

Spinning Tabletop Molecules

Goal: Students will understand that information gained by the rotation of an object can be used to determine its structure.

This is a quantitative lab exercise. It extends the students investigation of spinning diatomic molecules begun in the PVC pipe activity. Here students are given straws with even and uneven masses fixed to each end. Students spin these straws on their desks and observe that they rotate about their center of mass. Students then balance the straws to determine the location of the center of mass. Then they complete the worksheet (attached).