Chapter 1
Convex Analysis

Convex Optimization for Machine Learning & Computer Vision
WS 2018/19

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Last updated: 06.11.2018

Convex Set

Convex Optimization

Notations

- $\mathbb{E}$ is a *Euclidean space* (i.e., finite dimensional inner product space), equipped with
  1. Inner product $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$, e.g., $\langle u, v \rangle = u^\top v$ if $\mathbb{E} = \mathbb{R}^n$;
  2. Norm $\|\cdot\| = \sqrt{\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle}$ satisfying polarization identity:

$$2\|u\|^2 + 2\|v\|^2 = \|u + v\|^2 + \|u - v\|^2.$$

- C is a closed, convex subset of $\mathbb{E}$.
- J is a convex *objective* function.

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- J is a convex *objective* function.

Convex optimization

$$\text{minimize } J(u) \quad \text{over } u \in C.$$

First questions:

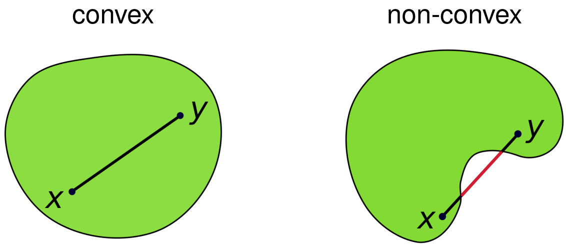
- What is a convex set?
- What is a convex function?

Convex set

Definition

A set C is said to be **convex** if

$$\alpha u + (1-\alpha)v \in C, \quad \forall u, v \in C,\ \forall \alpha \in [0,1].$$



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Recall basic concepts in analysis

Definition

- A set $C \subset \mathbb{E}$ is **open** if $\forall u \in C$, $\exists \epsilon > 0$ s.t. $B_\epsilon(u) \subset C$, where $B_\epsilon(u) := \{v \in \mathbb{E} : \|v - u\| < \epsilon\}$.
- A set $C \subset \mathbb{E}$ is **closed** if its complement $\mathbb{E} \backslash C$ is open.
- The **closure** of a set $C \subset \mathbb{E}$ is

$$\text{cl}\, C = \{u \in \mathbb{E} : \exists \{u^k\} \subset C \text{ s.t. } \lim_{k \to \infty} u^k = u\}.$$

- The **interior** of a set $C \subset \mathbb{E}$ is

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- The **interior** of a set $C \subset \mathbb{E}$ is

$$\text{int}\, C = \{u \in C : \exists \epsilon > 0 \text{ s.t. } B_\epsilon(u) \subset C\}.$$

- The **relative interior** of a set $C \subset \mathbb{E}$ is

$$\begin{aligned}\text{rint}\, C &:= \{u \in C : \exists \epsilon > 0 \text{ s.t. } B_\epsilon(u) \cap \text{aff}\, C \subset C\} \\ &= \{u \in C : \forall v \in C, \exists \alpha > 1 \text{ s.t. } v + \alpha(u - v) \in C\}\end{aligned}$$

  if C is convex. Here aff C stands for the **affine hull** of C.

Basic properties

The following operations preserve the convexity:

- Intersection: $C_1 \cap C_2$.
- Summation: $C_1 + C_2 := \{u^1 + u^2 : u^1 \in C_1, u^2 \in C_2\}$.
- Closure: $\operatorname{cl} C$.
- (Relative) interior: $\operatorname{int} C$, $\operatorname{rint} C$.

– In general, the union of convex sets is not convex.

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Convex cone

C is a **cone** if $C = \alpha C$ for any $\alpha > 0$.
C is a **convex cone** if C is a cone and is convex as well.

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Separation of convex sets

Theorem (separation of convex sets)

Let C_1, C_2 be nonempty convex subsets in $\mathbb{E}$.

