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PROCESS FOR THE ISOMERIZATION OF DIMETHYL CIS-1,4-CYCLOHEXANEDICARBOXYLATE TO THE TRANS-ISOMER

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A process for isomerizing a mixture of cis- and trans-dimethyl 1,4-cyclohexanedicarboxylate containing a high content of the cis-isomer to mixtures containing much larger amounts of the trans-isomer by heating the original mixture in the presence of an acidic catalyst which is insoluble in the mixture of cis- and trans-isomers. The insoluble catalyst can be removed from the reaction mixture by filtration or decantation, permitting either the substantially pure trans-isomer or at least a mixture of cis- and trans-isomers uncontaminated with the catalyst to be recovered. The ratio of catalyst employed with respect to the cis- and trans-mixture may range from about 0.005 to 1.0. When operating at atmospheric pressure heating may be at a temperature of 200–265° C. Carrying out the reaction at super-atmospheric pressures permits the use of higher temperatures.