

15. The acceleration due to gravity is given by $a_g = GM/r^2$, where M is the mass of Earth and r is the distance from Earth's center. We substitute $r = R + h$, where R is the radius of Earth and h is the altitude, to obtain $a_g = GM/(R + h)^2$. We solve for h and obtain $h = \sqrt{GM/a_g} - R$. According to Appendix C, $R = 6.37 \times 10^6$ m and $M = 5.98 \times 10^{24}$ kg, so

$$h = \sqrt{\frac{(6.67 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^3/\text{s}^2 \cdot \text{kg})(5.98 \times 10^{24} \text{ kg})}{4.9 \text{ m/s}^2}} - 6.37 \times 10^6 \text{ m} = 2.6 \times 10^6 \text{ m} .$$