Exploiting Quasi-Direct Drive Actuation in a Knee Exoskeleton for Effective Human-Robot Interaction

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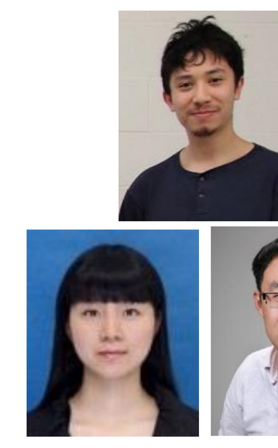

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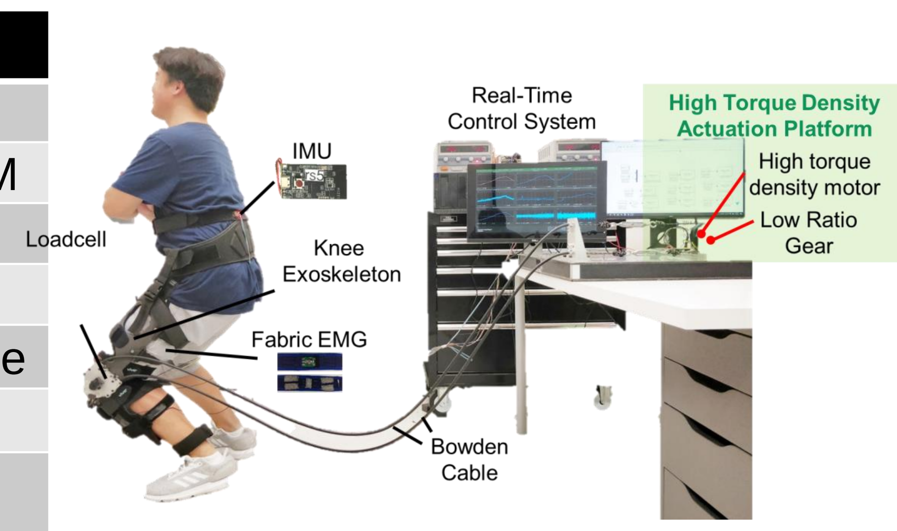
Motivation/Introduction

- More than $15 billion yearly due to physical overexertion of workers
- Stooping, kneeling and squatting increase the risk of developing bursitis, tendinitis, or osteoarthritis of the knee
- Exoskeletons have potential to mitigate the injury incidence and augment human
- Goal: lightweight, compliant, versatile devices to reduce musculoskeletal injuries

Tethered and Portable Soft Exoskeleton Systems

- Tethered System: lightweight, scientific platform to study control and biomechanics

