

# Operating Principle of RobotMotion Library

CK-Explorer\*

## 1 Introduction

This library is written specifically for this type of SCARA robot<sup>1</sup> which has one of its motor not located in its joint for stability purpose as in figure 1. Hence, this robot has its special DH parameters which will be explained in Section 2.

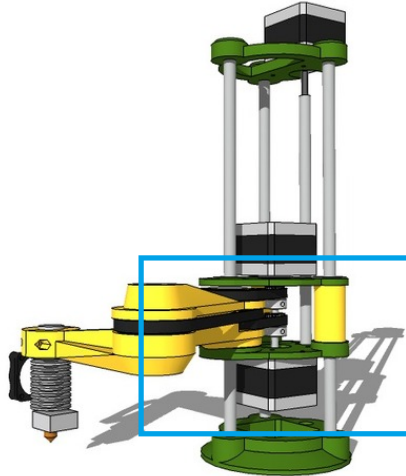


Figure 1: The blue boxed region indicates that the stepper motor responsible for link 2 (between joint 2 and 3) is not placed on the joint 2 and the rotation motion is transmitted using timing belt.

This library consists of two main functions, i.e.

- i `int coordinates2step()`
- ii `int motion(void(*speedTimeFcn)(float, float, float, float, float, float, int), void(*endEffectorFcn)(int))`

As their names implied, function (i) converts the user-defined coordinates of the end-effector to the number of steps required by the stepper motors to transition from one coordinate to the other. Meanwhile, function (ii) controls the time for the stepper motor to move each step, so that a smooth motion can

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\*With the help of my coursework's partners in building this hardware.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:1241491>, thanks to Idegraaf for open sourcing it.

be executed. Both of these functions will be briefly explained in Section 3 and 4 respectively.

## 2 SCARA Robot Specification

Skeleton diagram in figure 2 shows the essential parameters involved in determining the frame orientation and the global position of the end-effector with respect to inertial reference frame or frame 0.

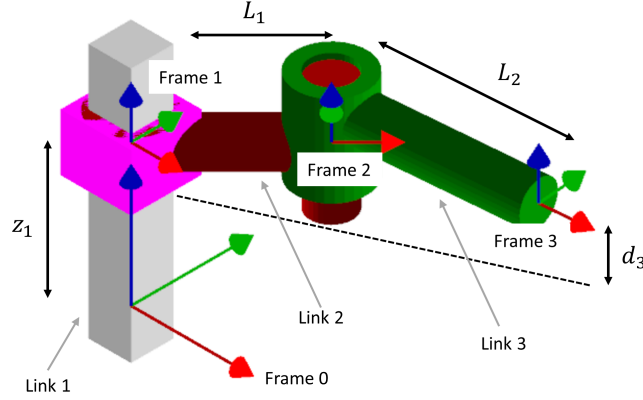


Figure 2: Skeleton diagram for determining the DH parameters.

2

Nonetheless, since the motor controlling link 3 (arm 2) is placed along the z-axis of frame 1 but not on joint 2, then by supposing  $\theta_1$  and  $\theta_2$  represents the orientations of frames 2 and 3 with respect to frame 1 respectively, we have the DH parameters listed out in table 1.

Table 1: DH parameters of the SCARA Robot

Joint	Link	$\theta_i$	$\alpha_i$	$r_i$	$d_i$
0 - 1	1	0	0	0	$z_1$
1 - 2	2	$\theta_1$	0	$L_1$	0
1 - 2	2	$-\theta_1$	0	0	0
2 - 3	3	$\theta_2$	0	$L_2$	0

Notice that the extra third row in table 1 causes it to have special DH parameters. Then, the homogenous transformation matrix of joint 3 relative to joint 0,  ${}^0T_3$  is derived, which the orientation of joint 3 depends only on  $\theta_2$  but not  $\theta_1 + \theta_2$ .

$${}^0T_3 = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta_2 & -\sin \theta_2 & 0 & L_1 \cos \theta_1 + L_2 \cos \theta_2 \\ \sin \theta_2 & \cos \theta_2 & 0 & L_1 \sin \theta_1 + L_2 \sin \theta_2 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & z_1 + d_3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (1)$$

<sup>2</sup>red-axis = x-axis, green-axis = y-axis, blue-axis = z-axis. Also, joints 0, 1, 2 and 3 are located at frame 0, 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

(Library's public parameters)  $L_1 = \text{armLength1}$ ,  $L_2 = \text{armLength2}$ ,  $d_3 = \text{zOffset}$

### 3 `int` coordinates2step()

Suppose the global coordinate of the end effector is  $(x, y, z)$  with respect to frame 0, then this function will convert this coordinate to the variables  $\theta_1$ ,  $\theta_2$  and  $z_1$  from Eq. 1, through inverse kinematic process, and this function can be divided into three sub functions, i.e.