1. Assume C_1 is closed and $C_2 = \{w\} \subset \mathbb{E} \backslash C_1$. Then $\exists v \in \mathbb{E},\ v \neq 0,\ \alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ s.t.

$$\langle v, w \rangle > \alpha \geq \langle v, u \rangle\,, \quad \forall u \in C_1.$$

2. Assume C_1 is open and $C_2 = \{w\} \subset \mathbb{E} \backslash C_1$. Then $\exists v \in \mathbb{E},\ v \neq 0,\ \alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ s.t.

$$\langle v, w \rangle \geq \alpha \geq \langle v, u \rangle\,, \quad \forall u \in C_1.$$

3. Assume $C_1 \cap C_2 = \emptyset$ and C_1 is open. Then $\exists v \in \mathbb{E},\ v \neq 0,\ \alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ s.t.

$$\left\langle v, u^1 \right\rangle \geq \alpha \geq \left\langle v, u^2 \right\rangle, \quad \forall u^1 \in C_1,\ u^2 \in C_2.$$

4. Assume $\emptyset \neq \operatorname{int} C_1 \subset \mathbb{E} \backslash C_2$. Then $\exists v \in \mathbb{E},\ v \neq 0,\ \alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ s.t.

$$\left\langle v, u^1 \right\rangle \geq \alpha \geq \left\langle v, u^2 \right\rangle, \quad \forall u^1 \in C_1,\ u^2 \in C_2.$$

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Convex Function

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Convex functions

- An **extended real-valued function** J maps from $\mathbb{E}$ to $\overline{\mathbb{R}} := \mathbb{R} \cup \{\infty\}$.
- The **domain** of $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is

$$\operatorname{dom} J = \{u \in \mathbb{E} : J(u) < \infty\}.$$

- The function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is **proper** if $\operatorname{dom} J \neq \emptyset$.

Definition

We say $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is a **convex function** if

1. $\operatorname{dom} J$ is a convex set.
2. For all $u, v \in \operatorname{dom} J$ and $\alpha \in [0, 1]$ it holds that

$$J(\alpha u + (1 - \alpha)v) \leq \alpha J(u) + (1 - \alpha)J(v).$$

We say J is **strictly convex** if the above inequality is strict for all $\alpha \in (0, 1)$ and $u \neq v$.

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Examples

- $J_{data}(u) = \|u - z\|_q^q$, where $q \geq 1$ and $\|\cdot\|_q$ is ℓ^q-norm.
- $J_{regu}(u) = \|Ku\|_{q'}^{q'}$, where K is linear transform and $q' \geq 1$.
- $J(u) = J_{data}(u) + \alpha J_{regu}(u)$.

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- $J_{regu}(u) = \|Ku\|_{q'}^{q'}$, where K is linear transform and $q' \geq 1$.
- $J(u) = J_{data}(u) + \alpha J_{regu}(u)$.
- Negative entropy: $J_\epsilon(u) = \epsilon\big(u \log(u) + (1-u)\log(1-u)\big)$.
- Soft plus: $J_\epsilon^*(v) = \epsilon \log(1 + \exp(v/\epsilon)) \xrightarrow{\epsilon \to 0^+} \max(v, 0)$.

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- Soft plus: $J_\epsilon^*(v) = \epsilon \log(1 + \exp(v/\epsilon)) \xrightarrow{\epsilon \to 0^+} \max(v, 0)$.
- **Indicator function** ($C \subset \mathbb{E}$ is closed and convex):

$$\delta_C(u) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } u \in C, \\ \infty & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

- Formulate *constrained optimization* with indicator function:

$$\min J(u) \text{ over } u \in C. \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad \min J(u) + \delta_C(u) \text{ over } u \in \mathbb{E}.$$

Basic facts

(As exercises)

- Any norm (over a normed vector space) is a convex function.
- J is a convex function and A is an affine transform $\Rightarrow J(A\,\cdot)$ is convex function.
- (Jensen's inequality) $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is convex iff

$$J\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} \alpha_i u^i\right) \leq \sum_{i=1}^{n} \alpha_i J(u^i),$$

whenever $\{u^i\}_{i=1}^n \subset \mathbb{E}$, $\{\alpha_i\}_{i=1}^n \subset [0, 1]$, $\sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_i = 1$.