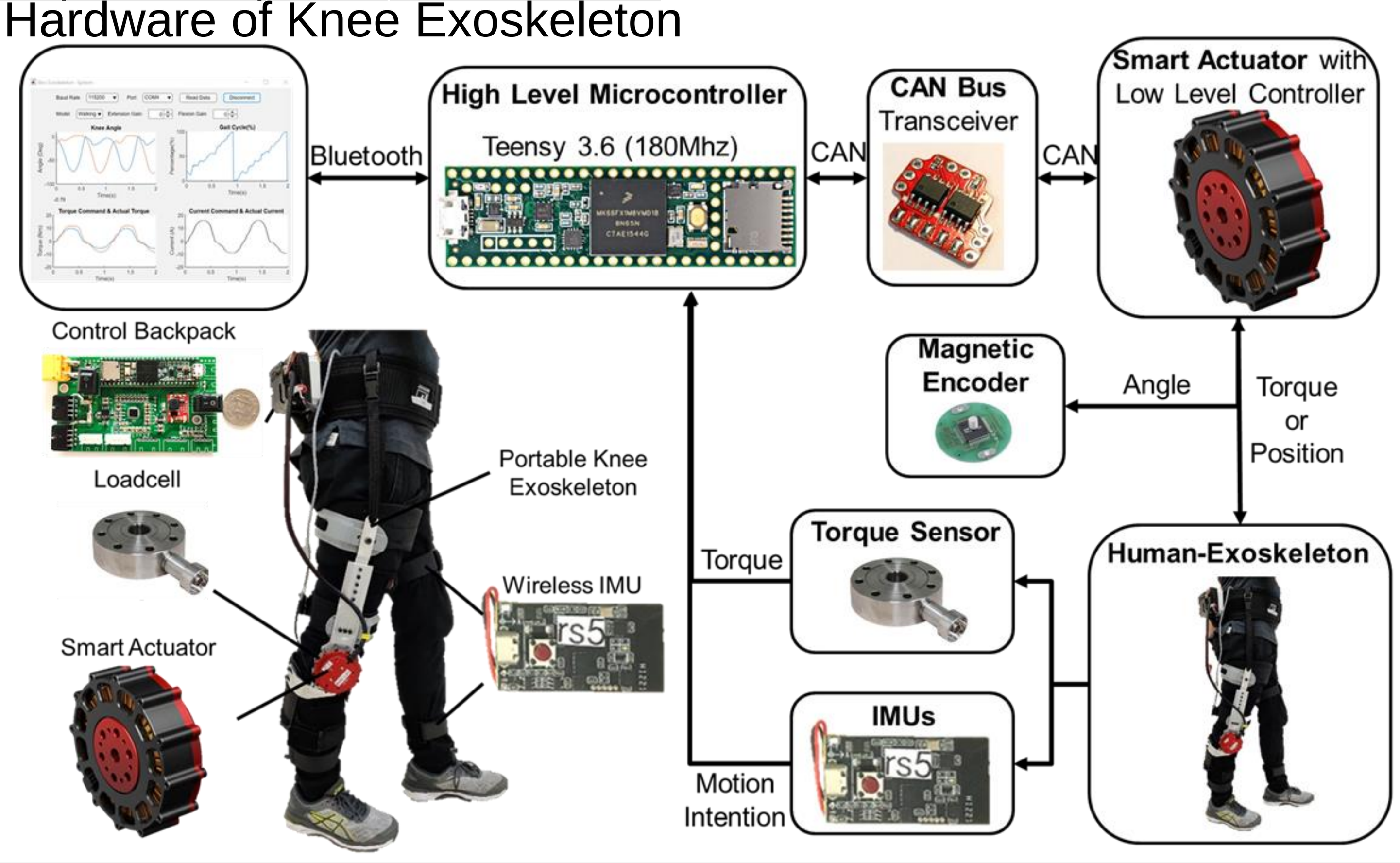
Specification Table	
Motor Torque	2Nm
Motor Speed	1500 RPM
Output Torque:	72 Nm
Output Speed:	4.4 rad/s
Range of Motion:	130 degree
Gear Ratio	36:1
Total Weight (Unilateral):	< 1 kg



- Tethered System: lightweight, scientific platform to study control and biomechanics

Specification Table	
Motor Torque	1.1 Nm
Motor Speed	250 RPM
Output Torque:	20 Nm
Output Speed:	26.2 rad/s
Range of Motion:	160 degree
Gear Ratio	6:1
Total Weight (Unilateral):	2.5 kg

- Hardware of Knee Exoskeleton



Exoskeleton Innovations

- Advantages of Our Soft Exoskeleton

Acknowledgment

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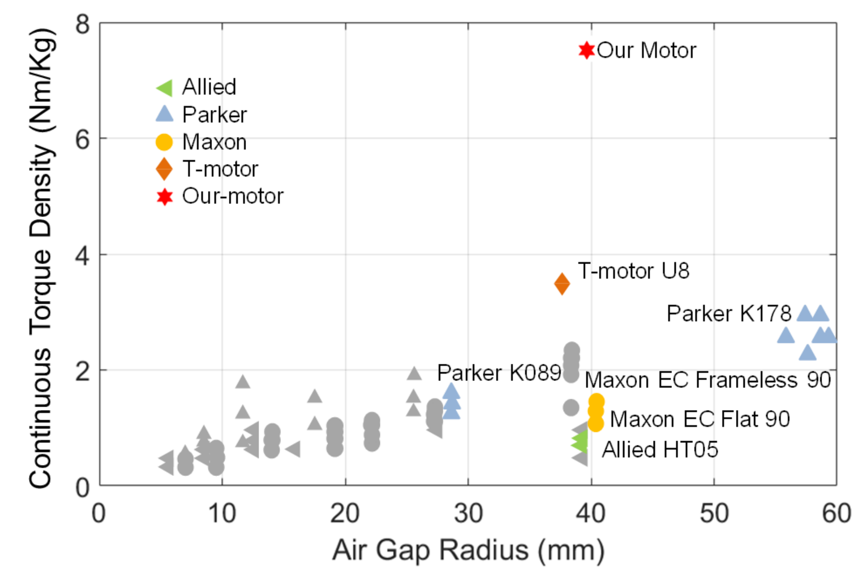
Reference

[1] S. Yu, etc. Design and Control of a High-Torque and Highly Backdrivable Hybrid Soft Exoskeleton for Knee Injury Prevention During Squatting. IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters, 2019
[2] J. Yang, etc. Machine Learning Based Adaptive Gait Phase Estimation Using Inertial Measurement Sensors. Design of Medical Devices Conference. American Society of Mechanical Engineers Digital Collection, 2019

