
CMSC 498M: Chapter 11

Game Physics

Reading:

- [Game Physics](#), by David H. Eberly, 2004
- [Physics for Game Developers](#), by David M. Bourg, 2002
- [Bullet Physics](http://bulletphysics.org/) (<http://bulletphysics.org/>)

Overview:

- Basic physical concepts
- Kinematics for particles and rigid bodies
- Kinetics
- Collisions and motion constraints
- The Bullet physics library

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Game Physics: Basic Concepts

Basic Issues:

Kinematics: The study of motion (ignoring forces). How does acceleration affect velocity? How does velocity affect position?

Particle: A point-mass. Body rotation ignored

Rigid body: Rotation of the body needs to be considered

Force: Objects change motion only when forces are applied

Contact vs. field forces: Hitting a baseball vs. gravity or magnetism

Torque: Force that induces rotation

Environmental sources: Friction, buoyancy, drag/lift

Kinetics: (also called **Dynamics**) The effect of force on motion

Non-rigid Objects:

- **Joints and constraints:** Rag-doll physics, mass-spring systems

- **Flexible objects:** Soft bodies, meshes, cloth, hair

Complex Motion: Fluid dynamics, smoke, particle systems

Collisions: Detection and response

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Applications of Physics in Games

Flight simulators
Sports/Racing
Combat Simulation
many others...



Major League Baseball 2K6



EF2000



WRC4



LiveForSpeed



Age of Empires III

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Game Physics: Kinetics

Kinetics: How do forces effect the motion of an object

Projectiles: (e.g., bullets, cannon balls)

- Body **rotation may be negligible** or totally ignored
- Effects due to **gravity, wind, air resistance**

Aircraft: (e.g., for flight simulators)

- **Full 3D motion** modeling
- Effects due to **lift, drag, turbulence**
- Control issues (how do ailerons, flaps, rudder affect motion)

Ships: (and floating objects)

- **Buoyancy and flotation**
- Motion resistance and **fluid dynamics**

Cars: (e.g. for racing games)

- Friction, **road resistance, breaking, skidding, drifting**
- Effects of road **banking**
- **Crashing** and **tumbling**

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Game Physics: Mathematics

Units and measures:

- **Type-checking** for physicists
- **English or metric?** Important to keep these straight

3-dimensional geometry:

- **Basic representations:** Scalars, points, vectors, matrices, tensors (we won't discuss tensors)
- **3D geometric processing:**
 - Linear/affine transformations
 - Dot and cross product of vectors
 - Rotation and quaternions

Calculus: Although derivations involve understanding of calculus, most computations just use basic constructs

Differential calculus: finite differences

Integral calculus: finite summations

Differential equations: simulated using small time steps

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Physical Quantities and Units

Basic Quantities:

Measure	English	Metric (SI)
Mass	Slug	Kilogram (kg)
Length	Foot (ft)	Meter (m)
Time	Second (s)	Second (s)



Examples of Other Quantities:

Measure	English	Metric (SI)
Force	Pound (lb)	Newton (N)
Pressure	lb/ft ²	N/m ²
Velocity	ft/s	m/s

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Basics: Newton's Laws

Isaac Newton's Laws of Motion: (circa 1687)

Law I: A body tends to **remain at rest** or continue to move in a **straight line at constant velocity**, unless it is acted upon by an external force (Inertia)

Law II: The **acceleration** of a body is proportional to the resultant **force** acting on the body, and this acceleration is in the same direction as the force ($F = ma$)

Law III: For every force acting on a body (**action**) there is an equal and oppositely directed reacting force (**reaction**)

Relevance: Most of game physics involves implementing **Newton's laws**



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Rigid Body Physics

Rigid Bodies:

- **No moving parts**, no hinges, no flexibility
- Very **simple** to analyze/model
- Unlike a point masses, need to consider **rotation**
- Complex objects can often be modeled as **systems of rigid bodies**



Rigid Body Properties:

Mass: (scalar)

- the **amount of matter**
- the degree of **resistance to change in motion** (inertial mass)

Center of Mass (or gravity): (point/vector)

- **central point** about which rotations occur
- need not lie within the body (if the body is nonconvex)

