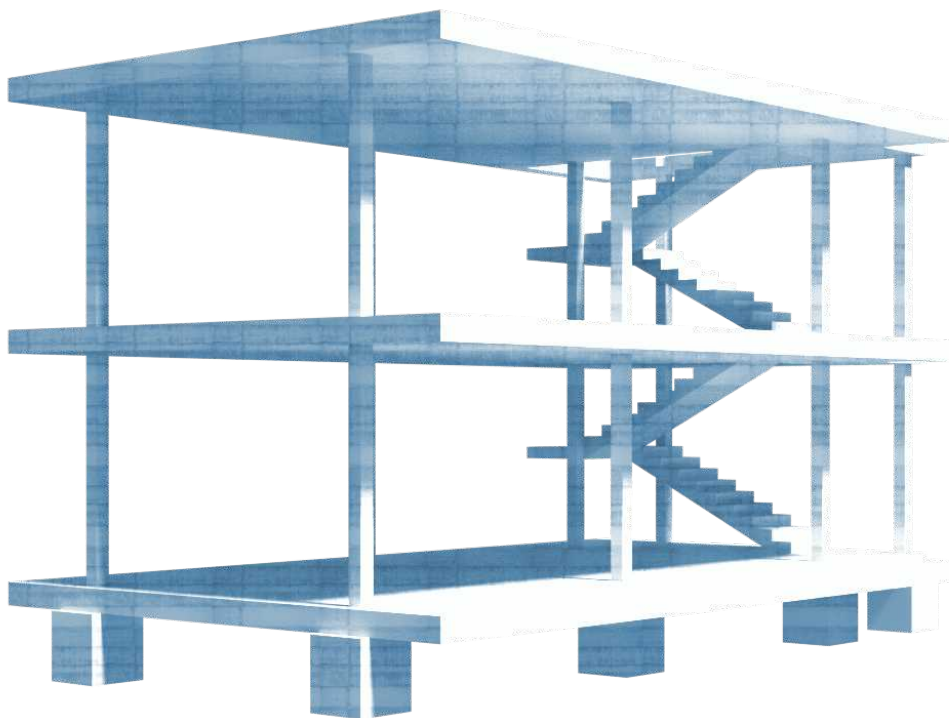


# Bullet Constraints Builder

## User Manual

*Preliminary version 2.0*

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# I USER INTERFACE

**Bullet Constraints Builder v2.70**

▶ Preprocessing Tools

Build ✖

Simulate 📄

▶ Global Settings

▶ Advanced Global Settings

▶ Triggers

▼ Element Group List

+ 📄 ✖ ✖ ▲ ▼

GRP	CT	CP	TN	SH	BN
RC Columns	6	35	5.2	15	1.0
RC Walls	6	35	5.2	0.9	1.0
RC Slabs	6	35	5.2	0.9	1.0
Base	0	-	-	-	-

▼ Element Group Selector

⏪ ▲ Previous ▼ Next ⏩

Grp. Name: RC Columns 📄

▶ Formula Assistant

▼ Element Group Settings

◀ Connection Type: 6 ▶

4x GENERIC

Breaking Thresholds in [N or Nm] / mm<sup>2</sup>:

Compressive: 35

Tensile: 5.2

Shear: 155

Bend: 1.0

Plastic: 1.3

◀ Breaking Threshold Multiplier: 1.00 ▶

Mat. Preset: Concrete

◀ Density: 2400.00 ▶

▶ Advanced Element Group Settings

## 1 Preprocessing Tools

The *Preprocessing Tools* are tools to prepare the mesh topology of a model for simulation. They provide the entire workflow from the imported CAD model (or others) to the completely setup and discretized model ready to be simulated.

### 1.a Do All Selected Steps At Once!

Executes all selected tools in the order from top to bottom. Select those tools you want to be invoked during the batch process by ticking the checkboxes in the left column. These checkboxes are also taken into account for automatic mode.

#### **Run On Automatic Mode**

Enables that preprocessing will be performed on *Automatic Mode*. To avoid accidental double execution, this will be disabled whenever a preprocessing tool is activated manually, but it can be activated again at any time.

### 1.b Run Python Script

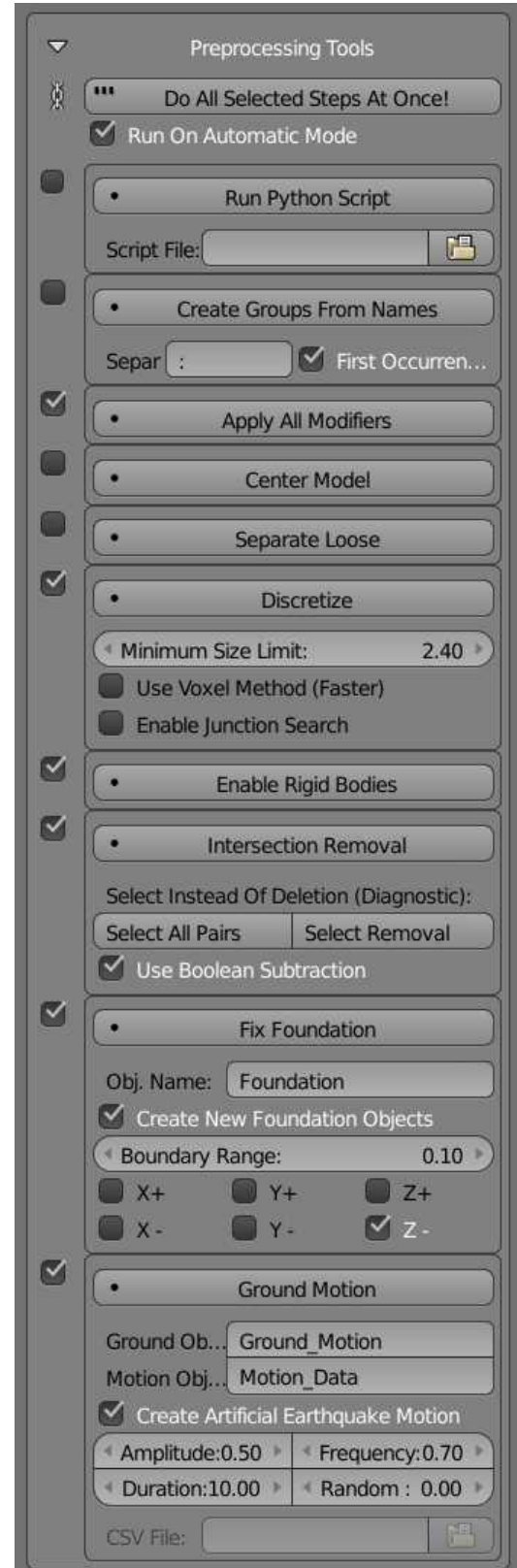
Executes a user-defined Python script for customizable automatization purposes (e.g. batch import or general scene management).

