

Avoiding Stiction

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- Reduce droplet area via mechanical design approaches

- Avoid liquid-vapor meniscus formation
 - Use solvents that sublime
 - Use vapor-phase sacrificial layer etch
- Modify surfaces to change the meniscus shape from concave (small contact angle) to convex (large contact angle)
 - Use teflon-like films
 - Use hydrophobic self-assembled monolayers (SAMs)

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Supercritical CO₂ Drying

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- A method for stictionless drying of released microstructures by immersing them in CO₂ at its supercritical point
- Basic Strategy:** Eliminate surface tension-derived sticking by avoiding a liquid-vapor meniscus
- Procedure:**
 - Etch oxide in solution of HF
 - Rinse thoroughly in DI water, but do not dry
 - Transfer the wafer from water to methanol
 - Displace methanol w/ liquid CO₂
 - Apply heat & pressure to take the CO₂ past its critical pt.
 - Vent to lower pressure and allow the supercritical CO₂ to revert to gas → liquid-to-gas transition in supercritical region means no capillary forces to cause stiction

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Hydrophilic Versus Hydrophobic

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contact angle

- Hydrophilic:**
 - A surface that invites wetting by water
 - Get stiction
 - Occurs when the contact angle $\theta_{\text{water}} < 90^\circ$
- Hydrophobic:**
 - A surface that repels wetting by water
 - Avoids stiction
 - Occurs when the contact angle $\theta_{\text{water}} > 90^\circ$

Hydrophilic case

Hydrophobic case

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Tailoring Contact Angle Via SAM's

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- Can reduce stiction by tailoring surfaces so that they induce a water contact angle $> 90^\circ$

Self-Assembled Monolayers (SAM's):

- Monolayers of "stringy" molecules covalently bonded to the surface that then raise the contact angle

OTS

CH3(CH2)17SiCl3

	θ_{water}
ODT SAM	$112 \pm 0.7^\circ$
SiO ₂	$< 10^\circ$

- Beneficial characteristics:**
 - Conformal, ultrathin
 - Low surface energy
 - Covalent bonding makes them wear resistant
 - Thermally stable (to a point)

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Dry Release

- Another way to avoid stiction is to use a dry sacrificial layer
- For an oxide sacrificial layer
 - ☞ use HF vapor phase etching
 - ☞ **Additional advantage:** gas can more easily get into tiny gaps
 - ☞ **Issue:** not always completely dry → moisture can still condense → stiction → **soln:** add alcohol
- For a polymer sacrificial layer
 - ☞ Use an O₂ plasma etch (isotropic, so it can undercut well)
 - ☞ **Issues:**
 - ☛ Cannot be used when structural material requires high temperature for deposition
 - ☛ If all the polymer is not removed, polymer under the suspended structure can still promote stiction

Released via vapor phase HF [Kenny, et al., Stanford]

[Kobayashi]

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Residual Stress

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Residual Stress in Thin Films

- After release, poorly designed microstructures might buckle, bend, or warp → often caused by residual film stress
- Origins of residual stress, σ
 - ☞ Growth processes
 - ☛ Non-equilibrium deposition
 - ☛ Grain morphology change
 - ☛ Gas entrapment
 - ☛ Doping
 - ☞ Thermal stresses
 - ☛ Thermal expansion mismatch of materials → introduce stress during cool-down after deposition
 - ☛ Annealing

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Need to Control Film Stress

- Resonance frequency expression for a lateral resonator:

$$f_0 \approx \frac{1}{2\pi} \sqrt{\frac{4E_y t W^3}{ML^3} + \frac{24\sigma_r t W}{5ML}}$$

↑ Basic term ↑ Stress term

Since $W \ll L$, the stress term will dominate if $\sigma_r \sim E_y$

E_y = Young's modulus
 σ_r = stress
 t = thickness
 W = beam width
 L = beam length
 M = mass

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Tensile Versus Compressive Stress

- Under **tensile stress**, a film wants to shrink w/r to its substrate
 - Caused, e.g., by differences in film vs. substrate thermal expansion coefficients
 - If suspended above a substrate and anchored to it at two points, the film will be "stretched" by the substrate
- Under **compressive stress**, a film wants to expand w/r to its substrate
 - If suspended above a substrate and anchored to it at two points, the film will buckle over the substrate

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Vertical Stress Gradients

- Variation of residual stress in the direction of film growth
- Can warp released structures in z-direction

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Stress in Polysilicon Films

- Stress depends on crystal structure, which in turn depends upon the deposition temperature
- Temperature $\leq 600^\circ\text{C}$
 - Films are initially amorphous, then crystallize
 - Get equiaxed crystals, largely isotropic
 - Crystals have higher density \rightarrow tensile stress
 - Small stress gradient
- Temperature $\geq 600^\circ\text{C}$
 - Columnar crystals grow during deposition
 - As crystals grow vertically and in-plane they push on neighbors \rightarrow compressive stress
 - Positive stress gradient

