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## [nanowerk - Nanotechnology-based solutions for oil spills](#)



(Nanowerk Spotlight) The recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is widely acknowledged to be among the worst ocean oil spills in world history. Inevitably, the spill has once again raised serious concerns worldwide about the likely environmental impact of such catastrophic oil spills caused by oil tanker accidents at sea or mishaps during loading and unloading of oil from tankers at seaports. Similar concerns are also associated with discharge of oil in areas around oil wells and oil storage facilities. Such oil spills can cause havoc to marine ecology (sea birds, mammals, algae, coral, seagrass etc.), beside the health hazards to the human population located in nearby coastal zones. Moreover, the economic loss suffered by oil companies resulting from oil-spillage is enormous.

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### Cotton Absorbent Pads and Filter Papers

Inexpensive, raw cotton waste is an amazing oil absorbing material that is also biodegradable in nature. It can soak up the oil up to 40 times its weight. Professor S. Ramkumar of The Institute of Environmental and Human Health (TIEHH), Texas Tech University is developing value-added cotton absorbent pads using non-woven materials and nanotechnology 11. Recently, he chemically treated the raw cotton which enhances its oil absorbing capabilities to soak the oil up to 70 times its weight.






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