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Polymorphism and Elastic Response of Molecular Materials from First Principles: How Hard Can it Be? ANTHONY REILLY, ALEXANDRE TKATCHENKO, Fritz-Haber-Institut der MPG, Berlin — Molecular materials are of great fundamental and applied importance in science and industry, with numerous applications in pharmaceuticals, electronics, sensing, and catalysis. A key challenge for theory has been the prediction of their stability, polymorphism and response to perturbations. While pairwise models of van der Waals (vdW) interactions have improved the ability of density functional theory (DFT) to model these systems, substantial quantitative and even qualitative failures remain. In this contribution we show how a many-body description of vdW interactions can dramatically improve the accuracy of DFT for molecular materials, yielding quantitative description of stabilities and polymorphism for these challenging systems. Moreover, the role of many-body vdW interactions goes beyond stabilities to response properties. In particular, we have studied the elastic properties of a series of molecular crystals, finding that many-body vdW interactions can account for up to 30% of the elastic response, leading to quantitative and qualitative changes in elastic behavior. We will illustrate these crucial effects with the challenging case of the polymorphs of aspirin, leading to a better understanding of the conflicting experimental and theoretical studies of this system.

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