#### **Script File**

Enter the filename of an existing Python script, either within the .blend file or extern.

### 1.c Create Groups From Names

Creates groups for all selected objects based on a specified naming convention and adds them also to



The screenshot shows the 'Preprocessing Tools' panel with a list of tools and their execution status. The tools are: 'Do All Selected Steps At Once!', 'Run On Automatic Mode', 'Run Python Script', 'Create Groups From Names', 'Apply All Modifiers', 'Center Model', 'Separate Loose', 'Discretize', 'Enable Rigid Bodies', 'Intersection Removal', 'Fix Foundation', and 'Ground Motion'. Each tool has a checkbox in the left column to indicate if it should be executed. The 'Run On Automatic Mode' checkbox is checked. The 'Run Python Script' tool has a 'Script File' input field. The 'Create Groups From Names' tool has a 'Separ' input field and a 'First Occurren...' checkbox. The 'Discretize' tool has a 'Minimum Size Limit' input field and two checkboxes: 'Use Voxel Method (Faster)' and 'Enable Junction Search'. The 'Intersection Removal' tool has a 'Select Instead Of Deletion (Diagnostic)' section with 'Select All Pairs' and 'Select Removal' buttons, and a 'Use Boolean Subtraction' checkbox. The 'Fix Foundation' tool has an 'Obj. Name' input field, a 'Create New Foundation Objects' checkbox, and a 'Boundary Range' input field. The 'Ground Motion' tool has a 'Ground Ob...' input field, a 'Motion Obj...' input field, a 'Create Artificial Earthquake Motion' checkbox, and four input fields: 'Amplitude:0.50', 'Frequency:0.70', 'Duration:10.00', and 'Random : 0.00'. There is also a 'CSV File' input field at the bottom.

the element groups list.

### ***Separator***

Defines a key character or string to derive the group names from the object names in the scene. Example: An object name 'Columns:B4' with separator ':' will generate a group named 'Columns' containing all objects with this phrase in their names.

### ***First Occurrence***

Enables first occurrence search of the separator within an element name for cases when there are more than one separator included, if disabled the last occurrence is used.

## **1.d Apply All Modifiers**

Applies all modifiers on all selected objects.

## **1.e Center Model**

Shifts all selected objects as a whole to the world center of the scene.

## **1.f Separate Loose**

Separates all loose (not connected) mesh elements within an object into separate objects, this is done for all selected objects.

## **1.g Discretize**

Discretizes (subdivides) all selected objects into smaller segments by splitting them into halves as long as a specified minimum size is reached.

### ***Minimum Size Limit***

Discretization size this tool tries to reach by discretization. To enforce regularity at all times, elements afterwards can deviate in size to some extent from the target size. For booleans (default method): The minimum dimension value serves as limit for an element still being considered for subdivision, at least two dimension axis must be above this size. After discretization no element will be larger than this value anymore, although they can be smaller up to 50%.

### ***Use Voxel Method (Faster)***

Use Voxel Method (Faster)", default=0, description="Enables the voxel based discretization method and geometry is converted into cuboid-shaped cells. While this method has the disadvantage that it can't keep mesh details such as curved surfaces, round columns or mural reliefs, it is extremely fast compared to the default boolean based method and can create thousands of new elements within seconds. Also note that this method is limited to odd subdivision level numbers [1,3,5,7..], so you basically can't split an element

into two for instance but only into three, five and so on.

### ***Enable Junction Search***

Tries to split cornered walls at the corner rather than splitting based on object space to generate more clean shapes.

## **1.h Enable Rigid Bodies**

Enables rigid body settings for all selected objects.

## **1.i Intersection Removal**

Detects and removes intersecting objects (one per found pair). Intesecting objects can be caused by several reasons: accidental object duplication, forgotten boolean cutout objects, careless modeling etc.

### ***Select All Pairs***

Selects element pairs intersecting each other, even those which could have been resolved automatically by the algorithm, for review by user.

### ***Select Removal***

Selects elements meant to be removed by the algorithm without removing them for review by user.

### ***Use Boolean Subtraction***

Uses boolean operations to resolve overlapping elements. Their geometries will be subtracted from each other and the collision shapes will be switched to 'Mesh'. (For accurate simulations it is strongly recommended to resolve such intersections manually and leave this option disabled.)

## **1.j Fix Foundation**

Either uses name based search to find foundation objects or creates foundation objects for all objects touching the overall model boundary box. These foundation objects will be set to be 'Passive' rigid bodies.

### ***Object Name***

Enter a name (or substring) for elements which should be set to 'Passive' in rigid body settings.

### ***Create New Foundation Objects***

Enables generation of additional rigid body objects to serve as anchors adjacent to the selected model objects.



### ***Boundary Range***

Internal margin in m for the model boundary box to include also objects within a certain distance from the outer border. This value should always stay smaller than Discretization Size divided by 2 because otherwise foundation elements can overlap user elements.

### ***X+ X- Y+ Y- Z+ Z-***

Enables this side of the overall model boundary for which fixed foundation objects will be created.

## **1.k Ground Motion**

Attaches all selected passive rigid body objects to a specified and animated ground object. This can be useful for simulating earthquakes through a pre-animated ground motion object like a virtual shake table.

### ***Ground Object***

Enter the name of a ground object here and the passive foundation objects will automatically be attached to it. If it is not existing it will be created at the underside of the active rigid body boundary box.

### ***Motion Object***

Enter the name of an optional motion data object here and the ground object will automatically be attached to it. This can be useful in case animation data should be manageable completely separate from the ground object.

### ***Create Artificial Earthquake Motion***

Enables generation of artificial ground motion data based on noise functions, this can be useful if there is no real world ground motion data available.