- i `void` offsetZaxis()
- ii `void` coordinates2angle()
- iii `void` angle2step()

Function (i) removes the offset,  $d_3$  from  $z$ , while function (ii) converts  $x$  and  $y$  to  $\theta_1$  and  $\theta_2$ .

Lastly, the differences of the next and present states of  $\theta_1$ ,  $\theta_2$  and  $z_1$  will be computed by function (iii), which are then further converted to the number of steps required for each of the stepper motors to move.

#### 3.1 `void` offsetZaxis()

$z_1$ <sup>3</sup> can be easily obtained through Eq. 1, which results in Eq. 2.

$$z_1 = z - d_3 \quad (2)$$

#### 3.2 `void` coordinates2angle()

Meanwhile,  $\theta_1$  and  $\theta_2$ <sup>4</sup> (both in radian) can be solved from the triangular solution in figure 3.

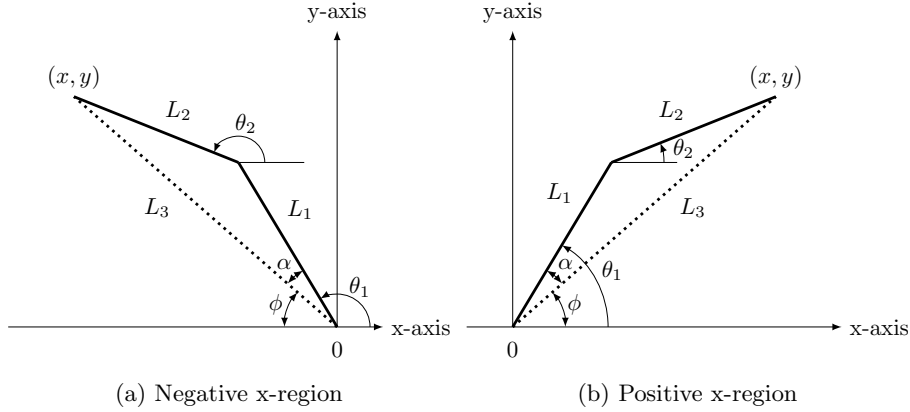


Figure 3: For  $x$ - $y$  Cartesian coordinate system with respect to frame 0, the workspace of the robotic arm is restricted inside the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quadrants.

<sup>3</sup>(Library's protected parameter)  $z_1 = z_{\text{New}}$

<sup>4</sup>(Library's protected parameters)  $\theta_1 = \text{angleMotor1}$ ,  $\theta_2 = \text{angleMotor2}$

The following equations are deduced,

$$L_3 = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2} \quad (3)$$

$$\alpha = \cos^{-1} \frac{L_1^2 + L_3^2 - L_2^2}{2L_1L_3} \quad (4)$$

$$\phi = \left| \tan^{-1} \frac{y}{x} \right| \quad (5)$$

$$\theta_1 = \begin{cases} \phi + \alpha & x \geq 0 \\ \pi - (\phi + \alpha) & x < 0 \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

$$\theta_2 = \sin^{-1} \frac{y - L_1 \sin \theta_1}{L_2} \quad (7)$$

The sine function is chosen in Eq. 7 since it is positive in both first and second quadrants which simplifies the calculation.

One important sidenote, based on figure 3, only the positive  $y$ -axis is involved, hence positive values with zero inclusive must be solely used for  $y$ , else calculation errors will be arised.

### 3.3 void angle2step()

Before proceeding to any explanation about the calculation, it is important to understand three parameters, i.e. teeth ratio, lead and step per revolution.

Teeth ratio refers to the ratio of gear teeth of the arm and the motor. Like the robotic arm in figure 4, the gear on the arm consists of 62 gear teeth while the motor has the 20 teeth, then the ratio will be  $\frac{62}{20}$ . This ratio for arm 1 (link 2) and arm 2 (link 3) are represented as  $T_1$  and  $T_2$ <sup>5</sup> respectively.

