

Even though it's August and the calendar says that summer is on its way out, that doesn't mean that things will be cooling down anytime soon. Whether you're on vacation or simply trying to beat the heat, I've learned a few things that can make life easier for you!

During Covid-19, I was teaching in South Korea experiencing the most tumultuous monsoon season I've ever seen, all while walking around wearing a mask. The streets once flooded so bad that my friend dropped her purse while crossing the street and it started floating away like a little boat. My hair was frizzed up so bad that a student accused me of stabbing her when she hugged me. I got a sunburn from a seven-minute walk to the bank. Needless to say, my fellow teachers and I were suffering. After looking at the locals and checking out the convenience stores, us foreigners were introduced to the wonderful variety of cooling products that are offered in the Asian market.



Bioré Japan

1. Bioré Hiya Towel

I absolutely adore these things. They're like giant, frozen baby wipes! They come individually wrapped for easy storage and require no activation. Once unraveled, it can be worn around your neck, or you can use it to wipe yourself down. I've admittedly tucked it in the band of my bra while on a walk. My favorite kind comes fragrance free (no minty scent!), and they stay cold for about an hour. I'm not sure about the -3* claim since I've never whipped out a thermometer, but these things get *cold*. Bioré offers these in a variety of packs, sizes, and fragrances.



Ice-Non

2. Ice-Non Shirt Mist

Japan really doesn't mess around when it comes to heat. This Ice-Non mist is only one of the many kinds of cooling mists on the market. You spray them on the outside of your shirt 2-3 times (do a test patch first) to create an icy feeling that relieves mugginess and odor for about 30-minutes. It feels like putting an ice cube down your shirt! Some people carry bottle around to re-apply; however I'd recommend checking out the instructions on each individual brand just in case. These mists are offered in several different scents and the big bottles last a long time.



Kakao Friends

3. Mini-USB Fan

These are a dime a dozen, found at any convenience store or street stand. I know these are also sold in the USA, but I don't see them being used nearly as much as I did when I lived overseas. Every child, grandma, or dog in a stroller had their own little fan around their neck or clipped to their hat. I was gifted a big one by the school I was working for, and the battery life was incredible! I used it every day while walking to work and kept it on my desk while teaching, and it lasted the whole day. They're easy to charge with any USB (you can use a portable battery pack) and come in tons of cute styles.



Morinaga Japan

4. Morinaga In Lemon Salt Plus Tablets

You know how athletes drink Gatorade to replenish electrolytes and hydrate when working out? These candies essentially do the same thing. After sweating all day, your sodium levels drop and can cause nausea or confusion. These candies contain sodium, glucose, and eight different vitamins to easily give you a boost without lugging bottles around. Plus, these ones taste like lemon and are super yummy.



EASYEAH

5. Fever Patches

These are the most accessible product on the list! I see them at my own local CVS and are sold in stores all over the world. These cooling patches are intended to be placed on the forehead when a child (or adult. No judgement) has a fever and helps to cool down the head as opposed to using a washcloth. However, sticking one to the back of your neck on a hot day is also a valid use! The cooling effect varies from brand to brand, as does price, but most are cheap and come in a whole pack. You can help them stick wherever you want with a bit of fashion tape if they're slipping around.



RYAN

Kakao Friends

6. Parasols

East Asian women have a crippling fear of the sun due to its tanning and ageing effects. While we don't have time to unpack Asia's colorist traditional beauty standards, hiding from the sun does help you keep cool. Sun umbrellas are lighter and less stuffy than regular umbrellas and offer UV protection. It quite common to see ladies walking around with a cute parasol, sunhat, and UV arm covers while going for a walk. A bit of a hassle to carry around, but I've never regretted bringing one on an outing.



Verygoods Japan

7. Cooling Bandanas/headbands/wristbands

I realize that most of the products on this list are single-use and not the most sustainable or eco-friendly. It might be because of the chemistry used, or simply due to travel convenience, but if this is a concern for you, there are still options! Cooling rags are another very accessible (and reusable) option that can be found on amazon or other retailers. Some are long, thin, cooling packs that you can put in the fridge and then wrap in wet cloth to wear around your neck. Others are made from special fibers that stay cooler for longer with UV properties and you can wear it as a bandana. There are sweatband and wristband styles that can fit your preference. The cooling lasts depending on the size of the towel-think of them like the cool packs you'd put in an injury.

And, of course, never forget your sunscreen and water! I hope I've given you a few new ideas on how to stay cool for the rest of the summer. You can find most of these products on several online retailers like eBay, sugoimart.com, or goodsofjapan.com. Or, search for similar ones at a store near you!