

- For cleaner water/ better health/ saving money & time -

Let's promote Acrylic Sponges!

< Promotion to use Acrylic Sponges is approved as >

* Official Common Actions of NVDA (Network for Voluntary Development in Asia)



What is an Acrylic Sponge?!

It is made with 100% acrylic yarn, which allows you to **wash dishes** (and bathtub, whatever) **without using washing soaps/ detergents** if the dishes are not too oily.

Q1: Why it can function like that?

Fibers of acryl are very small (0.01 mm). It is characterized with inherent polarity, making it oil resistant, and odor and mildew resistant too!

Q2: Can you really make it clean?

YES. Bacteria and viruses can't live on dry surfaces. Clean dishes kept wet will be contaminated again. Therefore, after using the acrylic sponge to remove the oil and things on the plate, simply rinse with water and make sure to air dry completely. You can also use it together with baking soda and or vinegar to remove greasier dishes.

Q3: How long can you use it?

Depends, but can be even for a few years!

Q4: Is it difficult to make?

Not at all!! Almost everyone can learn to make it in 30-60 minutes during the workshop. If it is too difficult to make, you can actually use it by rolling the yarns together into a big knot.

Q5: Where can I get tools and materials?

You can **easily** buy acryl and sticks in a wool/yarn shop but 100% acryl is the best.

Q6: Acryl is manufactured from plastic, so is it ecologically bad?

Looking at the big picture, the pros outweigh the cons since acryl won't rot/ degrade like natural materials and can be use for a long time, unlike soap that get use up fast.



Acrylic workshop in Vietnam (Jan. 2008)

Why Acrylic Sponges?

1) Good for water and environment!

By reducing the use of detergent, you can **decrease pollution of water!** This can be effective especially like in the following case;

☺ In the mountain village of Borneo, Malaysia where people flush used water directly to the river, Japanese volunteers made and gave acrylic sponges to the local people who use them now!

This can be also a powerful tool to **raise awareness** on importance to protect nature and promote concrete actions among any kinds of people who can easily join it!

2) Good for saving health and time!

There are many things that we believe necessary by the influence of the commercial information, but are actually not or even can be harmful to us like shampoo. Scientists say, "If you cannot eat it, you should **not put it on your skin.**"

You may also wash dishes **twice as fast** since you can save time use to rinse off the detergent.

3) Good for the economy & the project!

You can **save some money** from not buying detergents and even raise funds like;

☺ In the slum area of Hanoi, Vietnam, a woman got 40 US\$ by making and selling 20 sponges to the international volunteers, so that her son could get the birth certificate needed to go to school!

☺ A team of volunteers in Japan made and sold sponges at a festival to support Nepali children.

It can be also good to do in **rainy days of the workcamps** when there is nothing to do!!

There is a **pilot action** where women in the slum in Hanoi makes them, then volunteers bring back and sell them in their own countries, empowering the women, so let's join it!

Where can we promote it?!

1) International workcamps

- * **Rainy days** when you have nothing to do
- * Exchange programs with the **local people**
- * As a part of **voluntary work**

2) Training Seminars for camp leaders

So, the leaders can organize workshops during the workcamps by themselves!

3) Preparation Seminars for volunteers

So, they can promote it in their workcamps (at least, bring and use it there).

4) LMTV projects/ weekend workcamps

In schools, welfare institutions, etc.

5) Any other places you want!

Some Japanese volunteers made the sponges for the gift of St. Valentine day!

History and Achievement

It was started in Japan, 2003 as one of the actions for International year of Freshwater.

It has been done in over **120 workcamps and 55 special workshops** organized by NICE Japan, IWC Indonesia, MOVE Malaysia, SJV Vietnam, KNCU Korea, INEX Slovakia, LEGAMBIENTE Italy, etc. with involving over 1,500 international volunteers and local people.

How to make it?

Step 1: Hold crochet hook in right hand and make a slip knot on hook.

Step 2: Bring acrylic hook from back to front and grab it with hook.

Step 3: Draw hooked acrylic through slip knot and onto hook. This makes one chain stitch.

Step 4: Skip the first chain stitch.

Step 5: Insert hook into center of next chain stitch. Draw acrylic through the chain stitch and up onto the hook. There are now 2 loops on hook.



Repeat Steps 2 and 3 in sequence 28 more times. You should have 29 chain stitches and one loop will remain on hook.



Step 6: Bring acrylic over hook from back to front, and draw it through both loops on hook. One loop remains on the hook, and you have just made one single crochet stitch.

Repeat Steps 5 and 6 in each of the remaining 27 chains--be sure to work in the very last chain. You have now completed one row of single crochet. Measure your work; it should be about 7" wide. If it is too wide, try again with fewer beginning chains. If it is too narrow, try again with more beginning chains.

Step 7: At the end of the row, make one chain stitch, then turn the work counter-clockwise, leaving the hook in the chain.

Now you can begin another row, working into the stitches of the previous row.



Step 8: Make one single crochet stitch in first stitch and in each remaining stitch of the previous row. Be sure to work into the last stitch. Chain 1, turn. Repeat Step 8 until the block measures 9" long.

Finishing: Cut the acrylic from the skein, leaving a 6" end. Draw the hook straight up, bringing the yarn through the remaining loop on the hook. Thread yarn into yarn needle and weave back and forth through stitches to secure.

Well, it must be quite difficult to make it only with this instruction, but there are some ways like to **send Japanese (or other) volunteers as "Acryl messengers" to your office, projects, seminars** to teach how to make it! Of course, you are also free to make it your own way.

Report & for more details

Don't hesitate to ask questions and you are also very welcome to report the results of your actions (number of sponges made, fund raised, people joined, etc.) to the action coordinator and Treasurer of NVDA; KAIZAWA Shinichiro: nice@nice1.gr.jp or to Julie, NVDA Secretariat, at secretariat.nvda@gmail.com. You can also share on our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FcnSpongeAction/>