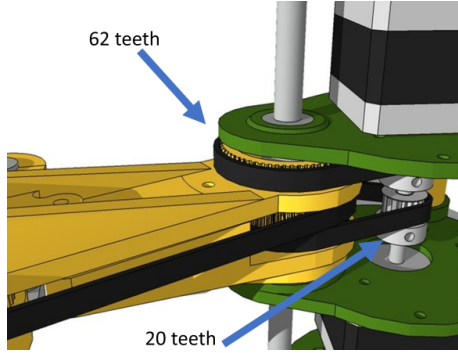


Figure 4: Locations of the gears of the robotic arm and motor

Lead refers to the screw lead. For example, if a nut can travel 0.8 unit of length when the screw performs one revolution, then lead = 0.8<sup>6</sup>. Let  $l$  be the lead of the power screw in link 1<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>(Library's public parameters)  $T_1 = \text{teethRatio1}$   $T_2 = \text{teethRatio2}$

<sup>6</sup>The length's unit must be the same as other parameters which involves the length's unit.

<sup>7</sup>(Library's public parameter)  $l = \text{lead}$

Step per revolution refers to the number of steps performed by the stepper motor after one revolution. For instance, if a stepper motor undergoes 400 steps to complete a revolution, then this parameter = 400. For the motors controlling link 1, 2, 3, such numbers are represented as  $S_z$ ,  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  <sup>8</sup> respectively.

Suppose this convention which  $\theta_m^n$  and  $\theta_m^p$  represent the next and present angles respectively of link  $m + 1$  from previous section 3.2. While  $x_n$  and  $x_p$  represents the next and present states of  $x$ , the same applies to  $y$  and  $z$  global coordinates. Then, this function will first compute the angles and height differences as follows:

For arm 1 or link 2,

$$\Delta\theta_1 = \theta_1^n - \theta_1^p \quad (8)$$

which is bounded in  $0 \leq \Delta\theta_1 \leq 2\pi$ , but in fact it will be  $0 \leq \Delta\theta_1 \leq \pi$  all the time since the robotic arm is only allowed to move in positive  $y$ -region with respect to the inertial frame.

For arm 2 or link 3, the difference is first computed,

$$\Delta\theta'_2 = \theta_2^n - \theta_2^p \quad (9)$$

which is also bounded in  $0 \leq \Delta\theta'_2 \leq 2\pi$ . Then to avoid any collision between links 2 and 3, an extra operation is implemented as follows:

$$\Delta\theta_2 = \begin{cases} \Delta\theta'_2 + 2\pi & x_n < 0 \cap x_p > 0 \cap \Delta\theta'_2 < 0 \\ \Delta\theta'_2 - 2\pi & x_n \geq 0 \cap x_p < 0 \cap \Delta\theta'_2 > 0 \end{cases} \quad (10)$$

For the height difference of next and present states for link 1,

$$\Delta z = z_n - z_p \quad (11)$$

Lastly, the total number of steps,  $n_t$  transistioning from one coordinate to the other for motors controlling link 1, link 2 (arm 1), and link 3 (arm 2) are represented in  $n_{tz}$ ,  $n_{t1}$  and  $n_{t2}$  <sup>9</sup> with their rotational directions,  $R$  stored in  $R_z$ ,  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  respectively <sup>10</sup>.

$$n_{tz} = \frac{|\Delta z|}{l} S_z \quad (12)$$

$$n_{t1} = \frac{|\Delta\theta_1|}{2\pi} T_1 S_1 \quad (13)$$

$$n_{t2} = \frac{|\Delta\theta_2|}{2\pi} T_2 S_2 \quad (14)$$

The value of rotation direction is assigned to HIGH for clockwise and LOW for anticlockwise motions.

<sup>8</sup>(Library's public parameters)  $S_1 = \text{stepPerRev1}$ ,  $S_2 = \text{stepPerRev2}$ ,  $S_z = \text{stepPerRevZaxis}$

<sup>9</sup>(Library's protected parameters)  $n_{t1} = \text{step1}$ ,  $n_{t2} = \text{step2}$ ,  $n_{tz} = \text{stepZaxis}$

<sup>10</sup>(Library's protected parameters)  $R_1 = \text{direction1}$ ,  $R_2 = \text{direction1}$ ,  $R_z = \text{directionZaxis}$

#### 4 `int motion(void(*speedTimeFcn)(float, ...), void(*endEffectorFcn)(int))`

Let us conceive a situation that a robotic arm is moving from a constant high speed to a complete halt, a sudden large change of momentum causes the robotic arm failing to stop and continuing its motion, leading to the inaccuracy in the translation of the end effector from this point onwards. This problem can be addressed by varying the speed of the arms gracefully and the implemented solution here is using trapezoidal velocity profile.