### ***Amplitude***

Amplitude of the artificial earthquake to be generated in m (because of the random nature of the noise function this should be taken as approximation).

### ***Frequency***

Frequency of the artificial earthquake to be generated in Hz (because of the random nature of the noise function this should be taken as approximation).

### ***Duration***

Duration of the artificial earthquake to be generated in seconds.



### ***Random Seed***

Seed number for the random noise function used to generate the artificial earthquake, modification will change the characteristics of the motion.

### ***CSV File***

Search for earthquake time history file as plain ASCII text with comma-separated values (.csv). File structure: 4 columns: t [s], X [m/s<sup>2</sup>], Y [m/s<sup>2</sup>], Z [m/s<sup>2</sup>]. Lines starting with '#' are skipped.

## 2 Main Menu

### 2.a Build / Update

- If no old BCB constraint settings are being loaded:  
Starts building process and adds constraints to selected elements.
- If old BCB constraint settings are being loaded:  
Update old constraints with the new settings (faster).



### 2.b Store / Get / Delete Scene Settings

- If no connections are being built yet:  
Stores actual configuration data in current scene.
- If BCB settings are stored within scene:  
Get settings from scene and update GUI.
- If BCB and constraint settings are stored in scene:  
Get settings and constraint data from scene and update GUI. One can update constraints after that instead of rebuilding constraints from scratch.
- If BCB and constraint settings are already loaded:  
Removal of all BCB related data from scene, including constraints, scaling and bevel changes, and additional facing meshes.

### **Simulation**

Starts the rigid body simulation and creates a *bake* of it for later real-time playback. A *build* is invoked beforehand if not already done. Use of this button instead of the regular Blender baking is crucial because BCB constraints require to be monitored on per frame basis for the entire simulation.

### 3 Global Settings

#### ***Simulate FM (Fracture Modifier)***

Builds and simulates with help of the Fracture Modifier (special Blender version required). 'Simulate FM' will simulate scientifically like 'Simulate'.

#### ***Dynamic FM***

Builds and simulates with help of the Fracture Modifier (special Blender version required). But also enables dynamic geometry shattering for more realistic appearance but is actually non-scientific.



#### ***Import BCB Configuration Data***

Imports BCB config data from an external file (from default temp folder).

#### ***Export BCB Configuration Data***

Exports BCB config data to an external file (into default temp folder).

#### ***Steps Per Second***

Number of simulation steps taken per second (higher values are more accurate but slower and can also be more instable).

#### ***Enable Breaking***

Enables breaking for all constraints.

#### ***Disable Collisions***

Disables collisions between connected elements until breach.

#### ***Automatic Mode***

Enables a fully automated workflow for extremely large simulations (object count-wise) where Blender is prone to not being responsive anymore. After clicking *Build* these steps are being done automatically:

1. Building of constraints
2. Simulation (and baking)
3. Clearing constraint and BCB data from scene

### ***Backup (for Automatic Mode)***

Enables saving of a backup .blend file after each step for automatic mode, whereby the name of the new .blend ends with `\_BCB`.

### ***Search Distance***

Search distance to neighbor geometry based on the boundary box of the elements.

### ***Cluster Radius***

Search distance to neighbor constraints. Close constraint objects will be bundled into clusters. This can be important if connection types other than 1 are used to ensure rotation is possible as the cluster serves as pivot point. See also the *Technical Details* section of this document.

### ***Estimate Cluster Radius***

To automatically estimate an appropriate Cluster Radius from the selected elements in the scene the button next to the *Cluster Radius* field can be used (even if you already have built a BCB structure only selected objects are considered).

### ***Warm Up Period***

Disables breakability of constraints for an initial period of the simulation (frames). This is to prevent structural damage caused by the gravity impulse on start.

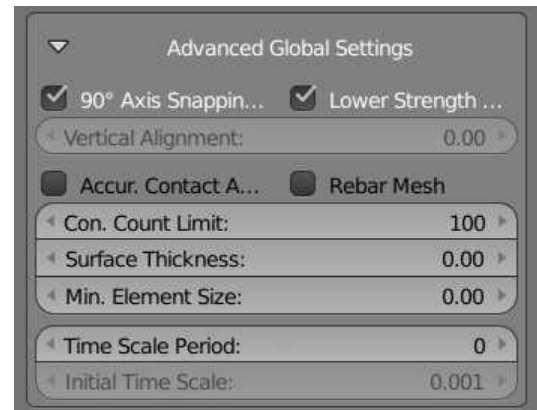
## 4 Advanced Global Settings

### **90° Axis Snapping for Constraint Orientation**

Enables axis snapping based on contact area orientation for constraints rotation instead of using center to center vector alignment (old method).

### **Lower Strength Priority**

Gives priority to the weaker breaking threshold of two elements with same Priority value to be connected, if disabled the stronger value is used for the connection.



### **Vertical Alignment**

Enables a vertical alignment multiplier for connection type 4 or above instead of using unweighted center to center orientation (0 = disabled, 1 = fully vertical).

### **Accurate Contact Area Calculation**

Enables accurate contact area calculation using booleans for the cost of an up to 20x slower building process. This only works correct with solids i.e. watertight and manifold objects and is therefore recommended for truss structures or steel constructions in general. If disabled a simpler boundary box intersection approach is used which is only recommended for rectangular constructions without diagonal elements like reinforced concrete buildings.

### **Rebar Mesh**

Enables creation of a rebar mesh on build or export execution using the settings from the Formula Assistant. This mesh is meant for diagnostic purposes only, it is not required nor used for the simulation. It is also not very accurate for very small elements as the rebar count is converted from the definition to the actual element size with a minimum limit of 4 bars per element.

### **Connection Count Limit**

Maximum count of connections per object pair (0 = unlimited).

### **Surface Thickness**

Artificial thickness for non-manifold elements (surfaces). If the element is solid this value will be added as extra margin to the detected contact area.

### ***Minimum Element Size***

Deletes connections whose elements are below this diameter and makes them parents instead. This can be helpful for increasing performance on models with irrelevant geometric detail such as screwheads.

### ***Time Scale Period***

Use a different time scale for an initial period of the simulation until this many frames has passed (0 = disabled).