(Mass) **Moment of Inertia:** (scalar)

- the **resistance to rotational motion** about a given axis (scalar form)

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Kinematics: Speed and Velocity

Speed and Velocity:

Average Speed: Let s denote the object's position and t denote time. Assuming motion along a line, speed is the change in **position** Δs over some **time interval** Δt :

$$v = \frac{\Delta s}{\Delta t}.$$



Units: Speed is often measured in feet per second (ft/s), miles per hour (mi/h), meters per second (m/s), etc

Instantaneous speed: If speed varies with time, we need to consider the limit for **differential** (infinitely small) **time intervals**:

$$v = \lim_{\Delta t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\Delta s}{\Delta t} = \frac{ds}{dt}.$$

Velocity: Is a **vector-valued** quantity, whose **magnitude is the speed** and whose direction indicates the **direction of motion**

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Kinematics: Acceleration

Acceleration: Change in speed over time

Average Acceleration: Change in **speed** Δv over some **time** Δt

$$a = \frac{\Delta v}{\Delta t}$$

Instantaneous acceleration: If speed varies with time, we need to consider the limit for **differential** (infinitely small) time intervals:

$$a = \lim_{\Delta t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\Delta v}{\Delta t} = \frac{dv}{dt}$$

Units: Acceleration is measured in ft/s², mi/h², m/s², etc



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Kinematics: Relationships

Relating Position, Velocity, and Acceleration:

Position and Velocity: By definition, $v(t) = ds/dt$. Suppose that an object moves from position s_0 to s_1 during the time period t_0 to t_1 . We have:

$$\begin{aligned} ds &= v(t) dt \\ \int_{s_0}^{s_1} ds &= \int_{t_0}^{t_1} v(t) dt \\ \Delta s &= s_1 - s_0 = \int_{t_0}^{t_1} v(t) dt \end{aligned}$$

We sometimes drop the parameter t and just write " v " here.

Velocity and Acceleration: By similar argument we have:

$$\Delta v = v_1 - v_0 = \int_{t_0}^{t_1} a(t) dt$$

All three: We also have:

$$a = \frac{dv}{dt} = \frac{d^2s}{dt^2} \quad \text{and} \quad v(t) dv = a(t) ds$$

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Angular Velocity

Rigid Body Rotation:

- So far we have only discussed **translation**, which would be fine if all objects were treated as **particles** (point-mass)
- For a complete understanding, we must consider **rotation**
- Rotation occurs about:
 - the object's **center of mass** and
 - some **axis of rotation** (which may change depending on forces)

Plane Kinematics:

- All rotation occurs about a **fixed axis of rotation** in 3-space (i.e., on a plane orthogonal to that axis)
- Good enough for many $2\frac{1}{2}$ -dimensional games (e.g. Mario Bros)



General Kinematics:

- 3D rotation: **Euler angles** and **quaternions**

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Plane Kinematics: Object State

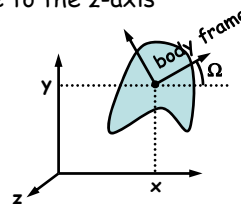
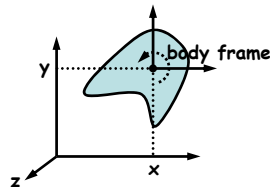
Local Coordinate Frame:

- We select a coordinate frame so that **z-axis** is aligned with the **axis of rotation**

Object Orientation:

To specify an object's location in space:

- Location of its **center of mass**: (x, y, z) coordinates in local frame.
- Current **angle of rotation** Ω relative to the z-axis



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Plane Kinematics: Angular Velocity & Acceleration

Each of the quantities for translational motion has a **counterpart** in angular motion (m = meters, s = seconds, r = radians)

Translational Motion			Angular Motion		
Quantity	Symbol	Dims.	Quantity	Symbol	Dims.
Position	s	m	Angle of orientation	Ω	r
Velocity	v	m/s	Angular velocity	ω	r/s
Acceleration	a	m/s ²	Angular acceleration	α	r/s ²

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Plane Kinematics: Angular Velocity & Acceleration

Analogs:

- The equations relating translational (linear) motion have **counterparts** for angular motion:

Translational motion

$$\begin{aligned}
 v &= ds/dt \\
 a &= dv/dt = d^2s/dt^2 \\
 s &= \int v \, dt \\
 v &= \int a \, dt \\
 v \, dv &= a \, ds
 \end{aligned}$$



Angular motion

$$\begin{aligned}
 \omega &= d\Omega/dt \\
 \alpha &= d\omega/dt = d^2\Omega/dt^2 \\
 \Omega &= \int \omega \, dt \\
 \omega &= \int \alpha \, dt \\
 \omega \, d\omega &= \alpha \, d\Omega
 \end{aligned}$$

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Kinetics (a.k.a. Dynamics)

Kinematics:

- The study of motion in the **absence of force**

Kinetics (Dynamics):

- How do we **integrate forces** with mass to determine **motion**?

Force Basics:

Contact force: from impact, friction, buoyancy, pressure

Field force: from gravity and electromagnetism

Newton's Third Law: Forces come in **pairs** (action and reaction). We will usually compute just one, and the other is its negation.

Examples:

Springs - useful for handling collisions

Friction - braking, skidding, sliding

Dampers - motion resistors

Bouyancy - floating

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Kinetics (a.k.a. Dynamics)

Fundamental Equations of Motion:

Determined by **Newton's 2nd Law**

Force: $F = ma$

Torque: $M = I\alpha$

(Where I is **angular momentum** with respect to axis of rotation)

If force and torque vary over **time** these are given as **derivatives**:

Force: $F(t) = m (dv/dt)$

Torque: $M(t) = I (d\omega/dt)$

Kinetics for Games:

- Given a set of **objects and forces** acting on them (both applied and reactive), determine new **accelerations, velocities, and positions**



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Kinetics (a.k.a. Dynamics)

Typical Steps in a Kinetic Simulation System:

1. Calculate **body properties**: mass, center of mass, moment of inertia
2. For each body, identify/quantify all **forces/torques**:
 - a. This will generally involve **collision detection** and **collision response**, to be discussed later
 - b. Calculate the **vector sums** of all these forces
3. Solve **equations of motion** to determine **new object accelerations**
4. **Integrate accelerations** over time to determine **new velocities**
5. **Integrate velocities** over time to determine **new positions**
6. **Render** scene with new object positions



1. Body Properties



2a. Identify Forces



2b. Sum Forces



5. New Position

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Typical (Generic) Physics Engine Code

```
#include <...> // your standard includes
#include <SomePhysicsEngine.h> // your favorite physics engine
int main( ... ) {
    SPE::World* world; // create the root physics object
    SPE::Box* box = world->createBox( ); // create a box
    box->setPosition( 0, 5, 0 ); // initialize box position
    box->setSize( 1, 1, 1 ); // ... dimensions
    box->setMass( 1 ); // ... mass
    box->setLinearVelocity( 2, 3, -1 ); // ... and velocity
    for ( int i = 0; i < 100; i++ ) { // run 100 simulation steps
        box->setForce( 0, -9.8f, 0 ); // apply some force (e.g. gravity)
        world->update( 0.02f ); // advance time 0.02sec
        SPE::Vector3 pos = box->getPosition( ); // get current box location
        // ...insert code to redraw everything...
    }
    world->cleanup( ); // done---clean up
}
```

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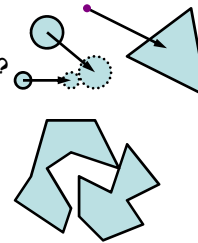
Collisions

Collisions:

- An important **source of forces** in games
- Can be **expensive**, since if there are n objects, there are $O(n^2)$ **possible colliding pairs** to test
- Requires **good data algorithms** to minimize calculations

Collision Detection:

- **Geometric primitives:** (By solving linear or quadratic equations.)
 - When does a moving **point hit a plane**?
 - When does a moving **line hit another line**?
 - When does a moving **sphere hit another sphere**?
- Combine these for more **complex objects**:
 - When does a polyhedral object hit another polyhedral object?