- High Torque Density Motor

Property	Our motor	EC-90 Flat
Motors:		
Mass(g):	244	648
Nominal Power(W):	314	107
Nominal Voltage(V):	42	48
Nominal Current(A):	7.47	2.12
Nominal Torque(Nm):	2	0.5
Nominal Speed(RPM):	1500	2080
Nominal Speed(rad/s):	157	217
Power Density(W/Kg):	1145	165
Torque Density (Nm/Kg):	7.29	0.76



Specific continuous torque $= \frac{Continuous\ torque}{Mass}$

Versatile Dynamic Model Based Control

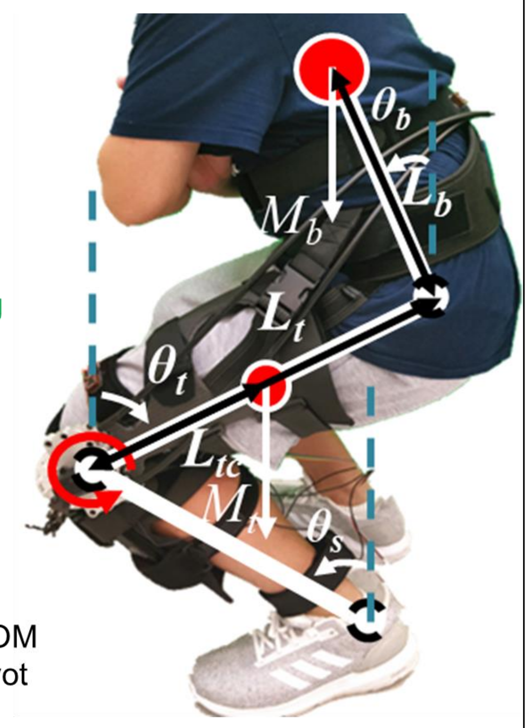
- Human Quasi-Static Model Based Control for Squatting and Stooping
  - A versatile biomechanics model for both squatting and stooping

$$\underbrace{\tau_k}_{\text{Knee joint torque}} = \underbrace{I(\theta)}_{\text{Inertia matrix}}\underbrace{\ddot{\theta}}_{\text{Joint angle acceleration}} + \underbrace{C(\theta,\dot{\theta})}_{\text{Centrifugal and Coriolis loading}} + \underbrace{G(\theta)}_{\text{Gravitational loading}}$$

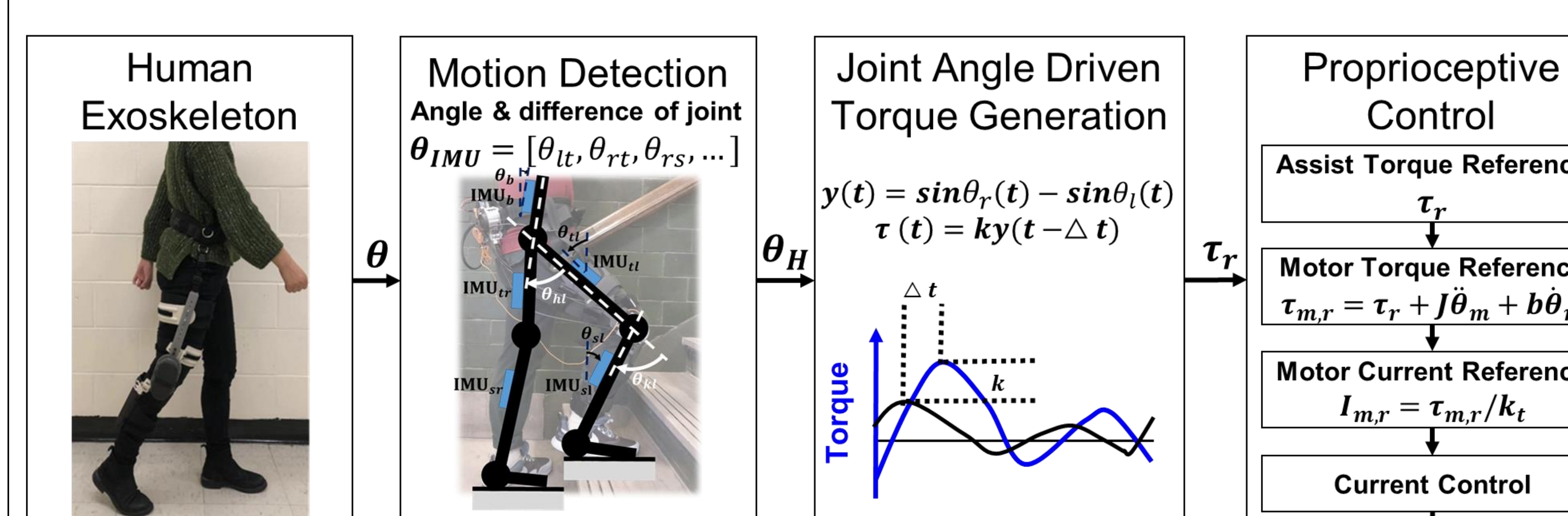
  - Since the lifting motions are typically relatively slow

