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Nanodroplets and graphene

Posted by Links of London on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 10:01:36 PM

A single-atom-thick sheet of carbon, like those seen in pencil marks -- offers great potential for new types [links of london](#) of nanoscale devices, if a good way can be found to mold the material into desired shapes.

Chemists at the [valentine's Day jewelry](#) University of Illinois at Chicago say it's possible, reporting that graphene can become quite pliable using only a nanodroplet of water to do the job. "Up until now, it wasn't thought we could controllably fold these structures," said Petr Kral, assistant professor of chemistry at UIC. "But now we know how to shape graphene [valentines Day rings](#) by using weak forces between nanodroplets carefully positioned on graphene sheets.

Kral and two of his graduate students described the process in a recent article in [Nano Letters](#), which is highlighted in Nature's "news and views" section Dec. 17. Engineers already cut graphene into narrow ribbons and other shapes, expanding the set of carboneous systems such as fullerenes, carbon nanotubes and [nano-diamonds](#). Using computer simulations, Kral showed that weak molecular interactions called van der Waals forces between water nanodroplets and graphene can shape it into a wide variety of forms, without the water and graphene chemically binding.

Kral and his students [Bookworm Charm](#) discovered they could use water droplets to roll, bend, slide and shape graphene into different complex structures such as capsules, sandwiches, knots and rings -- all potential building blocks of nanodevices

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