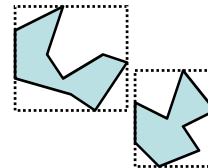


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Collision Detection

Efficient Collision Detection:

Bounding volumes: To simplify calculations, first test whether bounding volumes (e.g. box or sphere) intersect. If so, then apply **more complex tests**



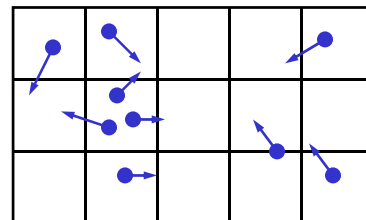
Examples:

AABB: Axis-aligned bounding box

MEB: Minimum enclosing ball

Spatial Index: Use a spatial index to **reduce** the number of intersecting pairs that need to be tested. Examples:

- **square grid**
- **quadtree** (more adaptive)
- **BSP-tree** (even more adaptive, but more complex)



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Collision Detection

Bounding-Volume Hierarchies:

- Good for **complex objects**
- Create a **tree** of enclosing shapes (e.g., AABBs)

Recursive Intersection Detection:

- Starting with the two tree roots, determine whether their **bounding boxes overlap**
- If they do, **recursively check their children** for overlaps
- Stop at the **leaf level**

```

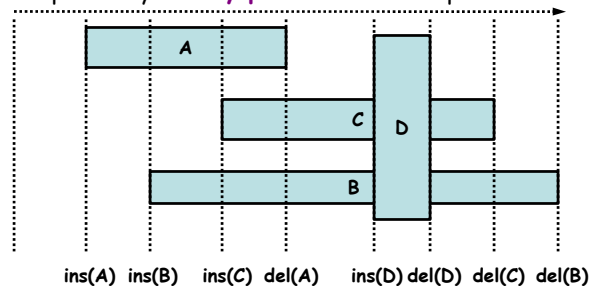
intersect(u, v) {
    if (bounds(u) ∩ bounds(v) = null)    // no overlap - return
        return null
    if (u.isLeaf() and v.isLeaf())        // both leaves - found a pair
        return {u, v}
    if (u.isLeaf()) swap u and v;         // make sure u is not a leaf
                                          // recursively find overlapping pairs
    return intersect(u.leftChild(), v) ∪ intersect(u.rightChild(), v)
}
    
```

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Collision Detection

Plane Sweep Algorithm:

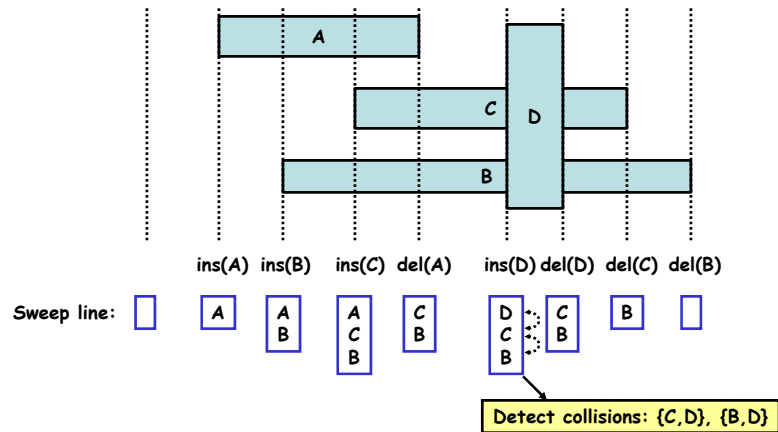
- Sweep the plane with a **vertical line**
- Maintain a data structure storing the objects that intersect the **sweep line** ordered from **top to bottom** based on their **top-most point**
- When new objects are **discovered**, add them to the **sweep line**
- Compare only **nearby pairs** on the sweep line for intersection



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Collision Detection

Plane Sweep Algorithm:



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Collision Response: Kinetic Energy

Collision Response:

- How do objects **react** to a collision?
- Depends on **masses** and **velocities**
- Also depends on the degree to which **kinetic energy** is conserved

Kinetic Energy:

- Defined to be $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$ ← We'll treat velocity as a scalar for now
- **Units:** $\text{kg m}^2/\text{s}^2 = 1 \text{ Newton-meter} = 1 \text{ joule (J)}$
- A collision is said to be **elastic** if kinetic energy is **preserved**
- Otherwise it is **inelastic** or **plastic**

