

Inverted pendulum model

Daniel Chen

January 21, 2026

1 Physics model of inverted pendulum

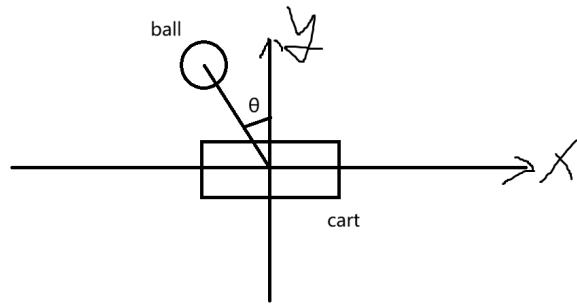


Figure 1: simplified figure

We assume that the mass of the cart is m_1 , the mass of the ball is m_2 , the length of pendulum is l , the angle between pendulum and y axis is θ .

2 Lagrange's Equation

The main purpose of Lagrange's Equation is to derive the equation of motion of a mechanical system by using generalized coordinates and least action principle, without directly applying Newton's Law.

T means kinetic energy, V means potential energy.

Q_i means force, q_i means different kind of generalized coordinate.

$$L = T - V$$
$$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}_i} \right) - \frac{\partial L}{\partial q_i} = Q_i$$

3 Dynamic model of inverted pendulum

There are only 2 movable points.

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{cart position: } (x_1, y_1) \\ &\text{ball position: } (x_2, y_2) \end{aligned}$$

According to the graph, we can easily calculate the ball position:

$$\begin{cases} x_2 = x_1 + l \sin \theta \\ y_2 = y_1 + l \cos \theta = l \cos \theta \end{cases}$$

so we will use x_1 and y_1 to represent ball position in the following deduction.

$$\begin{aligned} T &= \frac{1}{2}m_1(\dot{x}_1^2 + \dot{y}_1^2) + \frac{1}{2}m_2(\dot{x}_2^2 + \dot{y}_2^2) \\ &= \frac{1}{2}m_1\dot{x}_1^2 + \frac{1}{2}m_2\left(\dot{x}_1^2 + l^2\dot{\theta}^2 - 2l\dot{x}_1\dot{\theta}\cos\theta\right) \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

$$V = m_2gl\cos\theta \quad (2)$$

$$L = \frac{1}{2}m_1\dot{x}_1^2 + \frac{1}{2}m_2\left(\dot{x}_1^2 + l^2\dot{\theta}^2 - 2l\dot{x}_1\dot{\theta}\cos\theta\right) - m_2gl\cos\theta \quad (3)$$

As mentioned above, to calculate force in coordinate x, let $q_i = x_1$.

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial x_1} = 0 \quad (4)$$

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{x}_1} = (m_1 + m_2)\dot{x}_1 - m_2l\dot{\theta}\cos\theta \quad (5)$$

$$\frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{x}_1}\right) = (m_1 + m_2)\ddot{x}_1 - m_2l\left(\ddot{\theta}\cos\theta - \dot{\theta}^2\sin\theta\right) \quad (6)$$

$$\begin{aligned} F_x &= \frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{x}_1}\right) - \frac{\partial L}{\partial x_1} \\ &= (m_1 + m_2)\ddot{x}_1 - m_2l\left(\ddot{\theta}\cos\theta - \dot{\theta}^2\sin\theta\right) \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

To portray this system in angle dimension, let $q_i = \theta$.

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{\theta}} = m_2 l \dot{x}_1 \dot{\theta} \sin \theta + m_2 g l \sin \theta \quad (8)$$

$$\frac{\partial L}{\partial \ddot{\theta}} = m_2 l^2 \ddot{\theta} - m_2 l \dot{x}_1 \cos \theta \quad (9)$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{\theta}} \right) = m_2 l^2 \ddot{\theta} - m l \left(\ddot{x}_1 \cos \theta - \dot{\theta} \dot{x}_1 \sin \theta \right) \quad (10)$$

$$F_\theta = m_2 l^2 \ddot{\theta} - m l \left(\ddot{x}_1 \cos \theta - \dot{\theta} \dot{x}_1 \sin \theta \right) - m_2 l^2 \dot{\theta} + m_2 l \dot{x}_1 \cos \theta \quad (11)$$

It's known that $F_\theta = 0$ (the force F_x only acts on cart, neither pendulum nor ball),so from formula(7)and(11),we can get equation set.

$$\begin{cases} (m_1 + m_2) \ddot{x}_1 - m_2 l \left(\ddot{\theta} \cos \theta - \dot{\theta}^2 \sin \theta \right) - F_x = 0 \\ m_2 l^2 \ddot{\theta} - m l \left(\ddot{x}_1 \cos \theta - \dot{\theta} \dot{x}_1 \sin \theta \right) - m_2 l^2 \dot{\theta} + m_2 l \dot{x}_1 \cos \theta = 0 \end{cases} \quad (12)$$

After simplification results are shown as follows,we will finally use these two equations to implement the part of status updaters in simulation program.

$$\begin{cases} \ddot{x}_1 = \frac{F_x + m_2 g \sin \theta \cos \theta - m_2 l \dot{\theta}^2 \sin \theta}{m_1 + m_2 \sin^2 \theta} \\ \ddot{\theta} = \frac{(m_1 + m_2) g \sin \theta + F_x \cos \theta - m_2 l \dot{\theta}^2 \sin \theta \cos \theta}{l (m_1 + m_2 \sin^2 \theta)} \end{cases} \quad (13)$$