

Robotics: Rigid body motion

Vladimír Petrík

vladimir.petrik@cvut.cz

22.09.2025

What is robot?





Mobilní robot, UGV - unmanned ground vehicle



Flying robots (e.g. drones)



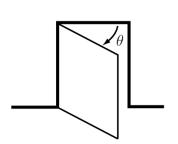
Walking robots (e.g. humanoids)



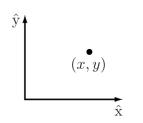
Manipulators (např. Franka Emika Panda)

Robot configuration

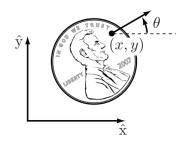
▶ Complete specification of the position of every point of the robot.



The configuration is described by the angle θ .



Point in plane is described by two coordinates.



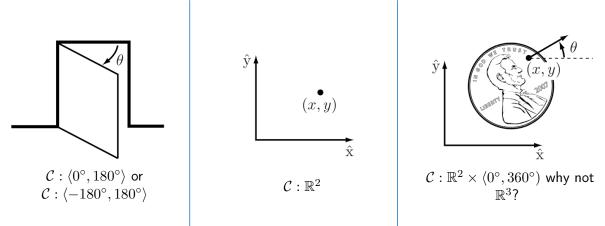
Planar rigid object configuration consists of the position and orientation.

Degrees of freedom (DoF)

- ► The minimum number of real-valued coordinates needed to represent the configuration.
 - door: 1
 - planar point: 2
 - planar rigid object: 3
 - manipulators: from 1 (e.g. rotating table) to tens (e.g. humanoids)
- Determining DoF
 - (sum of freedom of the points) (number of independent constraints)
 - Rigid objects how it is defined?
 - ▶ The distance between any two given points on a rigid body remains constant
 - Exercise: write constraints for N points of planar rigid object
 - ► For some robots, determining number of DoF is non-trivial

Configuration space - $\mathcal C$

- ▶ The N-dimensional space (N correspond to number of DoF)
- Every point of configuration space correspond to one configuration
- Contains all possible configurations of the robot



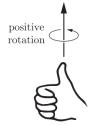


Rigid body motion in plane

 \hat{y}_{b} \hat{y}_{b}

- ► We attach a **body** frame to rigid body
 - Usually placed in the center of mass (but not required)
 - Can be placed outside of the body
 - ▶ Body frame is not moving w.r.t. to the body
- ▶ We select a fixed reference frame
 - center of the room
 - corner of the table
 - base of the manipulator
- ► All frames are right-handed







Rigid body motion in plane

- ► The configuration of body is given by
 - position of body frame w.r.t. reference frame
 - orientation of body frame w.r.t. reference frame
- Body frame origin

$$p = p_x \hat{\boldsymbol{x}}_s + p_y \hat{\boldsymbol{y}}_s \in \mathbb{R}^2$$

- ▶ If reference frame is clear from the context: $p = (p_x, p_y)^{\top}$
- Orientation
 - Angle $\theta \in \langle 0^{\circ}, 360^{\circ} \rangle$
 - Convenient for next computations:

$$\hat{\boldsymbol{x}}_b = +\cos\theta\hat{\boldsymbol{x}}_s + \sin\theta\hat{\boldsymbol{y}}_s$$

$$\hat{\boldsymbol{y}}_{\boldsymbol{b}} = -\sin\theta\hat{\boldsymbol{x}}_{\boldsymbol{s}} + \cos\theta\hat{\boldsymbol{y}}_{\boldsymbol{s}}$$

Rotation matrix
$$R = (\hat{x}_b, \hat{y}_b) = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta & -\sin \theta \\ \sin \theta & \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}$$



{b}

 $\{s\}$

SO(2)

- R has 4 numbers but only 1 DoF 3 independent constraints
 - both columns are unit vectors
 - columns are orthogonal to each other
- ▶ Set of all rotation matrix is SO(2) group, i.e. $R \in SO(2)$
 - Special Orthogonal group
 - det(R) = 1
 - $ightharpoonup RR^{ op} = I$, i.e. $R^{-1} = R^{ op}$
 - $ightharpoonup (R_1R_2) R_3 = R_1 (R_2R_3)$
 - ► For SO(2) $R_1R_2? = ?R_2R_1$
- Usage of rotation matrix
 - to represent an orientation of the frame
 - to change the reference frame in which a vector is represented
 - ▶ to rotate vector/frame

SE(2)

- ightharpoonup A pair (R_{ab}, \boldsymbol{p})
 - represents pose/configuration of the body
 - changes the reference frame of a vector $v_a = R_{ab}v_b + p$
 - ightharpoonup moves vector/frame (R, t)

$$oldsymbol{R}_{\mathsf{moved}} = R_{ab}R \quad oldsymbol{t}_{\mathsf{moved}} = R_{ab}oldsymbol{t} + oldsymbol{p}$$

