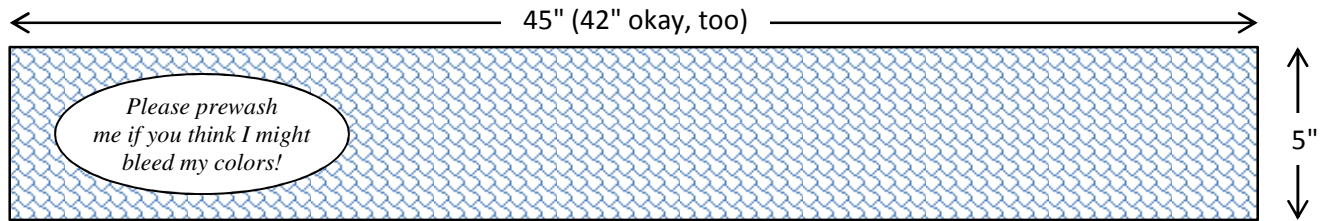


How to Make Cool Ties

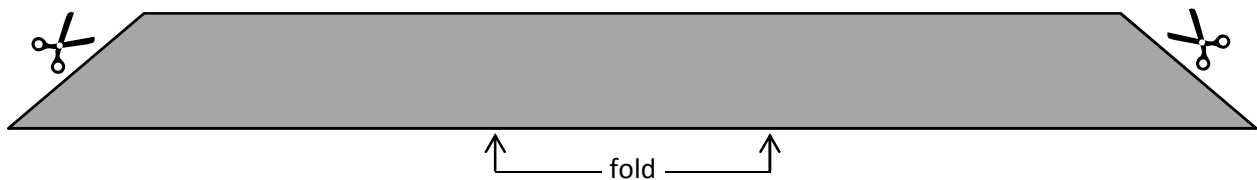
1. Using 100% cotton fabric, cut a 5" strip from selvedge to selvedge.



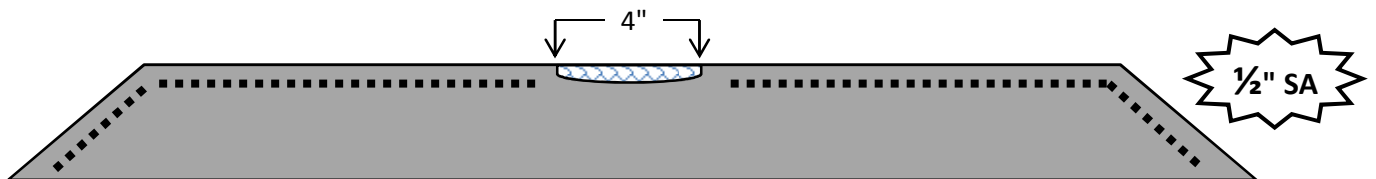
2. Fold in half, right sides together.



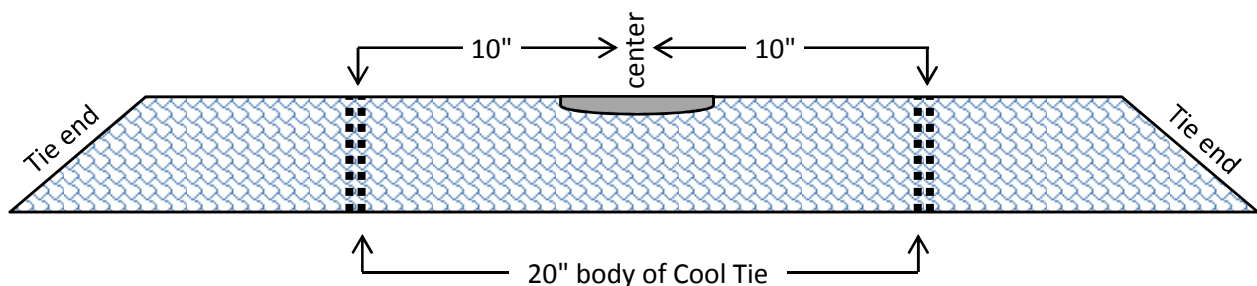
3. Cut the corners at a diagonal (pointy part along the fold).



4. Using a 1/2" seam allowance (SA), stitch around the edges. Leave a 4" opening in the middle.



5. Turn Cool Tie right side out. Measuring 10" from the center, stitch seams to separate the body of the Cool Tie (where the crystals will go) from the two tie ends. Go over these seams a couple of times because they keep the polymer crystals from escaping into the tie ends.