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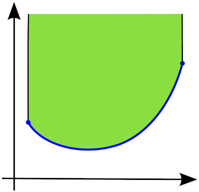
Epigraph

Definition

The **epigraph** of a proper function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is

$$\operatorname{epi} J = \{(u, \alpha) \in \mathbb{E} \times \mathbb{R} : J(u) \leq \alpha\}.$$



epigraph

Theorem

A proper function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is convex (resp. strictly convex) iff epi J is a convex (resp. strictly convex) set.

Proof: as exercise.

Lipschitz continuity

Definition

Assume $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ with $\operatorname{rint}\operatorname{dom} J \neq \emptyset$. We say J is **locally Lipschitz** at $u \in \operatorname{rint}\operatorname{dom} J$ with modulus $L_u > 0$ if there exists $\epsilon > 0$ s.t.

$$|J(u^1) - J(u^2)| \leq L_u \|u^1 - u^2\| \quad \forall u^1, u^2 \in B_\epsilon(u) \cap \operatorname{rint}\operatorname{dom} J.$$

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Theorem

A proper convex function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is locally Lipschitz at any $u \in \operatorname{rint} \operatorname{dom} J$.

Proof: found in script.

Existence of Minimizer

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Global vs. Local minimizer

Recall the optimization of $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$:

$$\text{minimize } J(u) \quad \text{over } u \in \mathbb{E}.$$

Definition

1. $u^* \in \mathbb{E}$ is a **global minimizer** if $J(u^*) \leq J(u)$ for all $u \in \mathbb{E}$.
2. u^* is a **local minimizer** if $\exists \epsilon > 0$ s.t. $J(u^*) \leq J(u)$ for all $u \in B_\epsilon(u^*)$.
3. In the above definitions, a global/local minimizer is **strict** if $J(u^*) \leq J(u)$ is replaced by $J(u^*) < J(u)$.

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3. In the above definitions, a global/local minimizer is **strict** if $J(u^*) \leq J(u)$ is replaced by $J(u^*) < J(u)$.

Theorem

For any proper convex function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$, if $u^* \in \operatorname{dom} J$ is a local minimizer of J, then it is also a global minimizer.

Proof: on board.

Does a minimizer always exist?

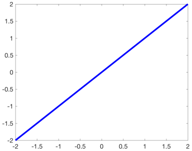
- Consider

$$\text{minimize } J(u) \quad \text{over } u \in \mathbb{E},$$

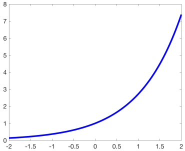
where $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is a proper, convex function.

- Some counterexamples for $J : \mathbb{R} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$:

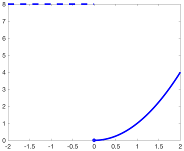
u



$\exp u$



$u^2 + \delta\{u > 0\}$



- Next we formalize our observations and derive sufficient conditions for existence.

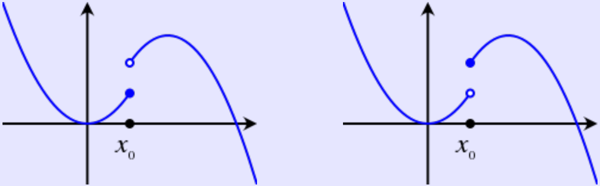
Sufficient conditions for existence

Definition

1. J is **bounded from below** if $J(\cdot) \geq C$ for some $C \in \mathbb{R}$.
2. J is **coercive** if $J(u) \to \infty$ whenever $\|u\| \to \infty$.
   - Proposition: J is coercive if $\operatorname{dom} J$ is bounded.
3. J is **lower semi-continuous** (lsc) at u^* if

$$J(u^*) \leq \liminf_{k\to\infty} J(u^k), \text{ whenever } u^k \to u^*.$$

lsc   not lsc



- Proposition: J is lsc iff $\operatorname{epi} J$ is closed.

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Theorem

Any proper function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$, which is bounded from below, coercive, and lsc (everywhere), has a (global) minimizer.

Proof: on board.

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Uniqueness

- Recall that a function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is strictly convex if

$$J(\alpha u + (1-\alpha)v) < \alpha J(u) + (1-\alpha)J(v),$$

for all $u, v \in \operatorname{dom} J,\ u \neq v,\ \alpha \in (0,1)$.

