

## Larry



In 1982 [a little bit before Mummy and Daddy were born] a really good thing happened.

Larry Walters [who lived in the USA] did something he had always wanted to do. He filled 45 weather [very big] balloons which were tied to a chair, with helium. He took some sandwiches and a pellet gun and sat in the chair.

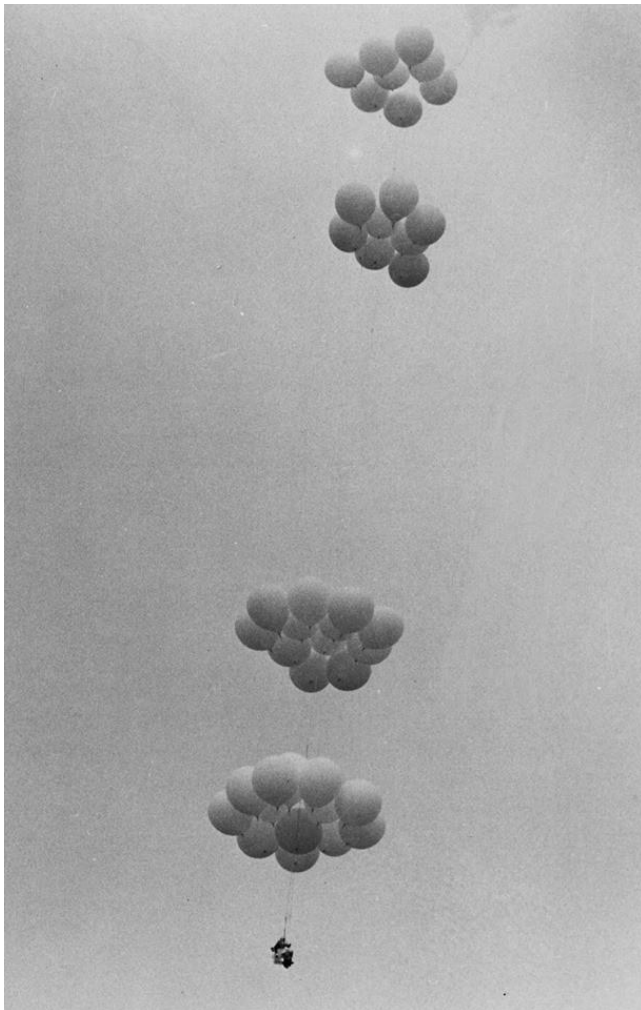
[A pellet gun does not shoot bullets – it shoots little pieces of metal – he took one so when he wanted to come down, he could shoot some of the balloons.]

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Larry thought he would go up about 10 metres in the air – but, he went straight up to about 5,000 metres. He got in the way of some passenger planes.

He stayed up for hours – when he wanted to come down he shot some balloons and he came down a little – but, he dropped his gun and he had to wait until his invention came down naturally. When he did come down his invention broke some electrical wires so some people didn't have electricity for a while.

The chair was a piece of outside furniture – which some people call a 'lawn chair'. Larry immediately became famous and the television and newspapers called him, 'Lawn Chair Larry'.



[<https://medium.com/lessons-from-history/the-strange-sad-odyssey-of-lawn-chair-larry-3b943991179c>]

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Larry got into trouble and was fined for flying a machine in the wrong place – but he was famous for a time. Yes, it is probably dangerous and could have hurt other people or himself.

But, he did what he had dreamed of doing since he was a boy, and many people think that's a good thing.

In the next chapter we learn more about helium – we learn that it is very light, and that is why helium balloons float up in the air [which is heavier].

## Floating

Stuff will float on stuff which is heavier than it is. So Lawn Chair Larry's helium balloons floated on air because helium is lighter than air.

If you pick up a dry stick and throw it into a pond of water – will it sink or float? Well, wood is lighter than water, so a stick floats on water. What if you pick up a stone [any size] and throw that in the pond – sink or float? Stone is heavier than water so, a stone will sink in water.



[Author: Alby

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pound-coin-floating-in-mercury.jpg>]

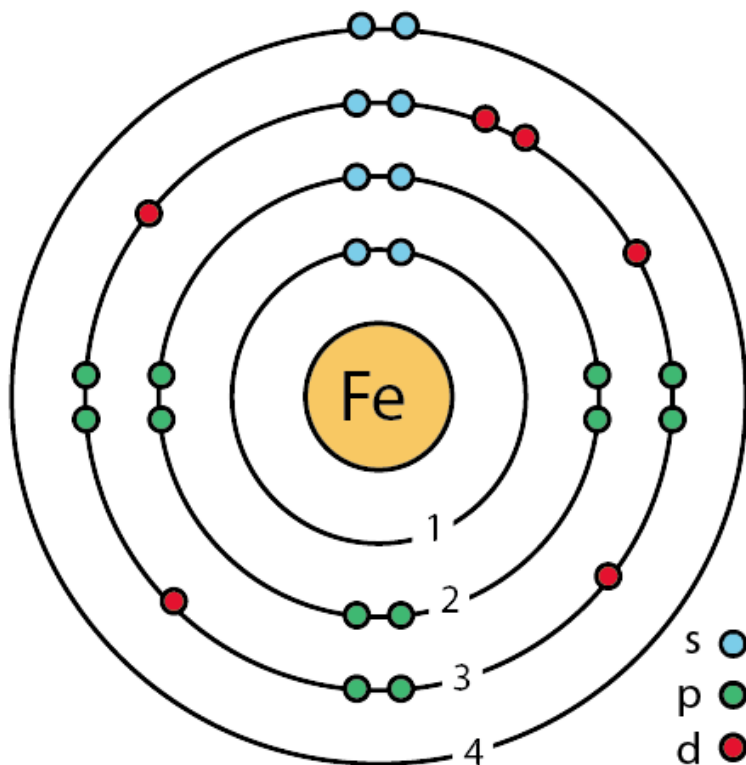
This is a very interesting picture – it shows a metal coin [coins are mainly made of iron] which is floating in a container of mercury. We know iron and mercury are both elements – they are made of one type of atom.