Coefficient of Restitution:

- Most collisions are **neither purely elastic or purely plastic**
- **Coefficient of Restitution** (ϵ): Degree of elasticity in a collision. This is a property of the two **materials** involved
- $\epsilon \cong 1$: Highly elastic (ping-pong balls). $\epsilon \cong 0$: Highly plastic (soft clay)

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Collision Response: Impulse Force

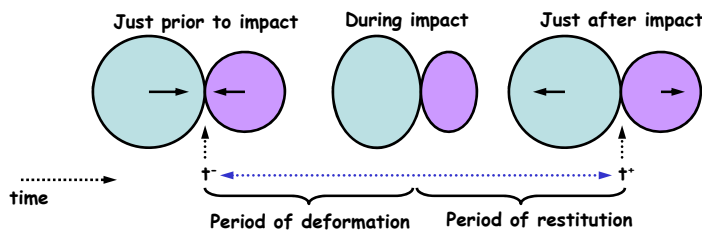
Impulse Force: A force that acts over a very short period of time.

Linear Impulse: Induces linear motion

Torque Impulse: Induces rotational motion

Impulse-Momentum Principle:

- When two objects collide, they are in contact for a **very short period**, and each exerts an **impulse** force on the other
- During collision time interval the objects **deform**. This results in some **loss of kinetic energy**. Then they **restore** to prior shape



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Collision Response: Linear Impulse

Response to Impulse:

- Recall: $F(t) = m (dv/dt)$, that is, $F(t) dt = m dv$
- Let $[t^-, t^+]$ denote the **small time interval** in which colliding objects are in contact
- **Integrating** over time:

$$\int_{t^-}^{t^+} F(t) dt = m \int_{v^-}^{v^+} dv = m(v^+ - v^-)$$

where v^- and v^+ are velocities at t^- and t^+ , respectively

Linear Impulse (Λ): Defined to be the **integral of force** over the time interval

$$\Lambda = \int_{t^-}^{t^+} F(t) dt$$

Equation of Linear Impulse: (Relates change in **momentum** to impulse force)

$$m \cdot v^+ = m \cdot v^- + \Lambda$$

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Collision Response: Example

Example: (Particles: no rotation)

- Consider two **spherical bodies** of masses m_1 and m_2 , that collide with respective **velocities** v_1^- and v_2^- . What are the velocities v_1^+ and v_2^+ **after collision**?



- If we knew the **linear impulse** Λ , we could use the equations of linear impulse to solve for v_1^+ and v_2^+

$$m_1 \cdot v_1^+ = m_1 \cdot v_1^- + \Lambda$$

$$m_2 \cdot v_2^+ = m_2 \cdot v_2^- - \Lambda$$

Observe that due to **reaction**, we use $-\Lambda$ for object 2

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Collision Response: Example

Example:

What's missing? The coefficient of restitution (ϵ)

Simple Definition: Velocities are measured along line of contact (n):

$$\epsilon = -\frac{v_1^+ - v_2^+}{v_1^- - v_2^-} \quad \epsilon = -\frac{(v_1^+ - v_2^+) \cdot n}{(v_1^- - v_2^-) \cdot n}$$

General (vector) Form:

Intuition: $(v_1 - v_2)$ is the **relative velocity** of the two objects. This fraction indicates the degree to which the relative velocities are **preserved** after collision.



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Collision Response: Example

Putting it together: Combining these equations we have the following (vector) equations

$$m_1 \cdot \mathbf{v}_1^+ = m_1 \cdot \mathbf{v}_1^- + \Lambda \quad (1)$$

$$m_2 \cdot \mathbf{v}_2^+ = m_2 \cdot \mathbf{v}_2^- - \Lambda \quad (2)$$

$$(\mathbf{v}_1^+ - \mathbf{v}_2^+) \cdot \mathbf{n} = -\varepsilon((\mathbf{v}_1^- - \mathbf{v}_2^-) \cdot \mathbf{n}) \quad (3)$$

Solving for impulse yields:

$$\Lambda = - \left(\frac{m_1 m_2 (1 + \varepsilon) ((\mathbf{v}_1^- - \mathbf{v}_2^-) \cdot \mathbf{n})}{m_1 + m_2} \right) \mathbf{n}$$

Vector dot product

Final impulse

Substituting Λ into (1) and (2) yields the final velocities $\mathbf{v}_1^+$ and $\mathbf{v}_2^+$ after collision

What about Angular Impulse (Torque)? Handled analogously

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Simple Motion Simulator

We have all the tools we need for a **simple motion simulator**.

