AI505

Optimization

Local Descent

Marco Chiarandini

Department of Mathematics & Computer Science
University of Southern Denmark

Outline

Preface

For multivariate functions, we have argued that:

- derivatives can have exponential growth in the resulting analytical expression
- calculating zeros might be challenging

Hence, minimizing by solving $\nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}) = 0$ may be computationally demanding.

Outline

1. Line Search Methods
2. Convergence Analysis
3. Trust Region Methods

Descent Direction Iteration

Descent Direction Methods use a local model to incrementally improve design point until some convergence criteria is met.

1. Check termination conditions at $\boldsymbol{x}_k$; if not met, continue.
2. Decide **descent direction** $\boldsymbol{d}_k$ using local information, commonly required that $\boldsymbol{d}_k^T \nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}_k) < 0$.
3. Decide **step size** (ie, magnitude of the overall step that depends on α_k, sometimes but not always $\|\boldsymbol{d}_k\|_2 = 1$)
4. Compute next design point $\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1}$

$$\boxed{\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1} \leftarrow \boldsymbol{x}_k + \alpha_k \boldsymbol{d}_k}$$

Descent Direction

The search direction often has the form

$$\boldsymbol{d}_k = -B_k^{-1} \nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)$$

where B_k is a symmetric and nonsingular matrix.

- in the steepest descent method, B_k is the identity matrix I
- in Newton's method, B_k is the exact Hessian $\nabla^2 f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)$.
- in quasi-Newton methods, B_k is an approximation to the Hessian that is updated at every iteration by means of a low-rank formula.

When $\boldsymbol{d}_k = -B_k^{-1} \nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)$ and B_k is positive definite, we have

$$\boldsymbol{d}_k^T \nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}_k) = -\nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)^T B_k^{-1} \nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}_k) < 0$$

and therefore $\boldsymbol{d}_k$ is a descent direction.

Outline

- we discuss how to choose α_k and $\boldsymbol{d}_k$ to promote convergence from remote starting points.
- We also consider the rate of convergence of steepest descent, quasi-Newton, and Newton methods.

Line Search for Step Size

Assuming we have the search direction:

- Use it to compute α
- Using the techniques discussed in the previous class, solve:

$$\text{minimize}_{\alpha} f(\boldsymbol{x} + \alpha \boldsymbol{d})$$

```
def line_search(f, x, d)
  objective = lambda alpha: f(x + alpha * d)
  a, b = bracket_minimum(objective)
  alpha = minimize(objective, a, b)
  return x + alpha * d
```

Often computationally costly, so approximate line search is used instead

Line Search: Alternatives

α is called to the **learning rate** or **step factor**:

Equal to the $\|stepsize\|$ only when $\|\boldsymbol{d}_k\|_2 = 1$.

- Fixed learning rate

- **Decaying step factor**

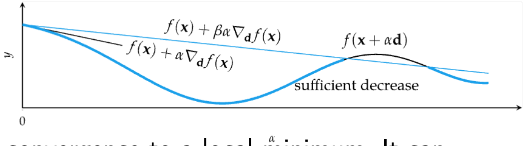
$$\alpha_k = \alpha_1 \gamma^{k-1} \qquad \text{for } \gamma \in [0, 1]$$

Decaying step factor is often required in convergence proofs

Approximate Line Search

- If function calls are expensive, rather than finding the minimum along a search direction, find a point of sufficient decrease

$$f(\mathbf{x}_{k+1}) \le f(\mathbf{x}_k) + \beta\alpha\nabla_{\mathbf{d}_k} f(\mathbf{x}_k)$$