### ***Initial Time Scale***

Use this time scale for the initial period of the simulation, after that it is switching back to default time scale and updating breaking thresholds accordingly during runtime.

## 5 Triggers

Triggers are used to trigger the collapse of a structure in a specific way. However, in this panel only triggers which affect the structural building routine are located, **Earthquake** for instance can be found under *Preprocessing Tools* since it requires a ground object.



### **Progressive Weakening**

Enables *Progressive Weakening* of all breaking thresholds by the specified factor per frame (starts not until timeScalePeriod and warmUpPeriod have passed). This can be used to enforce the certain collapse of a building structure after a while.

### **Progressive Weakening Limit**

For progressive weakening: Limits the weakening process by the number of broken connections per frame. If the limit is exceeded weakening will be disabled for the rest of the simulation.

### **Start Weakness**

Start weakness as factor all breaking thresholds will be multiplied with. This can be used to quick-change the initial thresholds without performing a full update.

### **Detonator Object**

Enter name of an object to be used to simulate the effects of an explosion. This feature replicates the damage caused by such an event by weakening the constraints within range of the object. It is recommended to use an Empty object with a sphere shape for this. The damage is calculated as gradient of the distance mapped to the size, from 200% weakening at center to 0% at boundary.



## 6 Element Group List

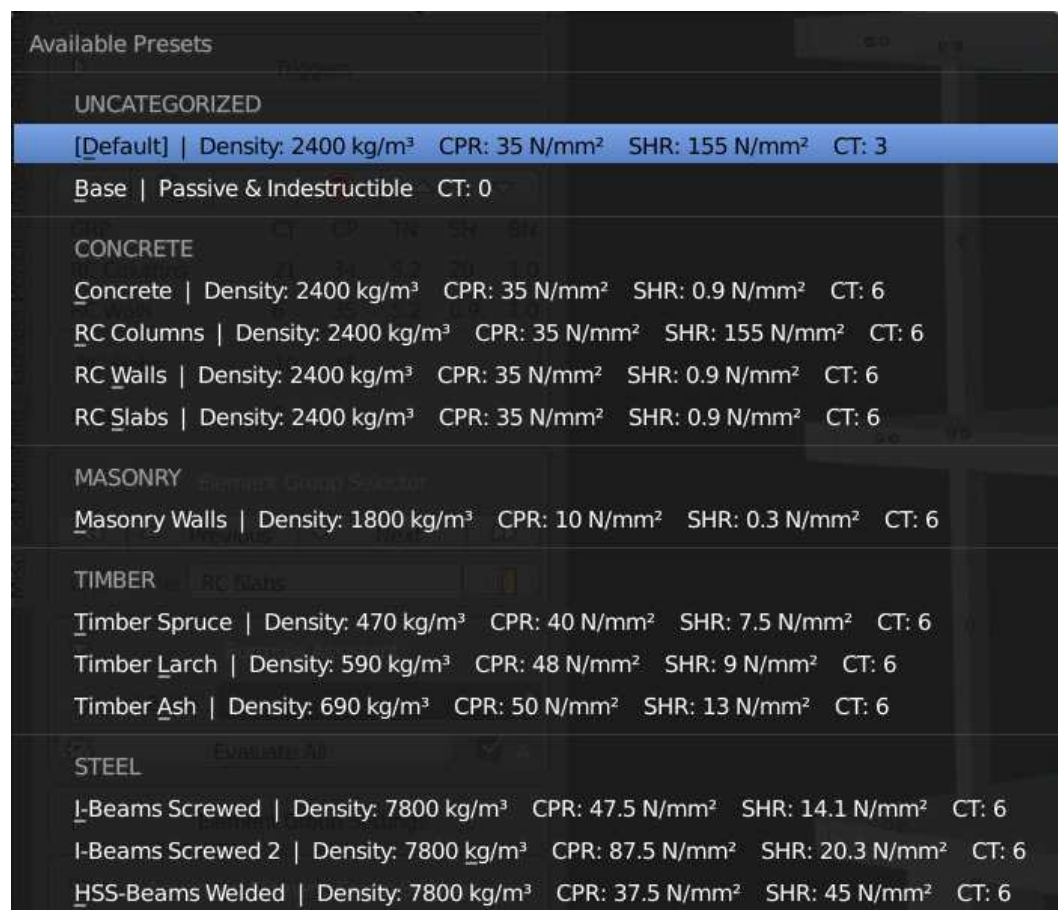
Element groups can be used to define different material properties to certain groups of objects.

The controls within the list box can be used to add, move and select element groups as desired. All settings below the list box belong to the selected group. A short overview of those settings is displayed in the list box as well.



GRP	CT	CP	TN	SH	BN
RC Columns	6	35	5.2	15	1.0
RC Walls	6	35	5.2	0.9	1.0
RC Slabs	6	35	5.2	0.9	1.0
Base	0	-	-	-	-

Further, there is the option to pick materials from a selection of preset materials which can be modified after addition to the list. Every preset can be created from scratch by the user, there is no need to use presets to initialize specific materials.



Available Presets				
UNCATEGORIZED				
[Default]	Density: 2400 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 35 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 155 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 3
Base	Passive & Indestructible	CT: 0		
CONCRETE				
Concrete	Density: 2400 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 35 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 0.9 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
RC Columns	Density: 2400 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 35 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 155 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
RC Walls	Density: 2400 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 35 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 0.9 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
RC Slabs	Density: 2400 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 35 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 0.9 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
MASONRY				
Masonry Walls	Density: 1800 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 10 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 0.3 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
TIMBER				
Timber Spruce	Density: 470 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 40 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 7.5 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
Timber Larch	Density: 590 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 48 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 9 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
Timber Ash	Density: 690 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 50 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 13 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
STEEL				
I-Beams Screwed	Density: 7800 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 47.5 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 14.1 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
I-Beams Screwed 2	Density: 7800 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 87.5 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 20.3 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6
HSS-Beams Welded	Density: 7800 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	CPR: 37.5 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	SHR: 45 N/mm <sup>2</sup>	CT: 6

For a connection by default only the weakest evaluated breaking threshold per degree of freedom from both element group settings is used, however, it is possible to invert this behavior by enabling *Lower Strength Priority*.



In case two elements of different element groups needs to be connected the order of the list defines the priority for conflicting connection settings. It is recommended to avoid such configurations.