- Assume motion **between** collision events can be computed **explicitly**
- If this is not true we need to resort to **integration** (later)

Simple Motion Simulator: A single step of the simulation

```

t ← getCurrentTime( )
collidingPairs ← getCollidingPairs( )
for each ( p,q ) in collidingPairs {
    calculate exact time tpq at which collision occurs
    calculate impulse force Λ           // as in previous example
    p.veloc ← p.veloc + Λ / p.mass      // by equation of linear impulse
    q.veloc ← q.veloc - Λ / q.mass
}
for each ( object p )
    update p's position based on velocities and elapsed time
    
```

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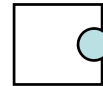
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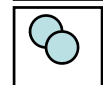
Motion Constraints

Real motion is subject to numerous constraints:

- Objects should not intersect **obstacles** in the environment



- Objects should not intersect **each other**



- **Link constraints:** Two objects must be at a fixed distance (E.g., wrist to elbow joint)



- **Angle constraints:** The angle determined by three objects should be within a certain range (E.g., wrist-elbow-shoulder angle from 0 and 180 degrees)



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Motion Constraints

How can we maintain constraints within our integrator?

Penalty springs: Insert stiff springs that offer resistance when constraints are violated (**Problem:** Possible instability)

Zero-Tolerance Policy: Process events exactly at the time they occur (**Problem:** Computationally expensive)

Relaxation: When constraints are violated, move to a state where the violation is lessened (A good compromise)



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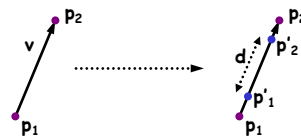
Constraints: Relaxation

Example 1: An object's x-coordinate must lie within [0,100]

- $x \leftarrow \text{updatePosition}()$
- if $(x < 0)$ $x \leftarrow 0$; if $(x > 100)$ $x \leftarrow 100$;

Example 2: Objects p_1 and p_2 must be at distance d of each other

- $p_1 \leftarrow p_1.\text{updatePosition}()$
- $p_2 \leftarrow p_2.\text{updatePosition}()$
- $v \leftarrow p_2 - p_1$ [vector from p_1 to p_2 .]
- $d' \leftarrow \text{sqrt}(v \cdot v)$ [length of vector v]
- $\gamma \leftarrow (d' - d)/(2d')$ [correction factor]
- $p'_1 \leftarrow p_1 - \gamma v$ [corrected position]
- $p'_2 \leftarrow p_2 + \gamma v$



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Constraints: Relaxation

Example 3: Obstacle avoidance for the link object p_1p_2

Idea 1: **Translate** the segment along the shortest vector from the obstacle

Idea 2: **Rotate** the segment about its farther endpoint to avoid the obstacle

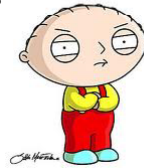
Idea 3: A **combination** of the above

Example 4: Articulated body

- Individual **joints** are modeled as particles
- Connecting **bones** are modeled as distance constraints
- Joint **angles** are modeled as 3-point angle constraints

Rag-Doll Physics:

- Forces applied to **any part** of the body are **transmitted** by these constraints to the **other joints**
- Result looks like a **stick-figure puppet**



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Multiple Constraints

Multiple Constrained Objects:

- Fixing one constraint violation may create a **new** constraint violation

Iterated local relaxation:

- Construct a **list of constraint violations**, involving small sets of objects (e.g. pairs)
- For each violation, compute a **minimal motion** that **resolves** the situation (and so satisfies the constraint)
- When done, go back and **repeat the process**. Repeat for some **fixed number** of iterations or until the system approaches a **stable configuration** (which may or may not be constraint-free)

Advantages:

- Easy to implement. Often works.