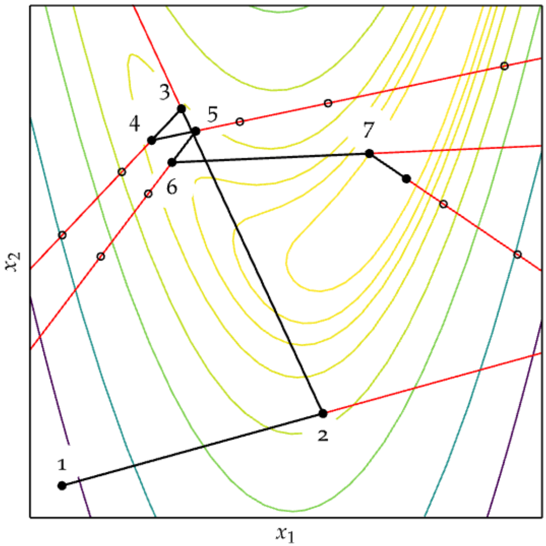


- $\beta \in [0, 1]$, usually $\beta = 1 \times 10^{-4}$
- Alone this condition is insufficient to guarantee convergence to a local minimum. It can converge prematurely.
- Backtracking line search starts with a large step and then backs off

```
def backtracking_line_search(f, grad, x, d, alpha_0=1, p=0.5, beta=1e-4):
    y, g, alpha = f(x), grad(x), alpha_0
    while ( f(x + alpha * d) > y + beta * alpha * np.dot(g, d) ) :
        alpha *= p
    return alpha
```

- Guaranteed to converge to a local minimum, but can be slow.

Approximate Line Search: Example



Approximate Line Search

Building on backtracking line search are the **Wolfe Conditions** together sufficient to guarantee convergence to a local minimum.

1. First Wolfe Condition: Sufficient Decrease (Armijo condition)

$$f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1}) \leq f(\boldsymbol{x}_k) + \beta\alpha\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)$$

2. Second Wolfe Condition: Curvature Condition

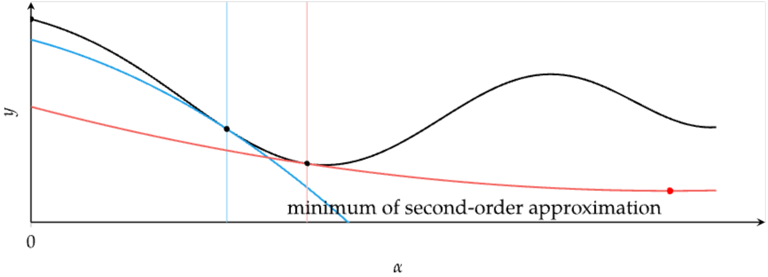
$$\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1}) \geq \sigma\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)$$

$\beta < \sigma < 1$ with
- $\sigma = 0.1$ with conjugate gradient method
- $\sigma = 0.9$ with Newton method

Approximate Line Search

The curvature condition ensures the second-order function approximations have positive curvature

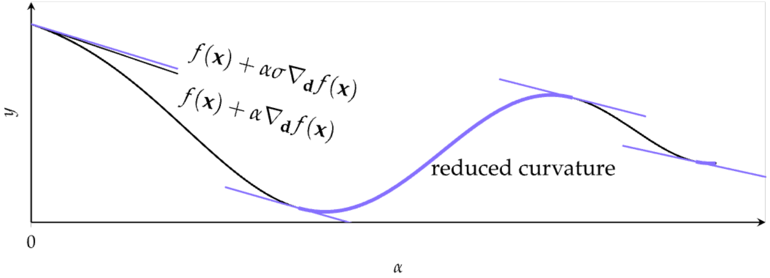
$$\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1}) \geq \sigma \nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)$$



Approximate Line Search

Regions satisfying the curvature condition $\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1}) \geq \sigma \nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)$

- Consider the univariate function $\phi(\alpha) = f(\boldsymbol{x}_k + \alpha \boldsymbol{d}_k)$.
- The left-hand-side is simply the derivative $\phi'(\alpha_k)$, so the curvature condition ensures that the slope of ϕ at α_k is greater than σ times the initial slope $\phi'(0)$.
- If the slope $\phi'(0)$ is negative, then we are looking for a step size α_k such that the slope of ϕ at that point is still negative but not too negative.
- If $\phi'(\alpha_k)$ is only slightly negative or even positive, it is a sign that we cannot expect much more decrease in f in this direction, so it makes sense to terminate the line search.



