

NO, LET'S KEEP AMERICA AMERICAN

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I am an American and proud of it. America is the greatest country in the world. We are emulated by other countries in just about every respect. So why should we change our method of measurement?

Because people have 10 fingers is a very poor reason to base all weights and measures on the number 10. I do my math with my brain, not my fingers. If you can't multiply or divide any number other than 10, you are sadly in need of a remedial course in arithmetic, not a new measurement system.

The metric system is a product of the French Revolution, a period when bloodthirsty French peasants beheaded most of the scientists and technical people simply because they were part of the aristocracy. That kind of behavior is hardly indicative of stable, rational thought. It's no wonder that some peasants in the middle of Paris saying that all measurement will be based on the number 10 spawned a measurement system that leaves a lot to be desired.

The meter is one-ten-millionth of the distance between the North Pole and the equator along the Greenwich meridian. Now there's a practical unit if I ever saw one! And so easy to calibrate too. Some critics of the metric system say that the original measurement of the circumference of the Earth to determine the meter was inaccurate to begin with and has never been corrected. At one point, they even had a metric time system and a metric calendar. Both were so unwieldy that even the French revolutionaries couldn't stand to use them and they were dropped.

Canada converted 25 years ago. Suddenly, citizens raised within the British Imperial system had to convert to metrics. Why? Has life in Canada radically improved because of the country's conversion? I don't think so. I have always considered the metric system somewhat of a joke. It like measuring objects with a string that has knots for measuring points. Yes, the string gives a little, but who cares? It's good enough. That's the metric system. It's not very precise, but who cares? It's easy because you can multiply and divide by 10. It's interesting to note that Airbus Industrie, a Europe-based manufacturer of some of the world's most advanced passenger aircraft, such as the A320 and A34, use the American system of measurement because it's more accurate.

Here is my closing thought about the American system of measurement. Our ancestors designed it. It was good enough for them. It allowed the United States to become the most technologically advanced country in the world. And it's good enough for me.

If you want to use the metric system, go live in a country that uses it. Leave our system alone.

Kitchen Equivalent Chart

A pinch.....	1/8 tsp. or less
3 tsp.....	1 tbsp.
2 tbsp.....	1/8 cup
4 tbsp.....	1/4 cup
16 tbsp.....	1 cup
5 tbsp + 1 tsp.....	1/3 cup
4 oz.....	1/2 cup
8 oz.....	1 cup
16 oz.....	1 pound
1 oz.....	2 tbsp fat or liquid
1 cup of liquid.....	1/2 pint
2 cups.....	1 pint
2 pints.....	1 quart
4 cups of liquid.....	1 quart
1 quart.....	4 cups
4 quarts.....	1 gallon
8 quarts.....	1 peck (such as apples, pears, etc.)
1 jigger.....	1 1/2 fl. oz. (3 tbsp)

Common Units of Mass and Weight

1 pound = 453.59 grams = 0.45359 kilograms
1 kilogram = 1000 grams = 2.205 pounds
1 gram = 10 decigrams = 100 centigrams = 1000 milligrams
1 atomic mass unit = 1.6605 x 10 ⁻²⁴ gram
1 short ton = 2000 pounds = 907.2 kilograms
1 long ton = 2240 pounds
1 metric tonne = 1000 kilograms = 2205 pounds

Common Units of Length and Volume

1 mile = 5280 feet = 1.609 kilometers
1 yard = 36 inches = 0.9144 meter
1 meter = 100 cm = 39.7 inches = 3.281 feet = 1.094 yards
1 kilometer = 1000 meters = 1094 yards = 0.6215 mile
1 Angstrom = 1.0 x 10 ⁻⁸ centimeter = 0.10 nanometer
100 picometers = 1.0 x 10 ⁻¹⁰ meter = 3.937 x 10 ⁻⁹ inch
1 quart = 0.9643 liter
1 liter = 1.0567 quarts
1 liter = 1 cubic decimeter = 1000 cubic centimeters
1 millimeter = 1 cm ³ = 0.001 liter = 1.056 x 10 ⁻³ quart