## **7 Element Group Selector**

In order to keep the element group list collapsable the selector is located in an extra panel. Use the arrow buttons to navigate through the element group list above.



### **Group Name**

The name of the chosen element group.

### **Select Group**

Selects objects belonging to this element group in viewport.

## 8 Formula Assistant

The *Formula Assistant* provides an convenient way for structural engineers to enter their building configurations.

### Type of Building Material

Select a formula assistant for a specific type of structural element. Formulas and UI might change depending on the requirements. Currently available types are:

- Reinforced Concrete (Beams & Columns)
- Reinforced Concrete (Walls & Slabs)

For reinforced concrete types the user interfaces of the formula assistants are identical except for the formula for  $V_{+/-}$ .

### Strength of Base Material and Reinforcement

**$f_c$**

Yield strength of concrete (N/mm<sup>2</sup>).

**$f_s$**

Yield strength of reinforcement irons (N/mm<sup>2</sup>).

**$h$**

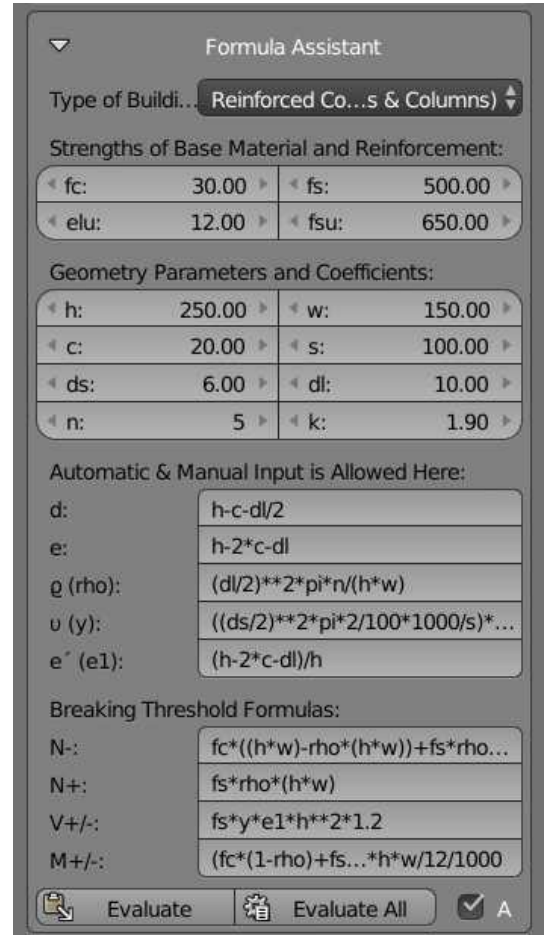
Height of element (mm). Leave it 0 to pass it through as variable instead of a fixed number.

**$w$**

Width of element (mm). Leave it 0 to pass it through as variable instead of a fixed number.

**$c$**

Concrete cover thickness above reinforcement (mm).



The screenshot shows the 'Formula Assistant' window for 'Reinforced Co...s & Columns'. It contains several sections:

- Strengths of Base Material and Reinforcement:**

$f_c$ :	30.00	$f_s$ :	500.00
$e_{lu}$ :	12.00	$f_{su}$ :	650.00
- Geometry Parameters and Coefficients:**

$h$ :	250.00	$w$ :	150.00
$c$ :	20.00	$s$ :	100.00
$d_s$ :	6.00	$d_l$ :	10.00
$n$ :	5	$k$ :	1.90
- Automatic & Manual Input is Allowed Here:**

$d$ :	$h - c - d_l / 2$
$e$ :	$h - 2 * c - d_l$
$\rho$ (rho):	$(d_l / 2) ** 2 * \pi * n / (h * w)$
$v$ (y):	$((d_s / 2) ** 2 * \pi * 2 / 100 * 1000 / s) * ...$
$e'$ (e1):	$(h - 2 * c - d_l) / h$
- Breaking Threshold Formulas:**

$N_-$ :	$f_c * ((h * w) - \rho * (h * w)) + f_s * \rho * ...$
$N_+$ :	$f_s * \rho * (h * w)$
$V_{+/-}$ :	$f_s * y * e1 * h ** 2 * 1.2$
$M_{+/-}$ :	$(f_c * (1 - \rho) + f_s * ... * h * w / 12 / 1000$

At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Evaluate', 'Evaluate All', and a checkbox 'A'.

***s***

Distance between stirrups (mm).

***ds***

Diameter of steel stirrup bar (mm).

***dl***

Diameter of steel longitudinal bar (mm).

***n***

Number of longitudinal steel bars.

***d***

Distance between the tensile irons and the opposite concrete surface (mm).

***e***

Distance between longitudinal irons (mm).

***ρ (rho)***

Reinforcement ratio =  $A_s/A$ .

***u (γ)***

Shear coefficient ( $a_{sw} \cdot 10/d$ ) (% value).

***e' (e1)***

Distance between longitudinal irons in relation to the element height:  $e/h$  (% value).

***N- (Advanced)***

Compressive breaking threshold formula.

***N+ (Advanced)***

Tensile breaking threshold formula.

***V+/- (Advanced)***

Shearing breaking threshold formula.

***M+/- (Advanced)***

Bending or momentum breaking threshold formula.



### ***Evaluate***

Combines and evaluates above expressions for constraint breaking threshold calculation. It is recommended to choose a Connection Type with 7x Generic constraints to get the best simulation results.

### ***Evaluate All***

Combines and evaluates expressions for every element groups with active Formula Assistant. Warning: Use this with care as it will overwrite also manually changed breaking thresholds for these element groups.

### ***Advanced***

Shows advanced settings and formulas.

## 9 Element Group Settings

### Connection Type

Connection type ID for the constraint presets defined by this script, see the *Technical Details* section of this document.

### Compressive Breaking Threshold

Real world material compressive breaking threshold in  $\text{N/mm}^2$ .

### Tensile Breaking Threshold

Real world material tensile breaking threshold in  $\text{N/mm}^2$  (not used by all connection types).

### Shearing Breaking Threshold

Real world material shearing breaking threshold in  $\text{N/mm}^2$  (not used by all connection types).