$$\hat{\tau}_k = G(\theta) = -0.5\cdot[M_b\cdot g\cdot(L_b\cdot sin\theta_b + L_t\cdot sin\theta_t) + M_t\cdot g\cdot L_{tc}\cdot sin\theta_t]$$

Length between COM of M_b and hip pivot; length of thigh; Mass of thigh; Total mass of upper part of the body; Trunk angle; Thigh angle; Length between COM of M_t and knee pivot



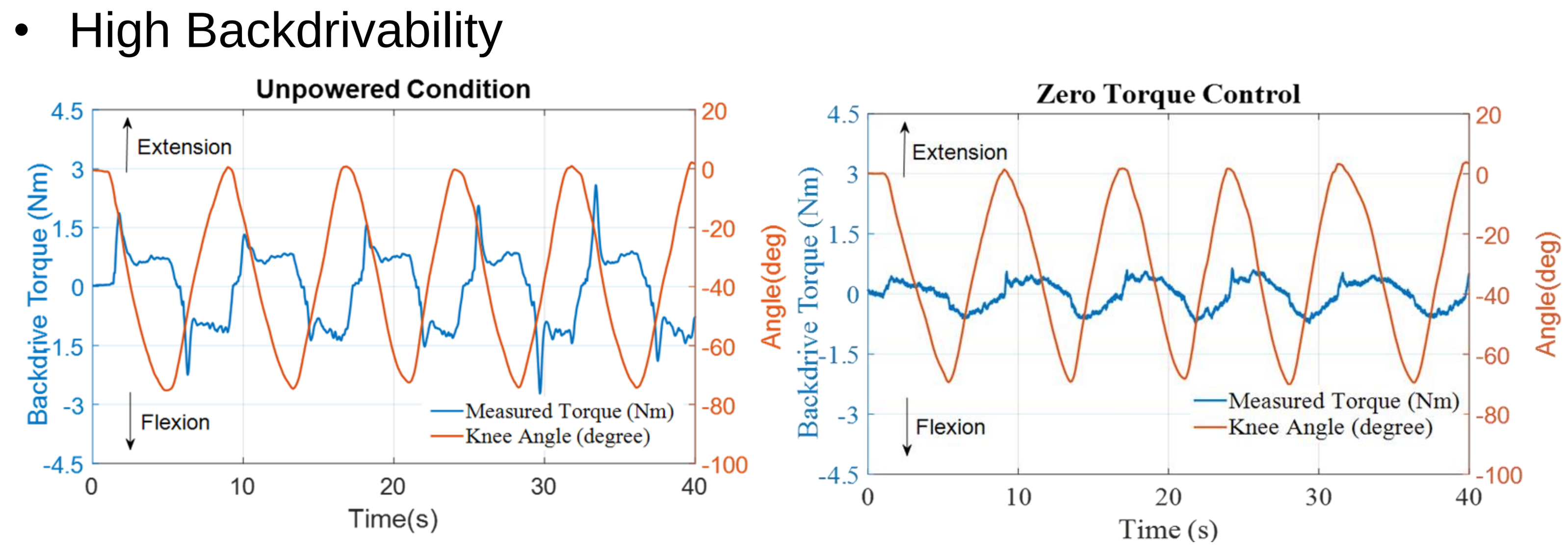
- Delayed Output Feedback Control Algorithm for Walking



θ: Human joint angles
θ_{IMU}: Measured joint angles
k: Gain
$\triangle t$: Output Time Delay
τ_r: Assistive torque reference
τ_a: Assistive torque
k_t: motor torque constant

