

“Floating” Metal



Purpose: To demonstrate the force of surface tension.

Location: room 136, shelf O4 (soap next to sink in 136)

Fill the beaker with tap water and carefully place a dry 1 g or 2 g aluminum mass on the surface of the water. The same thing can be done with a steel sewing needle. In each case the objects float due to surface tension even though aluminum and steel are more dense than water. A drop or two of liquid soap will reduce surface tension and the objects will immediately sink.