Approximate Line Search: Example

Consider approximate line search on $f(x_1, x_2) = x_1^2 + x_1x_2 + x_2^2$
from $\boldsymbol{x} = [1, 2]$ in the direction $\boldsymbol{d} = [-1, -1]$, gradient at $\boldsymbol{x}$ is $\boldsymbol{g} = [4, 5]$
using a maximum step size of 10, a reduction factor of 0.5,
first Wolfe condition parameter $\beta = 1 \times 10^{-4}$, second Wolfe condition parameter $\sigma = 0.9$.

First Wolfe condition $(f(\boldsymbol{x} + \alpha\boldsymbol{d}) \leq f(\boldsymbol{x}) + \beta\alpha(\boldsymbol{g}^T \cdot \boldsymbol{d}))$:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\alpha = 10: &\quad f([1,2] + 10 \cdot [-1,-1]) \leq 7 + 1 \times 10^{-4} 10 [4,5]^T [-1,-1] \implies 217 \not\leq 6.991 \\
\alpha = 10 \cdot 0.5 = 5: &\quad f([1,2] + 5 \cdot [-1,-1]) \leq 7 + 1 \times 10^{-4} 5 [4,5]^T [-1,-1] \implies 37 \not\leq 6.996 \\
\alpha = 2.5: &\quad f([1,2] + 2.5 \cdot [-1,-1]) \leq 7 + 1 \times 10^{-4} 2.5 [4,5]^T [-1,-1] \implies 3.25 \leq 6.998
\end{aligned}
$$

The candidate design point $\boldsymbol{x}' = \boldsymbol{x} + \alpha\boldsymbol{d} = [-1.5, -.0.5]$ is checked against the second Wolfe condition $\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}} f(\boldsymbol{x}') \geq \sigma \nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}} f(\boldsymbol{x})$:

$$
[-3.5, -2.5] \cdot [-1, -1] \geq \sigma [4, 5] \cdot [-1, -1] \implies 6 \geq -8.1
$$

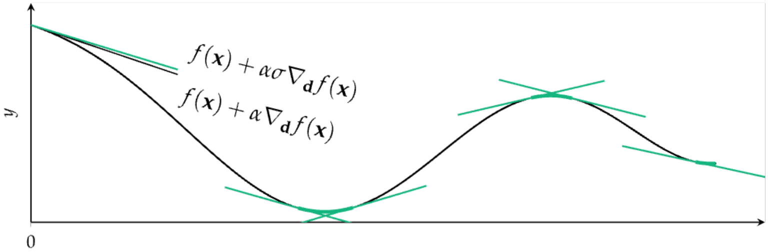
Approximate line search terminates with $\boldsymbol{x} = [-1.5, -0.5]$.

Approximate Line Search

A step length may satisfy the Wolfe conditions without being particularly close to a minimizer of ϕ. We can modify the curvature condition to force α_k to exclude points that are far from stationary points of ϕ, ie, we no longer allow the derivative $\phi'(\alpha_k)$ to be too positive.

Strong Wolf conditions:

$$f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1}) \leq f(\boldsymbol{x}_k) + \beta\alpha\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_k) \qquad \text{and} \qquad |\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1})| \leq \sigma|\nabla_{\boldsymbol{d}_k} f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)|$$



Approximate Line Search

- Satisfying the strong Wolfe conditions requires a more complicated algorithm

  Strong backtracking line search:

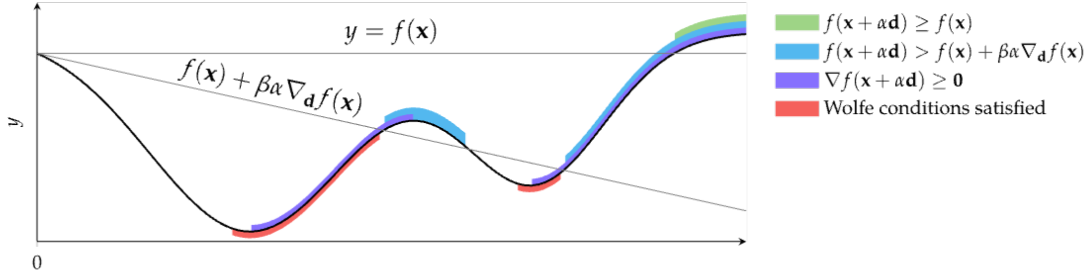
  1. Bracketing Phase: tests successively larger step sizes to bracket an interval $[\alpha_{k-1}, \alpha_k]$ guaranteed to contain step lengths satisfying the Wolfe conditions.
  2. Zoom Phase: shrink the interval using bisection to find point satisfying the **strong** Wolfe conditions

Approximate Line Search

1. Bracketing Phase
An interval guaranteed to contain step lengths satisfying the Wolfe conditions is found when one of the following conditions hold:

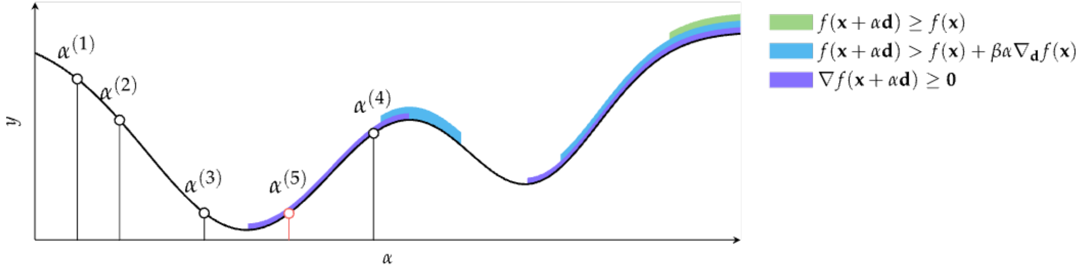
$$f(\boldsymbol{x}+\alpha\boldsymbol{d}) \geq f(\boldsymbol{x})$$
$$f(\boldsymbol{x}+\alpha\boldsymbol{d}) > f(\boldsymbol{x}) + \beta\alpha\nabla\boldsymbol{d}f(\boldsymbol{x})$$
$$\nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}+\alpha\boldsymbol{d}) \geq 0$$

Violation of Wolfe conditions



Approximate Line Search

1. Braketing Phase + zoom phase (α_5)



Approximate Line Search

```
def strong_backtracking(f, nabla, x, d; alpha=1, beta=1e-4, sigma=0.1)
  y0, g0, y_prev, alpha_prev = f(x), nabla(x) @ d, NaN, 0
  alpha_lo, alpha_hi = NaN, NaN
```

```
# bracket phase
while true
  y = f(x + alpha*d)
  if y > y0 + beta*alpha*g0 || (!isnan(y_prev) && y >= y_prev)
    alpha_lo, alpha_hi = alpha_prev, alpha
    break
  dir_gradient = g(x + alpha*d) @ d
  if abs(dir_gradient) <= -sigma * g0
    return alpha
  elif dir_gradient <= 0
    alpha_lo, alpha_hi = alpha, alpha_prev
```

Outline

Convergence Analysis

Let $\{\boldsymbol{x}_k\}$ be a sequence of points belonging in $\mathbb{R}^n$.
We say that a sequence $\{\boldsymbol{x}_k\}$ converges to some point $\boldsymbol{x}$, written $\lim_{k\text{ß}\infty} \boldsymbol{x}_k = x$, if for any $\epsilon > 0$, there is an index K such that

$$\|\boldsymbol{x}_k - \boldsymbol{x}\| \leq \epsilon \qquad \text{for all } k \geq K$$

For example, the sequence $\boldsymbol{x}_k$ defined by $\boldsymbol{x}_k = (1 - 2^{-k}, 1/k^2)^T$ converges to $(1, 0)^T$.