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Annealing Out Polysilicon Stress

- Control polySi stress by annealing at high temperatures
 - Typical anneal temperatures: $900\text{--}1150^\circ\text{C}$
 - Grain boundaries move, relax
 - Can dope while annealing by sandwiching the polysilicon between similarly doped oxides (symmetric dopant drive-in), e.g. using 10-15 wt. % PSG
- Rapid thermal anneal (RTA) also effective (surprisingly)

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Topography Issues

Degradation of lithographic resolution
↳ PR step coverage, streaking

Thickness differences pose problems for reduction steppers

Stringers
↳ Problematic when using anisotropic etching, e.g., RIE

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Nickel Surface-Micromachining Process Flow

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Electroplating: Metal MEMS

- Use electroplating to obtain metal μ structures
- When thick: call it "LIGA"
- Pros:** fast low temp deposition, very conductive
- Cons:** drift, low mech. Q
↳ but may be solvable?

RF Switch

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Nickel Metal Surface-Micromachining

- Deposit isolation LTO:
 - ↳ Target = $2\mu\text{m}$
 - ↳ 1 hr. 40 min. LPCVD @ 450°C
- Densify the LTO
 - ↳ Anneal @ 950°C for 30 min.
- Define metal interconnect via lift-off
 - ↳ Spin photoresist and pattern lithographically to open areas where interconnect will stay
 - ↳ Evaporate a Ti/Au layer
 - ↳ Target = 30nm Ti
 - ↳ Target = 270nm Au
 - ↳ Remove photoresist in PRS2000 → Ti/Au atop the photoresist also removed

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Nickel Metal Surface-Micromachining

- Evaporate Al to serve as a sacrificial layer
 - Target = $1\mu\text{m}$
- Lithography to define anchor openings
- Wet etch the aluminum to form anchor vias
 - Use solution of $\text{H}_3\text{PO}_4/\text{HNO}_3/\text{H}_2\text{O}$
- Remove photoresist in PRS2000
- Electroplate nickel to fill the anchor vias
 - Use solution of nickel sulfamate @ 50°C
 - Time the electroplating to planarize the surface

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Nickel Metal Surface-Micromachining

- Evaporate a thin film of nickel to serve as a seed layer for subsequent Ni electroplating
 - Target = 20nm
- Form a photoresist mold for subsequent electroplating
 - Spin $6\mu\text{m}$ -thick AZ 9260 photoresist
 - Lithographically pattern the photoresist to delineate areas where nickel structures are to be formed
- Electroplate nickel structural material through the PR mold
 - Use a solution of nickel sulfamate @ 50°C
 - Cathode-to-anode current density $\sim 2.5\text{ mA/cm}^2$

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Nickel Metal Surface-Micromachining

- Strip the PR in PRS2000
- Remove the Ni seed layer in Ni wet etchant
- Release the structures
 - Use a $\text{K}_4\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6/\text{NaOH}$ etchant that attacks Al while leaving Ni and Au intact
 - Etch selectivity $> 100:1$ for Al:Ni and Al:Au

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Nickel Surface-Micromachining Example

- Below: Surface-micromachined in nickel using the described process flow

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3D "Pop-up" MEMS

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Pop-Up MEMS

5µm

plate

staple

pin

First MEMS hinge
[K. Pister, et al., 1992]

Corner Cube Reflector
[v. Hsu, 1999]

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Pop-Up MEMS

- **Pictured:** hinged Campanile made in SUMMiT process, assembled using probes [Elliot Hui, et al.]

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3D Direct-Assembled Tunable L

[Ming Wu, UCLA]

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Hinge Process Flow

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Deposit first sacrificial
Deposit and pattern first poly

Deposit and pattern second sacrificial

Pattern contacts
Deposit and pattern second poly

Etch sacrificial
Assemble part

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"Foundry" MEMS: The MUMPS Process

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MUMPS: MultiUser MEMS Process

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- Originally created by the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina (MCNC) → now owned by MEMSCAP in France
- Three-level polysilicon surface micromachining process for prototyping and "foundry" services
- Designed to service as many users as possible; basically an attempt to provide a universal MEMS process
- 8 photomasks
- \$4,900 for 1 cm² dies

Micromotor fabricated via MUMPS

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MUMPS: MultiUser MEMS Process

