**Reading Passage: Magnetic Therapy**

Magnetic therapy is an alternative medical practice that uses static magnets to alleviate pain and other health concerns. So-called therapeutic magnets are typically integrated into bracelets, rings, or shoe inserts, though therapeutic magnetic mattresses and clothing are also on the market.

Many well-conducted studies over the past three decades have shown that static magnetic devices offer no more or no less benefit than sham devices devoid of a magnet. These studies suggest that static magnetic therapy devices may not work at all beyond having a placebo effect on those who wear them. Despite a lack of scientific evidence to support claims that commercially available magnetic therapy devices work, wearable magnets remain extremely popular. Global sale of therapeutic magnets is estimated to be at least $1 billion a year.

Magnetic therapy dates back at least 2,000 years. Folk healers in Europe and Asia are believed to have used magnets to try to treat a variety of ailments. These healers may have believed that magnets could actually draw disease from the body. Regardless, the therapeutic magnets sold to ease aches and pains have magnetic fields that are generally too weak to penetrate your skin. This can be tested by observing the weak interaction between a magnetic shoe insert and a paperclip when separated by a sock. Human skin is about 3mm deep, thicker than some socks.

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