Convergence of Line Search

Let θ_k be the angle between $\boldsymbol{d}_k$ and the steepest descent direction $-\nabla f_k$, defined by:

$$\cos\theta_k = \frac{-\nabla f_k^T \boldsymbol{d}_k}{\|\nabla f_k\|\,\|\boldsymbol{d}_k\|}$$

Theorem (Zoutendijk condition)

Consider any iteration of the form $\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1} \leftarrow \boldsymbol{x}_k + \alpha_k \boldsymbol{d}_k$, where $\boldsymbol{d}_k$ is a descent direction and α_k satisfies the Wolfe conditions. Suppose that f is bounded below in $\mathbb{R}^n$ and that f is continuously differentiable in an open set N containing the level set $\mathcal{L} = \{x : f(x) \leq f(x_0)\}$, where x_0 is the starting point of the iteration. Assume also that the gradient ∇f is Lipschitz continuous on N, that is, there exists a constant $L > 0$ such that:

$$|f(x) - f(y)| \leq L|x - y|, \quad \forall x, y \in N$$

Then:

$$\sum_{k\geq 0} \cos^2\theta_k \,\|\nabla f_k\|^2 < \infty$$

The Zoutendijk condition implies that

$$\cos^2 \theta_k \, \|\nabla f_k\|^2 \to 0$$

We can be sure that the gradient norms $\|\nabla f_k\|$ converge to zero, provided that the search directions are never too close to orthogonality with the gradient.

Rate of Convergence

Let $\{\boldsymbol{x}_k\}$ be a sequence in $\mathbb{R}^n$ that converges to $\boldsymbol{x}^*$.
The convergence is said to be **Q-linear** (quotient-linear) if there is a constant $r \in (0, 1)$ such that

$$\boxed{\frac{\|\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1} - \boldsymbol{x}^*\|}{\|\boldsymbol{x}_k - \boldsymbol{x}^*\|} \leq r \qquad \text{for all } k \text{ sufficiently large}}$$

ie, the distance to the solution $\boldsymbol{x}^*$ decreases at each iteration by at least a constant factor bounded away from 1 (ie, < 1).

Example:
sequence $\{1 + (0.5)^k\}$ converges Q-linearly to 1, with rate $r = 0.5$.

Rate of Convergence

The convergence is said to be **Q-superlinear** if

$$\boxed{\lim_{k\to\infty} \frac{\|\mathbf{x}_{k+1} - \mathbf{x}^*\|}{\|\mathbf{x}_k - \mathbf{x}^*\|} = 0}$$

Example: the sequence $\{1 + k^{-k}\}$ converges superlinearly to 1.

An even more rapid convergence rate: The convergence is said to be **Q-quadratic** if

$$\boxed{\frac{\|\mathbf{x}_{k+1} - \mathbf{x}^*\|}{\|\mathbf{x}_k - \mathbf{x}^*\|^2} \leq M \qquad \text{for all } k \text{ sufficiently large}}$$

where M is a positive constant, not necessarily less than 1. Example: the sequence $\{1 + (0.5)^{2^k}\}$. The values of r and M depend not only on the algorithm but also on the properties of the particular problem. Regardless of these values a quadratically convergent sequence will always eventually converge faster than a linearly convergent sequence.

Rate of Convergence

Superlinear convergence (quadratic, cubic, quartic, etc) is regarded as fast and desirable, while sublinear convergence is usually impractical.

- Steepest descent algorithms converge only at a Q-linear rate, and when the problem is ill-conditioned the convergence constant r in is close to 1.
- Quasi-Newton methods for unconstrained optimization typically converge Q-superlinearly
- Newton's method converges Q-quadratically under appropriate assumptions.

Rate of Convergence

A slightly weaker form of convergence:
overall rate of decrease in the error, rather than the decrease over each individual step of the algorithm.
We say that convergence is **R-linear** (root-linear) if there is a sequence of nonnegative scalars $\{v_k\}$ such that

$\|\boldsymbol{x}_k - \boldsymbol{x}^*\| \leq \{v_k\}$ for all k, and $\{v_k\}$ converges Q-linearly to zero.