6. Please iron flat, folding in the 1/2" SA at the opening. Another group will insert the polymer crystals and close the opening ~ Thank you for giving your time to help your fellow Houstonians!

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News from Nancy:

Houston Chapter Members,

It was a Red-Letter-Day for us in the summer of 2008 when we delivered our first Cool Ties to a group of Meals on Wheels residents, and I can't thank everyone enough for helping with the Project. There are a couple of things I learned that I want to pass on.

1. Generally speaking, the elderly have smaller necks than the generic pattern we were using. And, I didn't take into account that 10" tie ends on wider fabric would give a much longer area to go around the neck. Some are even too long for a regular size neck. The original ones we had on hand still worked if they are looped correctly (I instructed the Meals on Wheels drivers on how to do this). You'll find a revised pattern at the above link, so that going forward, the area of the tube which hugs the neck will be shorter and thus cool more efficiently.
2. It is better to cut the strips 5" wide rather than 4½".
3. Make the seams 1/2" wide.....not larger and not smaller. A "more narrow" seam makes it more difficult when closing the opening, and a "wider" seam makes the tube too skinny.
4. If you're one of those smart sewers who "press" things on the edge of your sewing cabinet, please watch so that the seam is even. This makes it easier for the ones who are filling and closing the Ties.
5. If you use fabric with the color red in it, please test for color fastness. I've received lots of "Ties" with red in them and only one faded. But it was a doozy; it bled like a stuck pig and "colored" everything soaking with it.
6. I discovered that all polymer crystals are not alike. There are some brands out there that leave the fabric slick/slimy after soaking in water. If anyone decides to go off on their own and stuff and close the "Ties," please use the brand "Soil Moist." This works best and it is also the brand that the Harris County Health Dept. approved for our use. Soil Moist, found at Lowe's, is non-toxic and safe to use. If you want to purchase some for yourself, you might be able to find it at other stores—just call around to locate it.

A further update:

The director of the Meals on Wheels group who delivered our first batch of "Ties" contacted me to let us know he received a phone call from one precious little lady (whom I met while making the rounds with a Meals on Wheels driver), telling him how thrilled she was to have a Cool Tie, and how very much she appreciates it. She was one of many who expressed deep appreciation for their "Tie," and was brought to tears as she expressed her gratitude to me, and her wonder that people were thinking of those like her.

The need is great, ladies. It really pained me to have to tell two Meals On Wheels groups that we couldn't furnish the number of "Ties" they requested. One group needed 4,000. We aren't even close to that number. There are many others that I haven't contacted because we don't have enough to go around. Someone gave me a conservative estimate of 9,000 people who receive Meals on Wheels and who would be eligible to receive a "Cool Tie."

As you spread the word about this worthy cause, **please remember that we need more volunteers to sew, and we could use some donations to defray the cost of the crystals.**

A big Thank You to all who are helping to make some of Houston's most needy residents more comfortable in this scorching heat!

Keep Cool,
Nancy

How to Use Your Cool Ties

While Cool Tie is dry, place one hand on each end and shake back and forth to spread the crystals evenly inside the tube.

Fill a deep bowl with water and place Cool Tie in the water.

The first time you soak the tie, check it after 5 minutes and mush the soft jell up and down the tube to distribute it evenly.

It is very important that you do not let the crystals collect down at one end of the tube while they are soaking because they will collect in a big lump and ooze out of the fabric.

Let it soak 20-30 minutes, max.

Remove Cool Tie from water and wipe off excess water with your hand. Then place on a towel and gently blot the fabric.

Now it's ready to use. Tie it around your neck like a kerchief and enjoy!

OPTIONAL: Place the wet Cool Tie in a plastic bag and refrigerate until cold, approximately 30 minutes. Pure Heaven! It will be so cold you may need to put a paper towel or dish towel between your skin and the tie until the chill is comfortable.

When it no longer feels cool to your skin, turn it over and use the opposite side. When that side warms up, take it off and hold by the ends while you swing it around to cool it off. You can also dip it in cold water to cool it.

After a few days, the Cool Tie may lose some moisture. When that happens, soak it in water again and it will be like new. It won't mold or mildew.

Keep the tie in the refrigerator in a Ziplock bag when not in use. Re-wet as needed. **DO NOT FREEZE.**

When the hot weather ends, let your Cool Tie dry out. Follow the same instructions next year and your Cool Tie will last for a long time.