Theorem

The minimizer of a strictly convex function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is unique.

Proof: on board.

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Subdifferential

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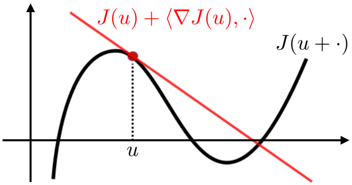
Differential



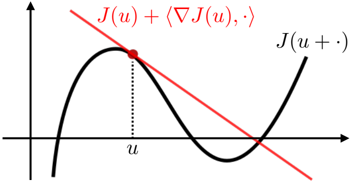
Definition

$J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ is called (Fréchet) **differentiable** at $u \in \operatorname{int} \operatorname{dom} J$ and $\nabla J(u) \in \mathbb{E}$ is the (Fréchet) **differential** of J at u if

$$\lim_{h \to 0} \frac{|J(u+h) - J(u) - \langle \nabla J(u), h \rangle|}{\|h\|} = 0.$$

J is **continuously differentiable** at $u \in \operatorname{int} \operatorname{dom} J$ if $\nabla J(\cdot)$ is continuous on $(\operatorname{dom} J) \cap B_\epsilon(u)$ for some $\epsilon > 0$.

Differential



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Remark

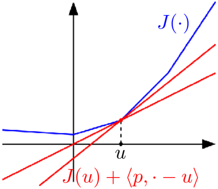
If $\mathbb{E}$ is a topological vector space, $\nabla J(u)$ is treated as a *dual* object in $\mathbb{E}^*$, and $\langle \nabla J(u), h \rangle_{\mathbb{E}^*, \mathbb{E}}$ as *duality pairing*.

Subdifferential

Definition

The **subdifferential** of a convex function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ at $u \in \operatorname{dom} J$ is defined by

$$\partial J(u) = \{p \in \mathbb{E} : J(v) \geq J(u) + \langle p, v - u \rangle \ \forall v \in \mathbb{E}\}\,.$$



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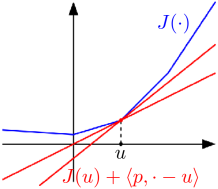


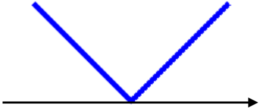
Geometric interpretation

$p \in \partial J(u)$ iff $(p, -1)$ is a normal vector for the supporting hyperplane of epi J at $(u, J(u))$, i.e.,

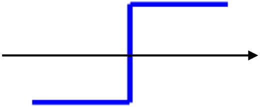
$$\left\langle \begin{bmatrix} p \\ -1 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} u \\ J(u) \end{bmatrix} \right\rangle \geq \left\langle \begin{bmatrix} p \\ -1 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} v \\ \alpha \end{bmatrix} \right\rangle, \quad \forall (v, \alpha) \in \operatorname{epi} J.$$

Subdifferential: Examples

1. $J(u) = |u|$.



$J(u)$



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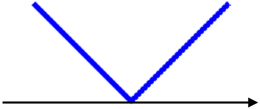
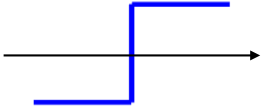


$J(u)$



$\partial J(u)$

2. Given a closed, convex subset $C \subset \mathbb{E}$ and $u \in C$,

$$\partial \delta_C(u) = \{p \in \mathbb{E} : \langle p, v - u \rangle \leq 0 \; \forall v \in C\} =: N_C(u),$$

known as the *normal cone* of C at u.

Subdifferential: Examples

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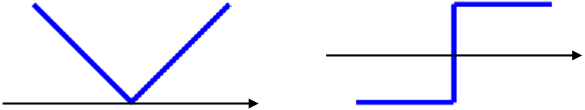

$J(u)$ $\qquad\qquad$ $\partial J(u)$

2. Given a closed, convex subset $C \subset \mathbb{E}$ and $u \in C$,

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known as the *normal cone* of C at u.