Outline

1. Line Search Methods

2. Convergence Analysis

3. Trust Region Methods

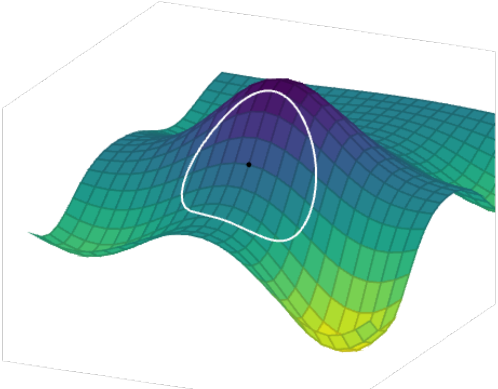
Trust Region Methods

- Descent methods can place too much trust in their first and second order information
- A **trust region** is the local area of the design space where the local model is believed to be reliable.
- Trust region methods, or restricted step methods, limit the step size to ensure local approximation error is minimized
- If the improvement matches the predicted value, the trust region is expanded; otherwise it is contracted

Trust Region Methods

- $\boldsymbol{x}'$ is new design point
- $\hat{f}(\boldsymbol{x}')$ is local function approximation, eg, second-order Taylor approximation
- δ is trust region radius

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{minimize}_{\boldsymbol{x}'} \hat{f}(\boldsymbol{x}') \\ &\text{subject to} \quad \|\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{x}'\| \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$



Constrained optimization problem.
It can be solved efficiently if $\hat{f}$ quadratic

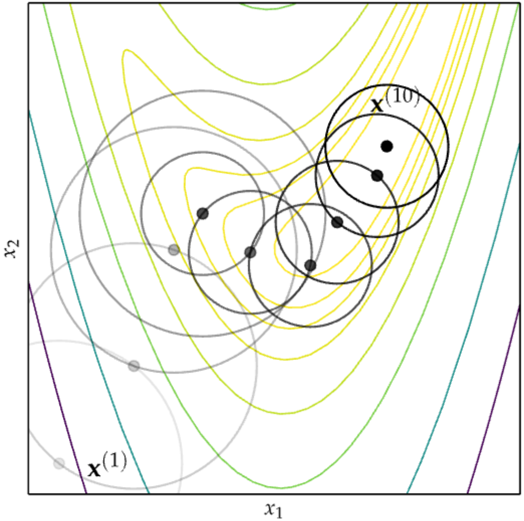
Trust Region Methods

δ can be expanded or contracted based on performance

$$\eta = \frac{\text{actual improvement}}{\text{predicted improvement}} = \frac{f(\boldsymbol{x}) - f(\boldsymbol{x}')}{f(\boldsymbol{x}) - \hat{f}(\boldsymbol{x}')}$$

If $\eta < \eta_1$ contract by a factor $\gamma_k < 1$
if $\eta > \eta_2$ expand by a factor $\gamma_k > 1$

Trust Region Methods: Example



Trust regions can be also non circular.

Trust Region Methods

Termination Conditions (commonly used together):

- Maximum Iterations: $k > k_{\text{max}}$
- Aboslute Improvement: $f(\boldsymbol{x}_k) - f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1}) < \epsilon_a$
- Relative Improvement: $f(\boldsymbol{x}_k) - f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1}) < \epsilon_r |f(\boldsymbol{x}_k)|$
- Gradient Magnitude: $||\nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}_{k+1})|| < \epsilon_g$

Then random restart.

Summary

- Descent direction methods incrementally descend toward a local optimum.
- Univariate optimization can be applied during line search.
- Approximate line search can be used to identify appropriate descent step sizes.
- Trust region methods constrain the step to lie within a local region that expands or contracts based on predictive accuracy.
- Termination conditions for descent methods can be based on criteria such as the change in the objective function value or magnitude of the gradient.