### Shearing Breaking Threshold 90°

Breaking threshold when height and width of the reference element in the *Formula Assistant* is flipped. This is used to adapt the reference dimensions to the actual geometry.

### Bending Breaking Threshold

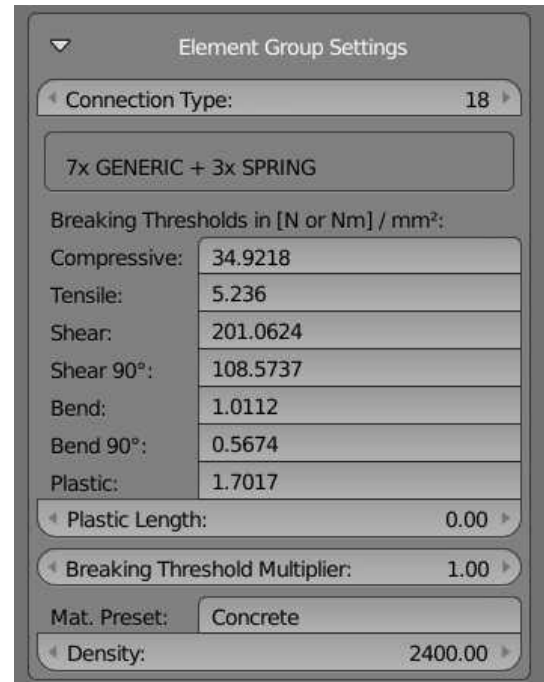
Real world material bending breaking threshold in  $\text{N/mm}^2$  (not used by all connection types).

### Bending Breaking Threshold 90°

Breaking threshold when height and width of the reference element in the *Formula Assistant* is flipped. This is used to adapt the reference dimensions to the actual geometry.

### Plastic Breaking Threshold

Real world material ultimate tensile breaking threshold in  $\text{N/mm}^2$  (only used for spring connection types).



The screenshot shows the 'Element Group Settings' dialog box. It contains the following fields and values:

- Connection Type:** 18
- 7x GENERIC + 3x SPRING**
- Breaking Thresholds in [N or Nm] / mm²:**
  - Compressive: 34.9218
  - Tensile: 5.236
  - Shear: 201.0624
  - Shear 90°: 108.5737
  - Bend: 1.0112
  - Bend 90°: 0.5674
  - Plastic: 1.7017
- Plastic Length:** 0.00
- Breaking Threshold Multiplier:** 1.00
- Mat. Preset:** Concrete
- Density:** 2400.00

### ***Plastic Length***

Length of the springs used for plastic deformation in m. If 0 is entered the distance between the element's centroids is used (default).

### ***Breaking Threshold Multiplier***

Multiplier to be applied on all breaking thresholds for constraint building. This can be useful for quickly weaken or strengthen a given element group without changing the original settings.

### ***Required Vertex Pairs (obsolete, hidden in UI and disabled)***

How many vertex pairs between two elements are required to generate a connection.

### ***Material Preset***

Preset name of the physical material to be used from Blender's internal database. See Blender's Rigid Body Tools for a list of available presets.

### ***Material Density***

Custom density value ( $\text{kg/m}^3$ ) to use instead of material preset (0 = disabled).



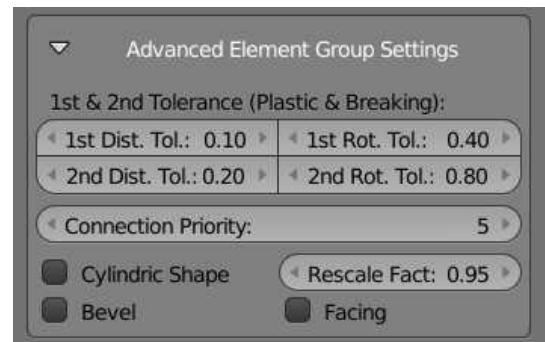
## 10 Advanced Element Group Settings

### 1<sup>st</sup> Distance Tolerance

First deformation tolerance limit for distance change in percent for connection removal or plastic deformation (1.00 = 100 %).

### 1<sup>st</sup> Rotation or Bending Tolerance

First deformation tolerance limit for angular change in radian for connection removal or plastic deformation.



Advanced Element Group Settings

1st & 2nd Tolerance (Plastic & Breaking):

1st Dist. Tol.: 0.10	1st Rot. Tol.: 0.40
2nd Dist. Tol.: 0.20	2nd Rot. Tol.: 0.80

Connection Priority: 5

☐ Cylindric Shape ☐ Rescale Fact: 0.95

☐ Bevel ☐ Facing

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Distance Tolerance

Second deformation tolerance limit for distance change in percent for connection removal (1.00 = 100 %). Smaller or greater distances will force the connection to detach completely.

The Formula Assistant might calculate this setting automatically on evaluation, it will appear greyed out then.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Rotation or Bending Tolerance

Second deformation tolerance limit for angular change in radian for connection removal. Smaller or greater angles will force the connection to detach completely.

The Formula Assistant might set this to 0 which means that this tolerance will be calculated later during the constraint building phase individually for each connection using Formula Assistant settings, there is no need to change it back then.

### Conection Priority

Changes the connection priority for this element group which will override that the weaker breaking threshold of two elements is preferred for an connection. Lower Strength Priority has similar functionality but works on all groups, however, it is ignored if the priority here is different for a particular connection.

### Cylindric Shape

Interpret connection area as round instead of rectangular ( $ar = a * \pi/4$ ). This can be useful when you have to deal with cylindrical columns.

### ***Rescale Factor***

Applies scaling factor on elements to avoid `Jenga` effect (undesired stability increase caused by incompressible rigid bodies). This has no influence on breaking threshold and mass calculations.

### ***Bevel***

Enables beveling for elements to avoid `Jenga` effect (undesired stability increase caused by incompressible rigid bodies). This uses hidden collision meshes and has no influence on breaking threshold and mass calculations.

### ***Facing***

Generates an additional layer of elements only for display (will only be used together with bevel and scale option, also serves as backup and for mass calculation).

## II TECHNICAL DETAILS

### 1 *Update / Rebuild*

Most changes in material properties or in the element groups are covered by the update functionality. There are however changes that will make a rebuild of the whole structure necessary. The remove button has to be pressed before you can rebuild.

