

# Fe

**Iron** is number 26 on the periodic table of elements and its symbol is Fe. It is the most common element found on Earth (the Earth's core is made almost entirely of iron.) It has been used since ancient times to make tools and weapons. Iron is soft by itself, but when combined with other elements can become very strong. Steel is a combination of iron and carbon.



Iron is a very malleable element, meaning it can be hammered and formed into many shapes. With small amounts of carbon it is also very strong. For this reason, and its abundance, it is the metal humans use most.



Like most metals iron is a good conductor of electricity.



Iron has a strong chemical reaction with oxygen. When they meet, the atoms combine into iron oxide, also known as rust. Rust will peel off and keep exposing new layers to oxygen.



Iron is found in many foods such as meats, beans and leafy vegetables. It is an important part of our diet. It combines with proteins to be one of the major parts of our red blood cells.

## Questions

1. Name an element iron combines with to become much stronger.
2. Why is iron important to eat?
3. Why does iron rust?
4. What part of Earth is made almost entirely of iron?