

Exercise 1 Find

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} (2x - \sqrt{4x^2 - x}) = \boxed{1/4}$$

Hint: Recall that the conjugate of $a + \sqrt{b}$ is $a - \sqrt{b}$ (similarly, the conjugate of $a - \sqrt{b}$ is $a + \sqrt{b}$). Multiply through by the clever form of 1.

Hint: The clever form of 1 alluded to is simply the fraction containing the conjugate: $1 = \frac{2x + \sqrt{4x^2 - x}}{2x + \sqrt{4x^2 - x}}$. After some algebra, you should see that the new numerator is $(2x - \sqrt{4x^2 - x})(2x + \sqrt{4x^2 - x}) = 4x^2 - 4x^2 + x = x$. Similarly, the new denominator is $2x + \sqrt{4x^2 - x}$. Hence, $2x - \sqrt{4x^2 - x} = \frac{x}{2x + \sqrt{4x^2 - x}}$. This is certainly a more tractable form!

Hint: Multiplying both the numerator and the denominator by 1 over the highest power of x (i.e., $1 = \frac{1}{\frac{1}{x}}$) we obtain the expression $\frac{x \frac{1}{x}}{2x \frac{1}{x} + \sqrt{4x^2 - x} \frac{1}{x}} = \frac{1}{2 + \sqrt{4x^2 - x} \frac{1}{x}}$.

Of course, $\sqrt{4x^2 - x} \frac{1}{x} = \sqrt{\frac{4x^2 - x}{x^2}} = \sqrt{4 - \frac{1}{x}}$. How exceedingly fortunate, since

we have transformed our formally intractable problem into $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \left(\frac{1}{2 + \sqrt{4 - \frac{1}{x}}} \right)$ and

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \left(\frac{1}{2 + \sqrt{4 - \frac{1}{x}}} \right) = \frac{1}{2 + 2} = \frac{1}{4}, \text{ hence, } \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} (2x - \sqrt{4x^2 - x}) = \frac{1}{4}.$$