

Cave Creations: Stalactites and Stalagmites

As water moves through rock in caves, it dissolves small amounts of limestone. When the water drips from the ceiling, small amounts of limestone are left behind, eventually creating an icicle shape—a stalactite. Limestone in water that drips onto the cave floor builds up and forms a stalagmite. Here is how you can create your own formations.

What you need

- Two 250 mL jars
- 500 mL of warm water
- 30-cm thick, natural-fibre string
- 30 cm x 15 cm sheet of cardboard
- 2 cups of Epsom salts.

What to do

1. Add equal amounts of Epsom salts and warm water to the two jars and stir.
2. Place the two jars on the piece of cardboard 15 cm apart.
3. Soak the entire length of string in the solution until it is completely saturated (approximately 1 minute).
4. Place one end of the string in one jar and the other end in the second jar. Let the string hang down between the two jars without touching the cardboard.
5. Leave the jars and the string undisturbed for several days.
6. Check your stalactites and stalagmites every day and observe how they are formed. You may want to take photos over a period of time and create a slideshow of the process.