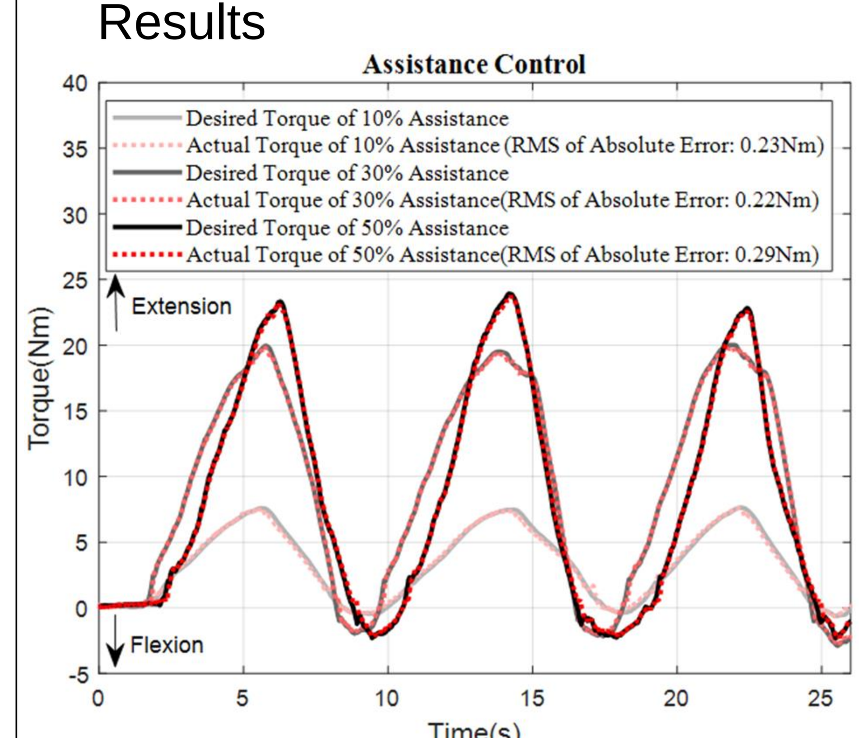
Experimental Result

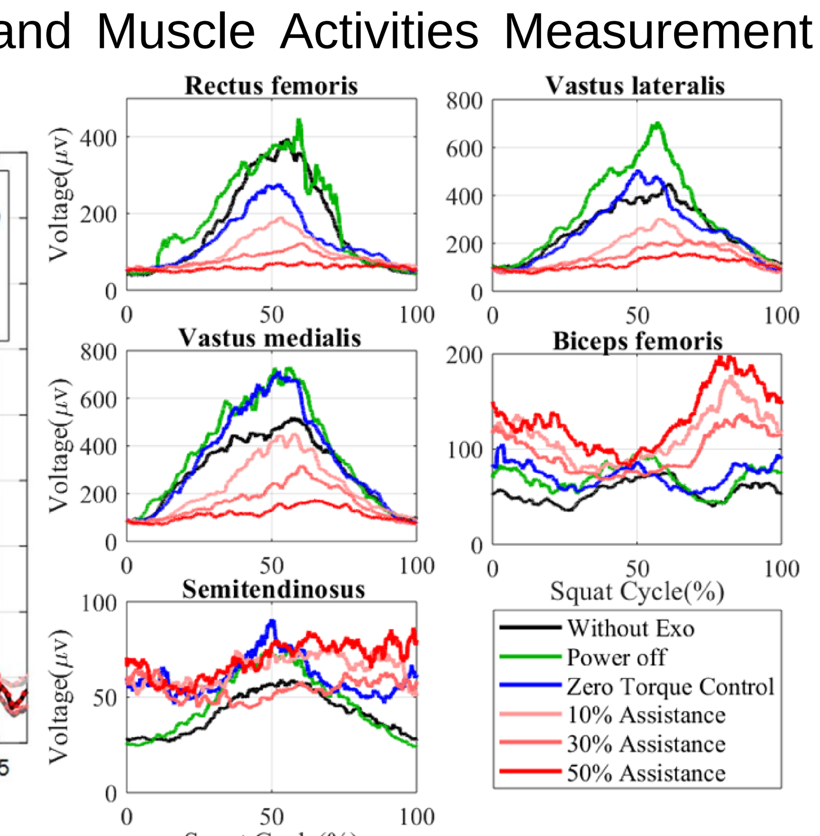
- High Backdrivability



The backdrivability performance of the knee exoskeleton in the unpowered mode and zero torque tracking control. The average backdrive torque is 0.92 Nm and 0.34 Nm respectively

- Torque Tracking for Squatting and Muscle Activities Measurement Results





The tracking performance of the 10%, 30%, 50% of knee torque assistance in three squatting cycles. The RMS of the absolute error between the desired and actual torque trajectory was 0.3 Nm, 0.22 Nm, and 0.29 Nm in 10%, 30%, and 50% knee assistance respectively.

It shows the average of EMG in 15 squat cycles (three healthy subjects with 5 cycles each). The result shows that the exoskeleton effectively reduced activities of three knee extensor muscles.