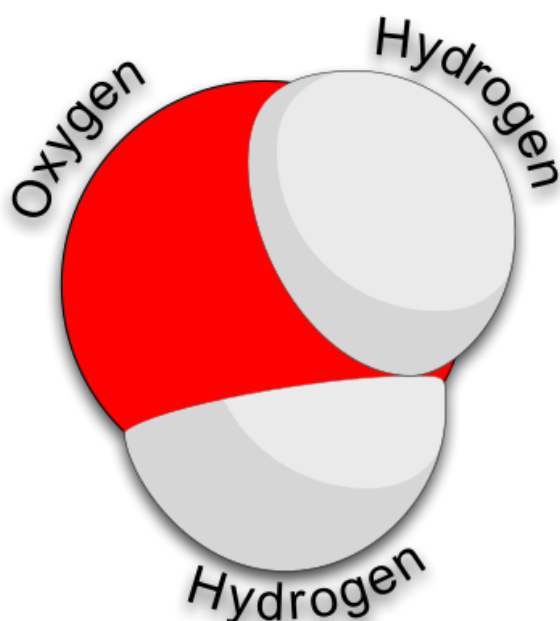


# Water Surface Tension



Water is all around us and we use and drink it every day, so it is easy to think of it as unexciting and 'normal'. However water is an unusual substance and has some amazing properties!

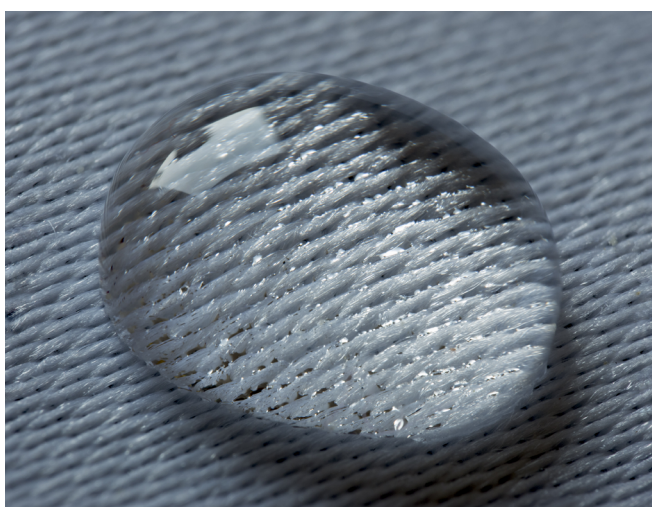
Like everything else, water is made up of atoms - the tiny building blocks that make up everything. Water is made of hydrogen and oxygen atoms which combine to form a water molecule. These molecules are pretty sticky and together create a sort of stretchy, elastic 'skin' on the surface of the water. You can see this for yourself - take a glass of water and look at it closely. You will be able to see the water sticking to the glass and climbing up the sides just ever so slightly.

Surface tension is also what allows insects such as water striders to literally walk on water!

Watch our '[pennies in a glass of water](#)' experiment which shows how water can even stretch beyond the top of a glass! Try it for yourself - how many coins can you add before the surface tension breaks?



*Image credit: By Cory, CC BY-SA 2.1 jp*



*Water forms droplet shapes partly because of surface tension*

*Image credit: Petar Milošević*