

Neck Coolers

Neck Coolers have become a very popular method of keeping cool during the summer heat. Neck coolers work on the principal of evaporative cooling. Once the rooting crystals are hydrated, the fabric surface on the Neck Cooler draws the moisture from the rooting crystal to the fabric surface, which evaporates and results in an effective body cooler.

MATERIALS:

Root Watering Crystals: Sold by various companies and can be found in plant department or local hardware stores. The brand that we will be using is Schultz Moisture Plus, which comes in a 12-oz. container. The cost is approximately \$7.00-8.00. (We used approximately 1/3 of the container to make 20 regular adult neck coolers).

Fabric, Velcro and Thread: Fabric needs to be at least 50% cotton blend, the more cotton the better. Knit fabric will work as long as it has the cotton content. Use regular thread and $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 1" Velcro. Helpful hint: It is better not to buy the sticky Velcro as this will gum up your sewing needle!

Yardage needed: If your fabric is approximately 60 to 62 inches wide then one 3- $\frac{1}{2}$ inch strip will make two regular adult size coolers and one of the large adult coolers. In 1.25 yards of material you will get 20 adult regular and 10 adult large coolers. For 45-inch wide fabric you will get 20 adult regular size in 1.25 yards.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash, dry and iron your fabric.
2. Cut the fabric in 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch strips width wise (selvage to selvage). (If you are making the neck coolers for soldiers do not make it wider as they have to wear kevlar (helmets) and flak jackets which leaves very little room for anything else). If the neck cooler is for yourself you can make it wider if you choose.
3. **For regular adult size:** strips should be approximately 20 inches long.
For larger adult size: strips should be approximately 22 to 23 inches long.
For children size: you will need to measure your neck to determine your length.
4. The Velcro will need to be centered at both ends of the strip and sewn all the way around on the right side of the fabric. Attach Velcro on right side of fabric, one at lower left corner end and one at lower right corner end. Be sure to place outside the seam allowance.
5. Fold the right sides together in half length wise. Sew a regular $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam all the way around leaving two inches open in the middle to insert the crystals. At the corners trim close to the seam.
6. Turn right side out thru the 2-inch opening. It helps to use the eraser end of a pencil to push the ends thru. Then press flat.
7. Stitch both ends at the edge of the Velcro. This is to ensure that no crystals get trapped under the Velcro.
8. Measure the length of your cooler (not to include where the Velcro is) then mark every 3 to 4 inches to divide length for pockets for the crystals. Starting from the furthest pocket, insert a scant $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of the crystals and make sure that crystals are in the area of the pocket. Then double stitch so the crystals can't move out of the pocket.
9. Follow this procedure for each pocket you marked leaving the pocket that has the opening (where you turn the cooler right side out) for the last one. For the last one you need to topstitch the opening shut.
10. Viola! You are done. All you need to do is soak the cooler in cold water until the crystals expand. As the water evaporates the crystals reform, so you need to re-soak the cooler. You should let the neck cooler dry completely every other day for better wear. The cooler should last approximately 3 to 4 months if you are using your cooler on a regular basis.

DO AND DON'TS:

1. Do not use more crystals because in this case more is not better. DON'T DO IT! The result will be that the neck cooler won't be able to bend around your neck.
2. The crystals eventually wear out, if not absorbing much water you need to replace them.
3. Wet crystals are a hazard if spilled on or around the working area due to their extreme slipperiness.