

## Directions for Making Neck Coolers

### MATERIALS:

"Magic Crystals" - These are the watering crystals you put in the soil of potted plants. They swell (A LOT) with water and then give it off slowly to the plants, or to a hot neck in our case.

These crystals can be found in the garden department of many discount stores and the ones I got were called "Moisture Plus". One jar will make MANY neck coolers....costs about \$7-8 for the jar.

Material and matching thread: Get 44" wide material because it was a good length for around the neck.

### DIRECTIONS:

I washed the material before starting, to make it softer. Cut up whatever amount of material you've got into 4" strips (by 44").

Fold lengthwise, good sides together, and sew together, leaving one end open. Turn the sewed strip inside out so that you have the good side visible.

Now you will make pockets for the crystals. I haven't seen ones that can be purchased made with pockets. They still work, but by sectioning the neck cooler it "bends" better.

Sew a line widthwise about 14" from the end. Pour into the open end 1/8 tsp of crystals and make sure that they slide down to your sewn line. Measure 4" and sew another line widthwise, making that first pocket about 4" long. Do this 3 more times until you have four pockets filled with crystals.

Now just sew up the open end, and you've got a SUPER-DOOPER NECK-COOLER.....

One note of caution: You will be tempted to add more crystals to each pocket, thinking that more is better. However, these crystals swell A LOT, and packing them too tightly will leave your soldier with something that won't bend enough to go around his/her neck. (1/8 tsp swells to about 1/3 cup of gelatinous balls) You might decide to make your neck-coolers a bit wider and that's fine, but remember

that most of our soldiers are wearing Kevlar and body armor when out in the heat. This does not leave much room around the neck....better to let them wear two if two fit rather than send one that is too big and makes them uncomfortable.

OK, that's it.....all the soldiers have to do is soak the collars in water until they swell and then tie them on..... This could take 30 minutes or more, especially the first time they are activated. The crystals eventually wear out and will not absorb as much water. However, they should last a month or two.

### **Directions for Using Neck Coolers**

There are "magic crystals" sewn into the four "pockets" of each neck cooler. In order to use your cooler, soak the whole thing in water until the crystals in the four pockets expand and the pockets bulge. The first soaking may take as long as ten minutes before the crystals absorb as much water as they are capable of. You can then tie the neck cooler around your neck....the crystals will slowly give up their absorbed water and the evaporation of the water should cool you for hours. The neck cooler can be re-soaked and used again and again. It should last about two months before the crystals lose their ability to absorb water.

We know of no negative skin reactions to the "magic crystals", even with long-term use. However, should you develop any skin problems, discontinue use. In addition, wet crystals are VERY slippery. For safety reasons, we advise discarding ripped neck coolers.