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Micromotor Example

Material Layer	Thickness (μm)	Lithography Level Name
Nitride	0.6	—
Poly 0	0.5	POLY0 (HOLE0)
First Oxide	2.0	DIMPLE ANCHOR1
Poly 1	2.0	POLY1 (HOLE1)
Second Oxide	0.75	POLY1_POLY2_VIA ANCHOR2
Poly 2	1.5	POLY2 (HOLE2)
Metal	0.5	METAL (HOLEM)

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Masks in polyMUMPS

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Minimum set of masks that must be used in MUMPS

Mnemonic level name	Field type	Purpose
POLY0	light	pattern ground plane
ANCHOR1	dark	open holes for Poly 1 to Nitride or Poly 0 connection
DIMPLE	dark	create dimples/bushings for Poly 1
POLY1	light	pattern Poly 1
POLY1_POLY2_VIA	dark	open holes for Poly 1 to Poly 2 connection
ANCHOR2	dark	open holes for Poly 2 to Nitride or Poly 0 connection
POLY2	light	pattern Poly 2
METAL	light	pattern Metal
HOLE0	dark	provide holes for POLY0
HOLE1	dark	provide release holes for POLY1
HOLE2	dark	provide release holes for POLY2
HOLEM	dark	provide release holes in METAL

Extra masks for more flexibility & ease of release

- Field type:
 - Light (or clear) field (cf): in layout, boxes represent features that will stay through fabrication
 - Dark field (df): in layout, boxes represent holes to be cut out

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MUMPS Process Flow

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- Deposit PSG on the starting n-type (100) wafers
- Anneal to heavily dope the wafers
- Remove the PSG
- LPCVD 600 nm of low stress nitride
- LPCVD 500 nm of polysilicon
- Lithography using the POLY0(cf) mask and RIE etching to pattern the poly0 ground plane layer
- LPCVD 2 μm of PSG as the 1st sacrificial layer
- Lithography using the DIMPLE(df) mask (align to poly0)
- RIE 750 nm deep to form dimple vias
- Lithography using the ANCHOR1(df) mask (align to poly0)
- RIE anchor vias down to the nitride surface

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MUMPS Process Flow (cont.)

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- LPCVD 2 μm undoped polysilicon
- LPCVD 200 nm of PSG
- Anneal for 1 hr. @ 1050°C
 - This both dopes the polysilicon and reduces its residual stress
- Lithography using the POLY1(cf) mask to define structures (align to anchor1)
- RIE the PSG to create a hard mask first, then ...
- RIE the polysilicon
- LPCVD 750 nm of PSG
- Lithography using the P1_P2_VIA(df) mask to define contacts to the poly1 layer (align to poly1)

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MUMPS Process Flow (cont.)

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- Recoat with photoresist and do lithography using the ANCHOR2(df) mask to define openings where poly2 contacts nitride or poly0 (align to poly0)
- RIE the PSG at ANCHOR2 openings
- LPCVD 1.5 μm undoped polysilicon
- LPCVD 200 nm PSG as a hard mask and doping source
- Anneal for 1 hr @ 1050°C to dope the polysilicon and reduce residual stress
- Lithography using the POLY2(cf) mask (align to anchor2)
- RIE PSG hard mask
- RIE poly2 film
- Remove PR and hard mask

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MUMPS Process Flow (cont.)

- Lithography using the METAL (df) mask (align to poly2)
- Evaporate titanium (Ti) (as an adhesion layer for gold)
- Evaporate gold (Au)
- Liftoff to remove PR and define metal interconnects
- Coat wafers with protective PR
- Dice wafers
- Ship to customer
- Customer releases structures by dipping and agitating dies in a 48.8 wt. % HF solution or via vapor phase HF
- Anti-stiction dry, if needed

Final Structure: Micromotor

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Micromotor fabricated via MUMPS

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polyMUMPS Minimum Feature Constraints

- Minimum feature size
 - Determined by MUMPS' photolithographic resolution and alignment precision
 - Violations result in missing (unanchored), under/oversized, or fused features
 - Use minimum feature only when absolutely necessary

	Nominal [μm]	Min Feature [μm]	Min Spacing [μm]
POLY0, POLY1, POLY2	3	2	2
POLY1_POLY2_VIA	3	2	2
ANCHOR1, ANCHOR2	3	3	2
DIMPLE	3	2	3
METAL	3	3	3
HOLE1, HOLE2	4	3	3
HOLEM	5	4	4

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MUMPS Design Rules (cont.)

Rule	Rule Letter	Figure #	Min. Value (μm)
POLY0 space to ANCHOR1	A	2.5	4.0
POLY0 enclose ANCHOR1	B	2.5	4.0
POLY0 enclose POLY1	C	2.6	4.0
POLY0 enclose POLY2	D	2.7	5.0
POLY0 enclose ANCHOR2	E	2.8	5.0
POLY0 space to ANCHOR2	F	2.8	5.0

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