Disadvantages:

- No guarantees

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Overview

Basic physical concepts

Kinematics for particles

Kinematics for rigid bodies

Kinetics

Collisions

Motion Constraints

The Bullet Physics Library

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Bullet

Bullet Physics:

- Open-source **library** for **collision detection**, rigid and soft body **dynamics** (what we have called **kinetics**)

Features:

- Implemented in **C++**. Free for commercial use on **many platforms** including PLAYSTATION 3, XBox 360, Wii, PC, Linux, Mac OSX and iPhone
- Supports **collision detection**. Collision shapes include concave and convex meshes and all basic primitives
- Stable **rigid body dynamics** constraint solver including **vehicle** and **ragdoll** dynamics
- **Soft body dynamics** for cloth, rope and deformable shapes

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Bullet Basic Data Structures

Basic Data Structures:

Collision Data: Depend only on **object shape**, not on other physical properties, such as mass and velocity

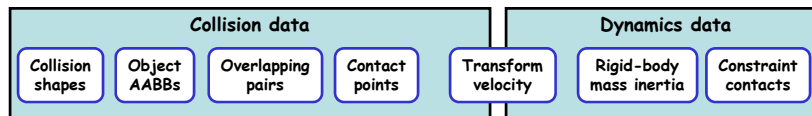
Collision shapes: Describe object extents

Axis-aligned Bounding Boxes (AABBs): Provide simple approximations to collision shapes

Overlapping pairs: Pairs of AABBs that overlap

Contact points: Computed exact collision points

Dynamics Data: Store **physical properties** such as mass, inertia, contact constraints, and joints.



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Bullet Processing Pipeline

Bullet Physics Pipeline: Executed by invoking "stepSimulation"

Apply gravity: Applies gravitational force to objects

Predict transforms: Predict current positions of objects

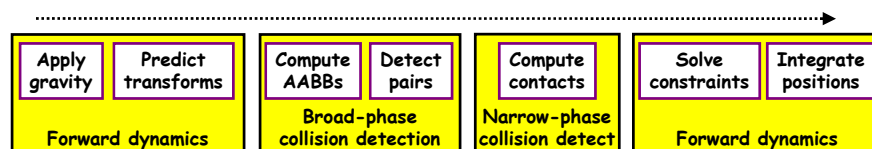
Compute AABBs: Computes bounding boxes

Detect pairs: Determine which AABBs overlap (possible collisions)

Compute contacts: Determine exact collisions

Solve constraints: Perform collision response with motion constraints

Integrate positions: Calculate new object positions and orientations



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Bullet: Basic Data Types

Bullet provides basic **math/geometry data types**:

btScalar: real-valued scalar

btVector3: vector in 3-space

(represented in homogeneous coordinates as a 4d vector)

btQuaternion/**btMatrix3x3**: representing rotations/linear transformations in 3-space

btTransform: an affine transformations (3d transformation plus rotation)

...and other **utilities**:

- Memory management
- Clock and performance profiling
- Debugging options

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Bullet: Collision Detection

Fast collision detection:

btCollisionObject: a **transformable object**

btCollisionShape: describes the shape of a **collision object** (e.g., box, sphere, convex hull, triangle mesh)

btCollisionWorld: stores **all collision objects** and provides an interface to perform **queries**

Broadphase collision detection: Efficient determination of pairs of **possibly intersecting pairs** based on axis-aligned bounding box (AABB) overlap:

btDbvtBroadphase: **bounding volume hierarchy** based on AABB trees

btAxisSweep3 and **bt32BitAxisSweep3**: **3D sweep and prune** approach

btCudaBroadphase: fast **uniform grid** using **GPU** graphics hardware for efficiency

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Bullet: Further Topics

Further topics (to be added):

Rigid-body Dynamics: Specifying how objects **respond** to **forces** and **collisions**

Motion Constraints: Specifying **constraints** on the motion of two or more objects (e.g., due to sharing a common joint)

Soft-body Dynamics: Specifying how **flexible bodies** (cloth, e.g.) behave

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Summary

Summary:

- Basic physical concepts
- Kinematics for particles and rigid bodies
- Kinetics (Dynamics)
- Collisions and motion constraints
- Bullet physics library

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