Here is a not conclusive list of changes that require a full rebuild:

- Adding or removing elements to or from the structure (it is however possible to put elements into another layer to make them invisible for the simulation)
- Adding or removing constraints to or from the structure

These changes outside of the BCB panel require an update:

- Changing of the simulation steps rate in the Rigid Body World panel of the scene properties, as it influences the breaking thresholds (but the constraint iteration rate can be changed)

### 2 *Simulate*

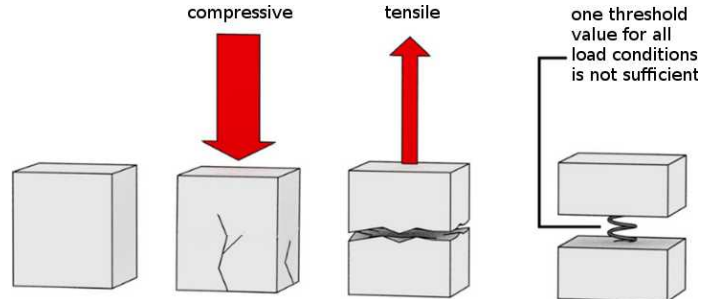
Since the introduction of multiple constraints per connection a custom simulation (or *bake* in Blender terms) option has been implemented. As constraints shared by a connection have no awareness of each other it has become necessary to manage these during the simulation and baking. Per each frame an event handler is invoked which is checking all connections if at least one constraint per connection has been detached and then it automatically detaches all other constraints within the particular connection as well. Individual left over constraints otherwise would heavily confuse the simulation, which can lead to very unstable behavior like exploding structures especially with higher step rates.

Detached connections are detected indirectly by measuring element to element relationships. More precisely, this is done by verifying changes in distance between elements and changes in their relative rotation to each other. Occurring differences are then compared to the *Tolerance* value. A change in distance which is only or mainly caused by a change in rotation will be recognized by the system as the tolerance threshold will be expanded accordingly to take this into account, so undesired detaching at least in this case should not happen.

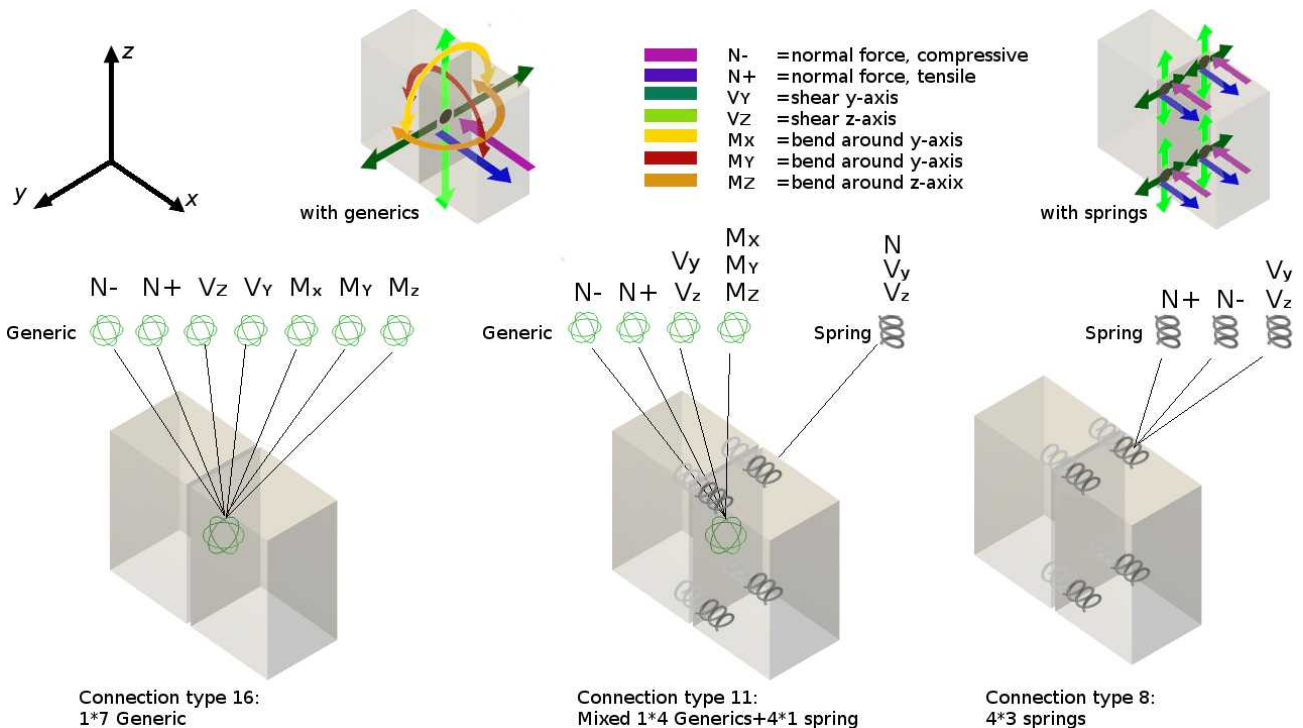
### 3 Connection types (CT)

The key to realistic collapse simulations is the accurate description of connections between elements. To accomplish this target the BCB is using following principles:

1. Multiple constraints per element pair to represent the relevant degrees of freedom (DOF)
2. Accurate constraint placement taking into account the contact surface of two elements
3. Evaluation of breaking thresholds based on physical structural properties of the building element



*Different strain directions require separate constraints*



*Three connection types in the BCB with generic and spring constraints*

Constraints in connections are defined by presets, only the ID from the following list needs to be entered into the *Connection Type* field to enable the respective connection type:

CT ID	Name in BCB interface	Const. Count	Short Description
0	PASSIVE	0	Passive (all other connection types will have priority over it)
1	1x FIXED	1	Linear omni-directional + bending breaking threshold
2	1x POINT	1	Linear omni-directional breaking threshold
3	1x POINT + 1x FIXED	2	Linear omni-directional and bending breaking thresholds
4	2x GENERIC	2	Compressive and tensile breaking thresholds
5	3x GENERIC	3	Compressive, tensile + shearing and bending breaking thresholds
6	4x GENERIC	4	Compressive, tensile, shearing and bending breaking thresholds
7	3x SPRING	3	Linear omni-directional breaking threshold with plastic deformability
8	4x SPRING	4	Linear omni-directional breaking threshold with plastic deformability
9	1x FIXED + 3x SPRING	4	Linear omni-directional + bending breaking threshold with plastic deformability
10	1x FIXED + 4x SPRING	5	Linear omni-directional + bending breaking threshold with plastic deformability
11	4x GENERIC + 3x SPRING	7	Compressive, tensile, shearing and bending breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
12	4x GENERIC + 4x SPRING	8	Compressive, tensile, shearing and bending breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
13	3 x 3x SPRING	9	Compressive, tensile and shearing breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
14	3 x 4x SPRING	12	Compressive, tensile and shearing breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
15	6x GENERIC	6	Compressive, tensile, shearing XY and bending XY breaking thresholds
16	7x GENERIC	7	Compressive, tensile, shearing XY and bending XY and torsion breaking thresholds
17	6x GENERIC + 3x SPRING	9	Compressive, tensile, shearing XY and bending XY breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
18	7x GENERIC + 3x SPRING	10	Compressive, tensile, shearing XY and bending XY and torsion breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
19	1x FIXED + 1x SPRING	2	Linear omni-directional + bending breaking threshold

			with plastic deformability
20	1x PNT + 1x FXD + 1x SPR	3	Linear omni-directional and bending breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
21	4x GENERIC + 1x SPRING	5	Compressive, tensile, shearing and bending breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
22	6x GENERIC + 1x SPRING	7	Compressive, tensile, shearing XY and bending XY breaking thresholds with plastic deformability
23	7x GENERIC + 1x SPRING	8	Compressive, tensile, shearing XY and bending XY and torsion breaking thresholds with plastic deformability

## 4 Constraint placement specifications

### 4.a Location

Constraints are placed at the center of the contact area boundary box. If bundling into clusters is enabled (Cluster Radius > 0) then all constraint locations will be bundled within a post process based on their previous locations.

### 4.b Orientation

Constraints will be aligned to the center to center line of both connected elements.

The *Vertical Alignment* setting can be used to make sure skewed but mostly vertically oriented constraints will be rectified. This is done by reducing the X and Y components of the directional vector by a custom factor in range from 0 to 1. This way horizontal oriented constraints will stay horizontal and more diagonal ones will be corrected towards upright. This can help for buildings where one wants to avoid undesired diagonal oriented constraints.

### III MODELING TIPS

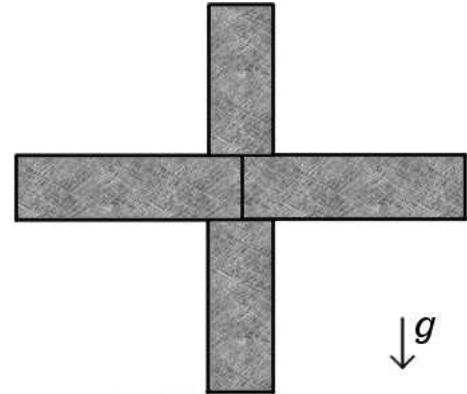
#### 1 The `Jenga` effect

By `Jenga` effect this document refers to describes the characteristic of rigid bodies of not being able to give in or break away if they were stacked upon each other like the wooden blocks of that popular game.

Rigid bodies are by design incompressible and indestructible so one needs to make sure they being hold together only by the connection constraints and that they are able to move away and to collapse, especially if that is the desired outcome of the simulation.

To deal with this issue in a convenient way BCB offers two options, beveling and rescaling, to change the collision shape accordingly. This can help to give all elements of the corresponding group more freedom of motion in all directions.

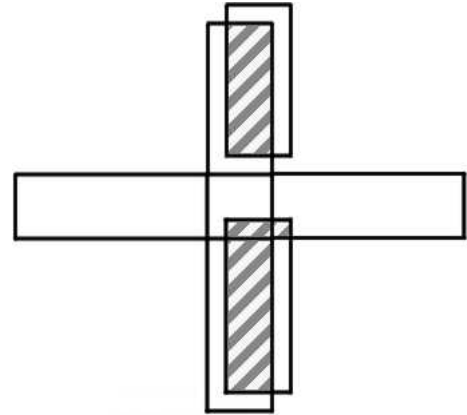
It is also possible to add an optional facing layer of element duplicates which will hide the visible changes of the underlying collision objects.



*Bad: Elements will not collapse even if all constraints are broken*

## 2 Element intersections

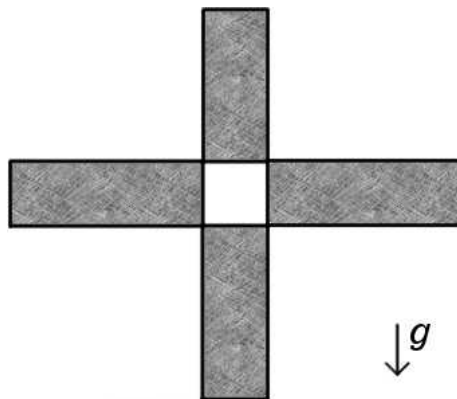
It is important that no active rigid body elements are intersecting each other, this would lead to an explosion like repelling reaction during simulation. Passive rigid body elements however can intersect each other, like for footings of a building that can intersect with a ground plane.



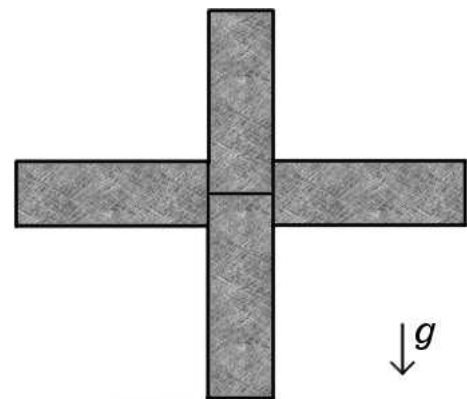
## 3 Connection evaluation

The search for connections starts by finding boundary box intersections of all mesh elements. Then for every found element pair the contact area will be calculated and only the contact area is  $> 0$  then a connection is created. You can have gaps between the elements as long as the distance between surfaces lies within *Search Distance*, all boundary boxes will be extended by this value.

*Bad: Elements overlapping others*



*Bad: No contact area*



*Optimal structure modeling*