3. $J(u) = |||u||| \ \Rightarrow \ \partial J(0) = \{p : |||p|||_* \leq 1\}$. $\quad |||\cdot|||_*$ is the *dual norm* of $|||\cdot|||$, i.e., $|||p|||_* = \sup\{\langle p, u \rangle : |||u||| \leq 1\}$.

Subdifferential calculus

Theorem (chain rule under linear transform)

Let $\widetilde{J}(\cdot) = J(K\cdot)$ with some convex function J and linear transform K. Then

$$\partial\widetilde{J}(u) = K^\top \partial J(Ku)$$

whenever $Ku \in \operatorname{rint} \operatorname{dom} J$.

Example: $J(u) = \|Ku\| \Rightarrow \partial J(u) = K^\top \partial \| \cdot \| (Ku)$.

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Theorem (summation rule)

Let $\widetilde{J}(\cdot) = J_1(\cdot) + J_2(\cdot)$, where J_1, J_2 are convex functions s.t.

$$\operatorname{rint} \operatorname{dom} J_1 \cap \operatorname{rint} \operatorname{dom} J_2 \neq \emptyset.$$

Then for any $u \in \operatorname{dom} J_1 \cap \operatorname{dom} J_2$, we have

$$\partial\widetilde{J}(u) = \partial J_1(u) + \partial J_2(u).$$

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Properties of subdifferential map

Theorem

Let $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ be a convex function. Then for any $u \in \operatorname{int}\operatorname{dom} J$, $\partial J(u)$ is a nonempty, compact, and convex subset.

Proof: on board.

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Properties of subdifferential map

Theorem

Let $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ be a convex function. Then for any $u \in \operatorname{int}\operatorname{dom} J$, $\partial J(u)$ is a nonempty, compact, and convex subset.

Proof: on board.

Theorem

Let $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ be a convex function. Then ∂J is a **monotone operator**, i.e. $\forall u^1, u^2 \in \operatorname{dom} J,\ p^1 \in \partial J(u^1),\ p^2 \in \partial J(u^2)$:

$$\langle p^1 - p^2, u^1 - u^2 \rangle \geq 0.$$

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Theorem

Let $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$ be a proper, convex, lsc function. Then the set-valued map ∂J is **closed**, i.e. $p^* \in \partial J(u^*)$ whenever

$$\exists (u^k, p^k) \to (u^*, p^*) \in (\operatorname{dom} J) \times \mathbb{E} \ \text{ s.t. } p^k \in \partial J(u^k) \ \ \forall k.$$

Proof: on board.

Optimality condition

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Given any proper convex function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \overline{\mathbb{R}}$, the sufficient and necessary condition for u^* being a (global) minimizer for J is

$$0 \in \partial J(u^*).$$

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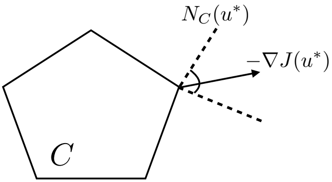
Constrained optimization as special case

If u^* minimizes $\widetilde{J} = J + \delta_C$ with convex function $J : \mathbb{E} \to \mathbb{R}$ and closed convex subset $C \subset \mathbb{E}$, then $0 \in \partial \widetilde{J}(u^*) \Leftrightarrow$

$$0 \in \partial J(u^*) + N_C(u^*).$$



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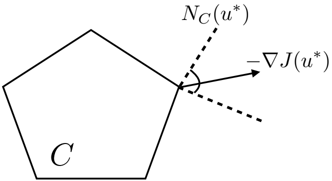

Remark

The optimality condition $0 \in \partial J(u^*) + N_C(u^*)$ is *geometric*. More explicit characterization replies on the *algebraic* representation of $N_C(u^*)$ (e.g., the Karush-Kuhn-Tucker (KKT) conditions) typically under certain *constraint qualifications*.

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Example: Linear-inequality constraints

Let $C = \{u \in \mathbb{R}^n : Au \leq b\}$ where $b \in \mathbb{R}^m$, $A \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times n}$ has linearly independent rows. Then

$$N_C(u) = \{A^\top \lambda : \lambda \geq 0, \lambda_i = 0 \text{ if } (Au - b)_i < 0\}.$$

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