

3 common units of energy

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What is the SI unit of energy?

Which unit of energy is commonly used in the food industry?

1 kilowatt-hour (kWh) is equivalent to how many joules?

What unit of energy is used in nuclear physics to measure small energy levels?

Which of the following is NOT a unit of energy?

How many joules are in a calorie?

Which unit of energy is equivalent to 1 Newton-meter?

In physics, we often discuss different quantities like energy, time, and work. Each of these quantities needs a standard unit of measurement to help us describe and understand them properly. For example, when we say someone weighs 36 kilograms (kg) and lives 1200 kilometers (km) away, “kg” and “km” are the units used to describe weight and distance, respectively. Similarly, we use Kelvin to measure temperature.

The Joule (symbol: J) is the official unit of energy in the International System of Units (SI). It is named after the English physicist James Prescott Joule. One joule represents the amount of energy transferred when applying a force of one newton over a distance of one meter.

Common Use: Joules are used universally in all fields of science and engineering to measure energy, work, or heat. For example, in electrical terms, one joule is the energy expended by passing an electric current of one ampere through a resistance of one ohm for one second.

The erg is the unit of energy in the centimeter-gram-second (CGS) system of units. It is a smaller unit compared to the joule. One erg is defined as the amount of energy done by a force of one dyne exerted for a distance of one centimeter.

Common Use: Though largely replaced by the joule in many fields due to the international adoption of the SI system, the erg is still used in some contexts within physics, especially in electromagnetism and astronomy.

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