- Alternatively, in homogeneous coordinates $T_{ab}=\begin{pmatrix} R_{ab} & \pmb{p} \\ \pmb{0}^\top & 1 \end{pmatrix} \in SE(2)$
 - Special Euclidean Group
 - represents both translation and rotation in a single matrix
 - $\mathbf{v}_{a}^{\dot{H}} = T_{ab}\mathbf{v}_{b}^{H}$
 - $(T_1T_2)T_3 = T_1(T_2T_3)$
 - $T_1T_2? = ? \neq T_2T_1$
 - Inverse T^{-1}
 - computing inverse of a matrix is costly

$$T^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} R^{\top} & -R^{\top} \mathbf{t} \\ \mathbf{0}^{\top} & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

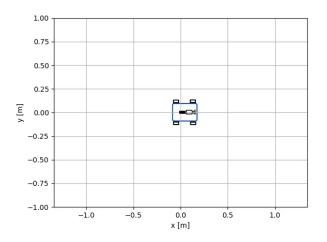


 $\{s\}$

{b}

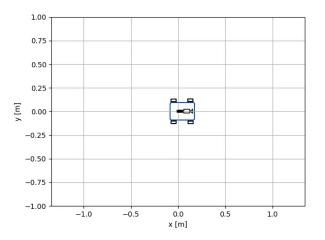
SE(2) example

$$T_{\mathsf{next}} = T_{\mathsf{current}} T_x(\delta_x) \qquad T_{\mathsf{next}} = T_{\mathsf{current}} T_\theta(\delta_\theta) \qquad T_{\mathsf{next}} = T_{\mathsf{current}} T_x(\delta_x)$$
 Delta transformations are defined in robot frame.



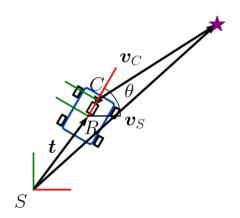
SE(2) example

 $T_{\rm next} = T_x(\delta_x) T_{\rm current} \qquad T_{\rm next} = T_\theta(\delta_\theta) T_{\rm current} \qquad T_{\rm next} = T_x(\delta_x) T_{\rm current}$ Delta transformations are defined in reference frame.



SE(2) example camera

$$T_{SR} = egin{pmatrix} R(heta) & m{t} \\ m{o}^{ op} & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$
 $T_{RC} = egin{pmatrix} I & \left(0.1 & 0
ight)^{ op} \\ m{o}^{ op} & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ How to compute $m{v}_S$? $T_{SC} = T_{SR}T_{RC}$ $m{v}_S = T_{SC}m{v}_C$



Extending to SO(3) and SE(3)

- ► *SO*(3)
 - $ightharpoonup \det(R) = 1$

$$RR^{\top} = I$$
. i.e. $R^{-1} = R^{\top}$

$$(R_1 R_2) R_3 = R_1 (R_2 R_3)$$

- $ightharpoonup R_1 R_2? = ? \neq R_2 R_1 \text{ obecně}$
- ► *SE*(3)
 - $\mathbf{v}_a^H = T_{ab} \mathbf{v}_b^H$
 - $(T_1T_2) T_3 = T_1 (T_2T_3)$
 - $T_1T_2 \neq T_2T_1$
 - $T^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} R^{\top} & -R^{\top} \mathbf{t} \\ \mathbf{0}^{\top} & 1 \end{pmatrix}$

How to compute $R \in SO(3)$?

ightharpoonup Composing rotations around the x,y,z axes

$$R_x(\theta) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \cos \theta & -\sin \theta \\ 0 & \sin \theta & \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}$$

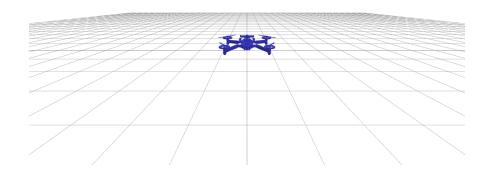
$$R_y(\theta) = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta & 0 & \sin \theta \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ -\sin \theta & 0 & \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}$$

$$R_z(\theta) = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta & -\sin \theta & 0 \\ \sin \theta & \cos \theta & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

► From other representations of rotations

Example of SE(3)

$$T_{\mathsf{next}} = TT_z(\delta_z)$$
 $T_{\mathsf{next}} = TR_z(\theta_z)$ $T_{\mathsf{next}} = TR_y(\theta_y)$ $T_{\mathsf{next}} = TT_x(\delta_x)$ $R_y, R_z \in SE(3)!$



