



HOLMIUM

Element Symbol: **Ho**

Atomic Number: **67**

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Holmium is a rare earth metal. The name Holmium comes from the Latin name for Stockholm, Holmia. It was discovered in 1878 by the Swiss Chemists Marc Delfontaine and Jacques-Louis Soret. Later that same year, Per Teodor Cleve independently discovered Holmium, naming it after his home town.

Holmium is like a complex, somewhat schizophrenic personality, exhibiting extremes in emotions and behaviours. It has a vulnerable side, and is a relatively soft and malleable metal. But it can show great strength of character: it has the highest magnetic strength of all the elements so can generate the strongest known artificial magnetic fields. Holmium exhibits dramatic mood swings, changing colour from light brown in the daylight to a fiery red/orange under chromatic lighting.

Above all, Holmium is a benevolent and friendly element. It is used as a magnetic flux concentrator, in nuclear control rods due to its ability to absorb subatomic products of nuclear fission, in solid-state lasers and in microwave equipment. Holmium lasers are safe to look at and so are used in fibre optics and in many medical applications. Holmium is non-toxic and there is some evidence that it might stimulate metabolism.

Provided by the element sponsor Sarah Lau

ARTISTS DESCRIPTION

Holmium is mainly used for its magnetic properties, so text about the element has been distorted as though by a strong field. An image of a coin struck from Holmium was used to compliment the other circular forms.

AILS A FERGUSON