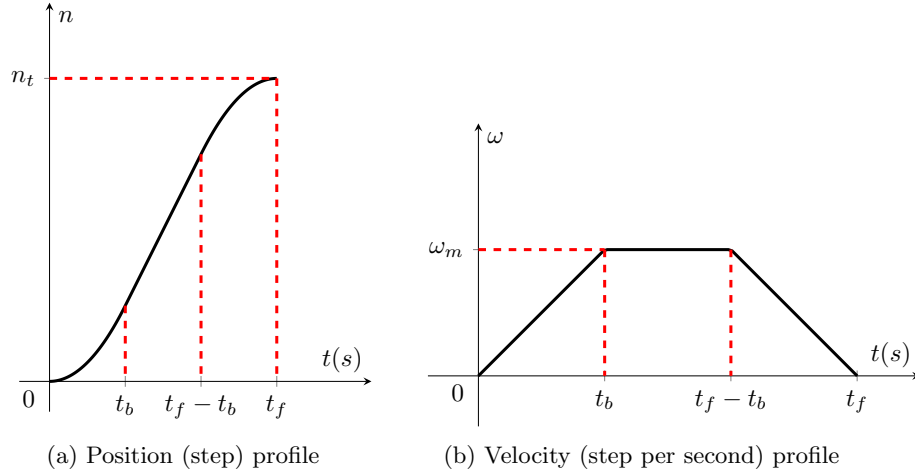


Figure 5: Each motor will undergo these profiles to complete the angles differences computed in Section 3.3 from one coordinate to the other.

11

This velocity profile will result in a linear segment with parabolic blends position profile, which can be represented by Eq. 15 and Eq 16 respectively.

$$n = \begin{cases} \frac{\omega_m t^2}{2t_b} & 0 \leq t \leq t_b \\ \omega_m t - \frac{\omega_m t_b}{2} & t_b \leq t \leq t_f - t_b \\ n_t - \frac{\omega_m}{2t_b} (t - t_f)^2 & t_f - t_b \leq t \leq t_f \end{cases} \quad (15)$$

$$\omega = \begin{cases} \frac{\omega_m t}{t_b} & 0 \leq t \leq t_b \\ \omega_m & t_b \leq t \leq t_f - t_b \\ -\frac{\omega_m}{t_b} (t - t_f) & t_f - t_b \leq t \leq t_f \end{cases} \quad (16)$$

The blending time,  $t_b$  in Eq. 17 is bounded between 0 and  $\frac{t_f}{2}$ , which causes  $\omega_m$  always have this condition in Eq. 18.

$$t_b = t_f - \frac{n_t}{\omega_m} \quad (17)$$

$$\frac{n_t}{t_f} < \omega_m \leq \frac{2n_t}{t_f} \quad (18)$$

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<sup>11</sup> $t$  = time (second),  $t_b$  = blending time,  $t_f$  = the final time to arrive the desired angle,  
 $n$  = the number of steps executed,  $\omega$  = number of steps / second,  
 $n_t$  = the total number of steps as described in Section 3.3,  $\omega_m$  = maximum  $\omega$

Hence, users are required to input a list of times,  $t_f$  to reach a list of coordinates from its previous stopping point together with a list of their corresponding maximum cruising speeds,  $\omega_m$ <sup>12</sup>. Besides, the maximum permissible rotational speed limit,  $\omega_p$  of the stepper motors also need to be specified<sup>13</sup>.

This library will first adjust the suitable  $\omega_m$  according to  $t_f$ . If  $\omega_m$  is within the limits stated in Eq. 18, then it will utilize the user defined  $\omega_m$ . Else, it will either use the lower or upper bounds of Eq. 18. However, if  $\omega_m$  chosen by this library is more than  $\omega_p$ , then  $\omega_m$  is first assigned to the value of  $\omega_p$ , next  $t_f$  is redetermined using Eq. 19, which its value will definitely more than the user's assigned  $t_f$ .

$$t_f = \frac{2n_t}{\omega_m} \quad (19)$$

With these  $t_f$  and  $\omega_m$ ,  $t_b$  will then be calculated through Eq. 17. The control of the motor speed is achieved by sending square wave signals to the IO pin<sup>14</sup> based on different time intervals,  $\Delta t$  from the position profile in Fig 5a<sup>15</sup>.

Nevertheless, finding  $\Delta t$  from Eq. 15 will involve square root function, causing inefficient computations for Arduino Uno or Mega, and hence the stepper motor might not able to complete the step within the expected  $\Delta t$  especially for very short translation time. Therefore, linear approximation is used in this library.