Axis-angle representation

- $\boldsymbol{\rho} \in \mathbb{R}, \quad \hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}} \in \mathbb{R}^3, \quad \|\hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}}\| = 1$
- ightharpoonup Axis-angle to R
 - ► Rodrigues' formula $R(\hat{\omega}, \theta) = I + \sin \theta [\hat{\omega}] + (1 \cos \theta) [\hat{\omega}]^2$
 - Skew-symmetric matrix $[\boldsymbol{\omega}] = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -\omega_z & \omega_y \\ \omega_z & 0 & -\omega_x \\ -\omega_y & \omega_x & 0 \end{pmatrix}$
 - ightharpoonup Example: compute R_z
- ightharpoonup Axis-angle from R algorithm
 - ▶ If R = I then $\theta = 0$ and $\hat{\omega}$ is undefined.
 - ▶ If $\operatorname{tr} R = -1$ then $\theta = \pi$ and

$$\hat{\omega} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2(1+r_{33})}} \begin{pmatrix} r_{13} & r_{23} & 1+r_{33} \end{pmatrix}^{\top} \text{ if } r_{33} \neq -1$$

$$\hat{\omega} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2(1+r_{22})}} \begin{pmatrix} r_{12} & 1+r_{22} & r_{32} \end{pmatrix}^{\top} \text{ if } r_{22} \neq -1$$

$$\hat{\omega} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2(1+r_{11})}} \begin{pmatrix} 1+r_{11} & r_{21} & r_{31} \end{pmatrix}^{\top} \text{ if } r_{11} \neq -1$$

• Otherwise $\theta = \arccos\left(1/2\left(\operatorname{tr} R - 1\right)\right)$ and $\left[\hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}}\right] = \frac{1}{2\sin\theta}(R - R^{\top})$

Exponential coordinates

- ightharpoonup A single vector $\omega \in \mathbb{R}^3$
- Also called Euler vector or Euler-Rodrigues parameters
- ► Mapping to angle-axis representation:
 - ho $\theta = \|\omega\|$
 - $\hat{\omega} = \frac{\omega}{\theta}$
- ► Exponential to/from *R*
 - $ightharpoonup R = \exp \omega$: use Rodrigues' formula
 - $\omega = \log R$: use angle axis from R algorithm
- ► Why exponential?
 - lacktriangle it correspond to matrix exponential/logarithm of $[oldsymbol{\omega}]$
 - ightharpoonup if ω is angular velocity, its integration for one unit of time leads to exponential and the final orientation is R
 - numerically sensitive to small angles

Quaternions

- $\mathbf{p} \in \mathbb{R}^4, \quad \|\mathbf{q}\| = 1$
- ► From axis-angle

$$q_w = \cos\left(\theta/2\right)$$

$$\mathbf{q}_{xyz} = \hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}}\sin\left(\theta/2\right)$$

ightharpoonup From R

$$q_w = 1/2\sqrt{1 + \operatorname{tr} R}$$

$$\mathbf{q}_{xyz} = \frac{1}{4a_{xx}} \begin{pmatrix} r_{32} - r_{23} & r_{13} - r_{31} & r_{21} - r_{12} \end{pmatrix}^{\top}$$

- ightharpoonup To R
 - $R = \exp\left(2\arccos\left(q_w\right) \frac{q_{xyz}}{\|q_{xyz}\|}\right)$
 - i.e. rotate about q_{xyz} with $\theta = 2 \arccos(q_w)$
- ightharpoonup Quaternions are not unique, two solutions for the same R
- ► Numerically stable

Other representations

- Euler angles
 - ▶ three numbers $\theta_1, \theta_2, \theta_3$
 - ightharpoonup rotation about the x, y, or z axes
 - e.g. XYX Euler angles correspond to $R = R_x(\theta_1)R_y(\theta_2)R_x(\theta_3)$
 - lacktriangleright computing Euler angles from R is often numerically unstable and requires special algorithm for each triplet of axes
- ▶ 6D representation of rotation
 - represented by the first two columns of R
 - smooth representation
 - used in machine-learning (e.g. output of neural network)

Summary

- ightharpoonup Configuration Space C, DoF
- ▶ Planar rigid body motion SO(2) , SE(2)
- ▶ Spatial rigid body motion SO(3) , SE(3)
- Properties of rotation matrix in SO(2) and SO(3)
- Representation of spatial rotations
 - rotation matrix
 - axis-angle
 - exponential coordinates
 - quaternions
 - Euler angles
 - 6D representation

Laboratories goal

- Start implementing robotics toolbox
- https://robotics-labs.readthedocs.io/
- lacktriangle Utilities to work with SO(2) , SE(2) , SO(3) , SE(3)
 - $\triangleright \exp(\boldsymbol{\omega})$
 - $ightharpoonup \log(R)$
 - $ightharpoonup R^{-1}$
 - **•** ...
- Preparation
 - Linux and MiniConda are recommended
 - Install Miniconda
 - Install Python IDE (PyCharm, VSCode)