

Sport a water-activated neck cooler and feel several degrees cooler! Made of 100% cotton material and polymer crystals, these are easy to make and feel great!

Who likes them? Wonderful for sports (both participants and spectators), horseback riding, fieldwork/gardening, laborers such as roofers or construction workers, parking meter attendants, any outdoor activity!

Also great for dogs (supervised only, please).

How to make

Step 1: Gather Materials:

100% cotton fabric (prewash all fabric so that colors will not bleed when cooler is wet)

Thread

Water absorbing polymer crystals

Tools:

Scissors or rotary cutter and mat

Sewing machine or hand-sewing needle

\*The most common brand of crystals is Watersorb. You can visit their website here: [Watersorb](http://Watersorb.com). You can also sometimes find them at gardening centers as these are the type of crystals you add to containers to help them retain moisture.

*Safety tip: Crystals are nontoxic but if eaten dry, they will expand. If a small dog or child eats a bellyful of dry crystals, it could cause problems. Please keep loose crystals away from pets and kids.*

Step 2: Create Fabric Tube

Cut fabric into a strip 4 1/2 inches wide by 40-45 inches long. This can most easily be done by cutting from selvage to selvage.

(Selvage are the finished edges of the fabric as opposed to the raw edges that fray.)

Fold right sides together along a long edge and pin. Sew along the edge to create a long tube.

Turn the tube right side out. Press (iron) the length of the tube with the seam at the center, not at a fold.

Step 4: Stitch Across and Add Crystals

Find the center of the tube and stitch across the center. Make sure to lock your stitches each time by backstitching a few stitches so the dry crystals won't shift.

Using a funnel, fill both halves of the tube with 1/4-1/2 teaspoon of crystals. Shake them down until they reach the center seam. Do not be tempted to use more. The crystals hold a tremendous amount of water and will swell many times their dry size. Too many crystals could put stress on the seams as well as make the gel ooze out of the fabric's weave making it feel slimy.

Measure 4 1/2 inches to each side of your center mark and stitch across the tube again at these marks. Repeat the addition of 1/4-1/2 teaspoon of crystals to both sides.

Measure 4 1/2 inches from your last stitch lines and sew across to form a second pocket on each side. You should now have four pockets filled with 1/8th teaspoon of crystals.

Step 5: Finish Ends.

Picture of Finish Ends.

Cut your ends at an angle and fold the edges inward to create a hem. Iron flat and sew across this hem to finish your cooler.

Step 6: How to Use.

Picture of How to Use.

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Soak your neck cooler in water for 30 minutes to activate the crystals. After the first 10-15 minutes, smooch the crystals around to evenly distribute them in each pocket, then soak for the remaining time. Once it has expanded, lightly squeegee the excess water off the outside with your hand if you don't want it to drip on you too much.

Tie around your neck (or your dog's neck) and enjoy the cool, evaporative effect. It should keep you cool for 3-5 hours depending on the temperature outside. To regenerate its cooling effect, simply soak it in cool water for a few minutes (1-3 minutes should do) and replace around your neck.

Your cooler can also be a heating pad. Soak in water as for cooling, then pop it in the microwave for 30 seconds!

Care: When you want to store the cooler, just let it sit out on a counter to dry completely and it will return to its flat state. Hand wash in mild soap. And for safety's sake, always wear sunscreen and keep hydrate when you are in the sun!

Maybe make a pair of coolind boots for your equine friend after you mastered creating your own cooling wrap?