We know iron, it is hard and used to make railway lines. We know mercury – yes, it is a metal, but it is very strange, because it is a metal which is runny like water.

In this picture, we see a coin [mainly iron] floating on a pool of mercury. This suggests that iron is lighter than mercury.

We can check that by comparing their atoms.

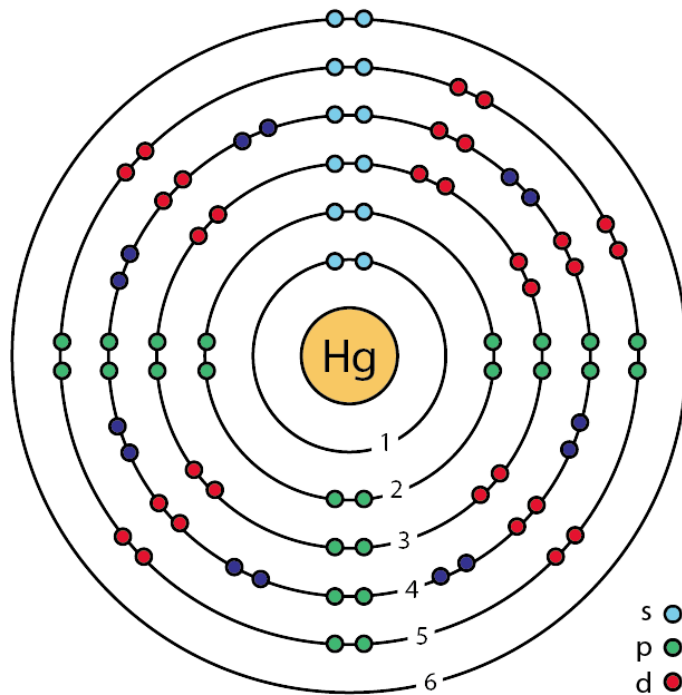
Most of the weight of an atom comes from the big lumps in the middle. The number of electrons, those little bits whizzing around the outside of atom, give a good idea about whether the atom will be heavy or light.



[Author: Ahazard.sciencewriter  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:26\\_iron\\_\(Fe\)\\_enhanced\\_Bohr\\_model.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:26_iron_(Fe)_enhanced_Bohr_model.png)]

Fe is the symbol for iron. There are 26 electrons going around in iron atoms – and the mass number of an iron atom is 56.

So, let's have a look at a mercury atom. Hg is the symbol for mercury.



[Author: Ahazard.sciencewriter  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:80\\_mercury\\_\(Hg\)\\_enhanced\\_Bohr\\_model.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:80_mercury_(Hg)_enhanced_Bohr_model.png)]

Wow! There are 80 electrons going around in the mercury atom [heaps more] and the mass number of a mercury atom is 201 [nearly 4 times heavier].

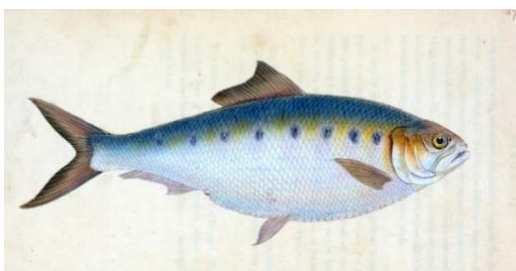
So, of course, a piece of iron will float on a pool of mercury.

## Just checking

So, in Chapter 2, we said that dolphins are not fish, they are mammals.

And we saw that they breathe [get their oxygen] through holes in the tops of their heads.

We said that fish get their oxygen straight out of the water. They do that through gills, which are slits on the sides of their necks.



[<https://thegraphicsfairy.com/free-fish-clip-art/>]

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The gills are those slits behind the eye and in front of the first fin.

And, how many eyes do spiders have?



They usually have 8 – some only have 6. The one in this picture only has 4 in front, but he/she has others on the side and back.

**Knock, knock.**

**Who's there?**

**Art**

**Art who?**

**R2-D2**

**My friend recently got crushed by a pile of books, but he's only got his shelf to blame.**

**Q: What gives you the power to walk through a wall?**

**A: A door.**

**Q: David's father has three sons: Snap, Crackle and... ?**

**A: David.**