

« 13 Scientific Explanations For Everyday Life » ¹

Science holds our lives together. In his new book *Atoms Under the Floorboards*, writer Chris Woodford lays out the abstract science that underlies the everyday world. Here are some of the things we learned about the world through his eyes:

_ **Post-it notes** feature a plastic adhesive that is spread out in blobs across the paper. When you slap a Post-it onto your bulletin board, only some of these blobs touch the surface to keep the note stuck there. Thus, you can unstick it, and when you go to attach it to something else, the unused blobs of glue can take over the adhesive role. Eventually, all the capsules of glue get used up or clogged with dirt, and the sticky note doesn't stick anymore.

_ Because **water molecules** are triangular - made of two hydrogen atoms stuck to one oxygen atom – they have slightly different charges on their different sides. The hydrogen end of the molecule is slightly positive, and the oxygen side is slightly negative. This makes water excellent at sticking to other molecules. When you wash away dirt, the water molecules stick to the dirt and pull it away from whatever surface it was on.

_ Unlike other solid materials like metals, **glass** is made up of amorphous, loosely packed atoms arranged randomly. They can't absorb or dissipate energy from something like a bullet. The atoms can't rearrange themselves quickly to retain the glass structure, so it collapses and shatters fragments everywhere.

¹ Adapted from <http://mentalfloss.com/article/66086/13-scientific-explanations-everyday-life> (July 14, 2015)