YES, AMERICA NEEDS TO BE METRIFIED

BY RICHARD BONNER
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I am sorry that you and your countrymen have not learned and used the metric system to a point where you would like it. Canada switched 25 years ago and our company, Atlantic Illumination, went metric a few years afterward. To acquaint our employees with the new system, we removed all obsolete measuring tapes and replaced them with metric only, painted over the inches side on our meter sticks and used lacquer thinner to remove Fahrenheit degrees on thermometers.

I would never go back to the old, annoying, tedious Imperial or American system. By the way, it is called the Imperial system because it's a royal pain to use.

Did you know that a bushel of wheat is a different size from a bushel of cranberries? Did you know that a barrel of oil is a different size from a barrel of vinegar? There are three different-length miles. Two different-size ounces and four different-weight tons. This doesn't even take into account that the American and Imperial system measures are not the same size, yet they use the same nomenclature. This is very confusing for trade between the United States and any other country in the world, especially Canada, America's most important trading partner. For that reason, U.S. industry is now metric. It's only the general public that clings to the old system for measurement.

It's a metric world. Gas and milk are sold by the liter. Odometers, speedometers and road signs are all in kilometers. Soft drinks are sold by the milliliter. Grocery-product weights are in grams. Deli scales are in grams. Temperature is in centigrade. Rainfall is measured in millimeters. Barometric and tire pressure are in kilopascals. I buy 35 mm slide film, which is placed in 50 mm mounts. I am 178 cm tall and weigh 80 kilograms. This is everywhere in the world *except* in the United States.

Even that is changing though. Look at your grocery shelves. Just about all products now have both metric and American measurements, and many have only metric. Most soft drinks are now sold by the liter. Film has long been sold by the millimeter.

With metric, all size names are equal. A liter is a liter, regardless of what in it. Only one number is needed to

convert: 10. One millimeter equals 1 cubic centimeter, 1 cubic centimeter of water weighs 1 gram. Also, 1000 cubic centimeters equal 1000 milliliters equal 1 liter. And 1 liter of water weighs 1 kilogram. What could be easier? It's all ones and zeroes.

Can you imagine if the American currency system was like our measurement system with six pennies to the nickel, three nickels to the dime, four dimes to the quarter and five quarters to the dollar? A calculator would be required every time you shop, just as you are forcing me to keep a calculator on hand every time I read POPULAR MECHANICS. Fortunately for Americans, your monetary system is based on 10, just like the metric system.

The United States is known for having the best of everything and for leadership in technology and innovation, *except* for the American measurement system, which is old hat and bottom of the barrel. How can you have the best of everything and yet the worst measurement system? I'll wager that you probably see a word processor. Would you go back to a manual typewriter? Do you still drive a horse and buggy? No, because the automobile is a better idea. So is the metric system. Learn to use it. Get comfortable with it and you will love it.

SI Fundamental Units

Physical Quantity	Name of Unit	Symbol
Length	meter	m
Mass	kilogram	kg
Time	second	s
Temperature	kelvin	K
Amount of Substance	mole	mol
Electric current	ampere	A
Luminous intensity	candela	cd

Traditional Metric and SI Prefixes

Factor	Prefix	Symbol	Factor	Prefix	Symbol
10 ¹²	tera	T	10 ⁻¹	deci-	d
10 ⁹	giga	G	10 ⁻²	centi-	c
10 ⁶	mega	M	10 ⁻³	milli-	m
10 ³	kilo	k	10 ⁻⁶	micro-	μ
10 ²	hecto	h	10 ⁻⁹	nano-	n
10 ¹	deka	da	10 ⁻¹²	pico-	p
			10 ⁻¹⁵	femto-	f
			10 ⁻¹⁸	atto-	a

