing pad material comprising a polymer resin,
 - (b) subjecting the polishing pad material to an inert gas at a first elevated pressure,
 - (c) foaming the polishing pad material by increasing the temperature of the polishing pad material to a first temperature above the glass transition temperature of the polishing pad material and less than the melting temperature of the polishing pad material,
 - (d) subjecting the polishing pad material to an inert gas at a second elevated pressure, and
 - (e) foaming the polishing pad material by increasing the temperature of the polishing pad material to a second temperature above the glass transition temperature of the polishing pad material and less than the melting temperature of the polishing pad material.

wherein the polishing pad comprises closed pores and the pores have an average pore size of 15 μm to 200 μm .

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the gas comprises nitrogen, carbon dioxide, or combinations thereof.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the gas is carbon dioxide, and the first and second pressures are 1 MPa to 20 MPa.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the polishing pad comprises a polymer resin selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic elastomers, thermoplastic polyurethanes, polyolefins, polycarbonates, polyvinylalcohols, nylons, elastomeric rubbers, styrenic polymers, polyaromatics, fluoropolymers, polyimides, cross-linked polyurethanes, cross-linked polyolefins, polyethers, polyesters, polyacrylates, elastomeric polyethylenes, polytetrafluoroethylenes, polyethyleneterephthalates, polyimides, polyaramides, polyarylenes, polystyrenes, polymethylmethacrylates, copolymers and block copolymers thereof, and mixtures and blends thereof.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein the polymer resin is a thermoplastic polyurethane.
6. A method of polishing a substrate, comprising:
 - (a) providing a substrate to be polished,

- (b) contacting the substrate with a polishing system comprising the polishing pad of claim 1 and a polishing composition, and
- (c) abrading at least a portion of the substrate with the polishing system to polish the substrate.