Since  $\frac{dn}{dt} \approx \frac{\Delta n}{\Delta t}$ , it can also be written as  $\Delta t \approx \Delta n \left(\frac{dn}{dt}\right)^{-1}$ . Using  $\frac{dn}{dt}$  or  $\omega$  from Eq. 16 and setting  $\Delta n = 1$ , we have

$$\Delta t = \begin{cases} \frac{t_b}{\omega_m t} & 0 \leq t \leq t_b \\ \frac{1}{\omega_m} & t_b \leq t \leq t_f - t_b \\ \frac{t_b}{\omega_m(t_f - t)} & t_f - t_b \leq t \leq t_f \end{cases} \quad (20)$$

which  $\Delta t$  represents the time to send a high pulse after the last high pulse.

Nevertheless, a cycle of square wave must contain a high and a low, hence a low pulse must be sent as well. Then  $\Delta t$  in Eq. 20 must be halved again, producing  $\Delta t'$ ,

$$\Delta t' = \begin{cases} \frac{t_b}{2\omega_m t} & 0 \leq t \leq t_b \\ \frac{1}{2\omega_m} & t_b \leq t \leq t_f - t_b \\ \frac{t_b}{2\omega_m(t_f - t)} & t_f - t_b \leq t \leq t_f \end{cases} \quad (21)$$

which is the time interval to send high pulse and low pulse alternatively.

The first value of  $t$  is required to be initialized. From the first function of Eq. 15 and setting  $n = \Delta n = \frac{1}{2}$ , the initial value of  $t$  is  $\sqrt{\frac{t_b}{\omega_m}}$ . Then, subsequents  $t$  are incremented with  $\Delta t'$  after sending each high or low pulse alternatively. This whole process continues until  $n$  reaches  $n_t$  and it is summarized in pseudocode 1<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>12</sup>(Library's public parameters)  $t_f$  = time (struct),  $\omega_m$  = maxCruisingSpeed (struct)

<sup>13</sup>(Library's public parameters)  $\omega_p$  = limitSpeed\_vZaxis (link 1), limitSpeed.v1 (link 2), limitSpeed.v2 (link 3)

<sup>14</sup>(Library's public parameters) IO pins = stepperPin\_pZaxis (link 1), stepperPin.p1 (link 2), stepperPin.p2(link 3)

<sup>15</sup>Suitable for motor drivers such as DRV8825 and A4988.

<sup>16</sup>This is only for one joint, refer to the .cpp code for three joints' contols.

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**Algorithm 1** Inner loop of int motion(...) for a single joint

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**Input:**  $t_f > 0, \omega_m > 0,$  ▷ User-defined variables  
 $n_t > 0, R = \text{HIGH/LOW}$  ▷ From Section 3.3  
 $\text{speedTimeFcn}, \text{endEffectorFcn}$  ▷ User-defined functors  
**Output:** Square wave signal to motor stepping input pin  
**if**  $\omega_m \leq \frac{n_t}{t_f}$  **then** ▷ From lower bound of Eq. 18  
 $\omega_m \leftarrow \frac{n_t}{t_f}$   
**else if**  $\omega_m > \frac{2n_t}{t_f}$  **then** ▷ From upper bound of Eq. 18  
 $\omega_m \leftarrow \frac{2n_t}{t_f}$   
**end if**  
**if**  $\omega_m > \omega_p$  **then**  
 $\omega_m \leftarrow \omega_p$   
calculate  $t_f$  ▷ From Eq. 19  
**end if**  
perform  $\text{speedTimeFcn}$   
motor directional input pin  $\leftarrow R$   
motor stepping input pin  $\leftarrow \text{LOW}$   
calculation  $\leftarrow \text{true}$   
 $n \leftarrow 0$   
 $t \leftarrow \sqrt{\frac{t_b}{\omega_m}}$  ▷ Initialize t  
 $t_{1st} \leftarrow \text{present time}$  ▷ Checking present time  
**while**  $n \leq n_t$  **do**  
**if** calculation = true **then**  
calculate  $\Delta t'$  ▷ From Eq. 21  
 $t \leftarrow t + \Delta t'$   
calculation  $\leftarrow \text{false}$   
**end if**  
 $t_{2nd} \leftarrow \text{present time}$  ▷ Checking present time  
**if**  $t_{2nd} - t_{1st} \geq \Delta t'$  **then**  
 $t_{1st} \leftarrow \text{present time}$   
**if** motor stepping input pin = LOW **then**  
motor stepping input pin  $\leftarrow \text{HIGH}$   
 $n \leftarrow n + 1$   
**else**  
motor stepping input pin  $\leftarrow \text{LOW}$   
**end if**  
calculation  $\leftarrow \text{true}$   
**end if**  
**end while**  
perform  $\text{endEffectorFcn}$

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END