

Magnet Myths

Magnets are objects that create an area of magnetic force called a magnetic field. These fields by themselves are invisible to the human eye. Magnets only attract certain types of metals, such as iron, cobalt, and nickel.

Attracted to:

Iron
Cobalt
Nickel

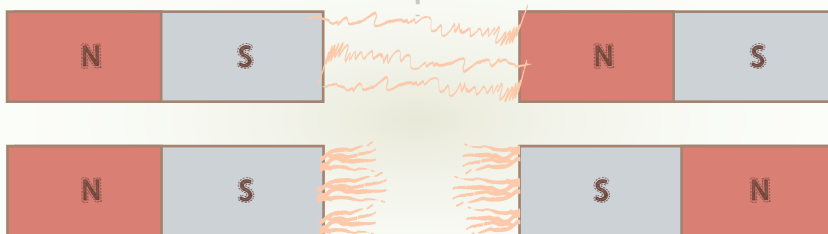
NOT attracted to:

Plastic Copper
Gold Silver
Aluminum Magnesium
Glass

Magnets have a north pole and a south pole. If the same pole of two magnets are put close each other they will repel or push away. If different poles are close to each other they will be attracted to each other and pull together.

Magnetic objects must be inside the magnetic field to respond, which is why you may have to move a magnet closer for it to have an effect.

Unlike poles
attract



Like poles
Repel

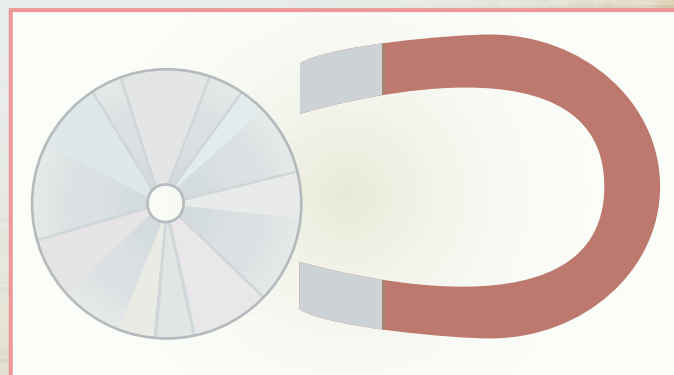
FREQUENT QUESTIONS

Can a magnet damage electronics?

Yes, powerful magnets are actually used to wipe information from computer hard drives. Most types of electronic equipment are made with tiny magnets, and those can be affected by another magnet close by. However, most household magnets, such as fridge magnets, are not strong enough to damage electronics.

Can a magnet wipe information from a CD?

No. The information on a CD is burned onto the CD with a laser. A magnet won't affect the information on a CD.



Magnet Myths (continued)

FREQUENT QUESTIONS...

Can you make a metal magnetic by rubbing a magnet on it?

To make a metal magnetic, you must do something to manipulate the magnetic domains of the metal so that they point in the same direction. This happens when you rub a pin on a magnet – the pin's magnetic domains will align because they've been exposed to the magnet's magnetic field. You can also do this by placing a piece of metal in a strong magnetic field in a north-south direction or passing an electrical current through it.

Do magnets have healing powers?

Doctors and scientists have been studying the healing effects of magnets for a long time. But we're still not quite sure of how powerful a magnet's healing capabilities are. There are many theories to explain why magnets MIGHT be good for your body. For example, some say that the iron found in hemoglobin in your blood can be affected by magnets. That is why many people wear magnetic bracelets or necklaces to help improve blood circulation. Some say that magnets can also change the structure of nearby cells. This could mean that magnets might be able to heal pain or illnesses.

Magnets are used as a part of many different medical devices. For example, an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) uses magnetic fields to see the organs in our bodies.

COMPREHENSION

1. If you can manipulate metal to be magnetic, do you think you can demagnetize something? How would this work?

2. Magnets do one of two things, repel or attract. Why is this?
