PHSA CC-1-2 TH MECHANICS: Non-Inertial Systems

Instructor: AKB

Books:

1. An Introduction to Mechanics → Kleppner/Kolenkow (Tata Mc Graw Hill) ⇒ Good for problem solving
2. Theoretical Mechanics → M.R. Spiegel (Schaum Series) ⇒ Good to learn solved problems & for solving problems.
3. Feynman lectures on Physics (vol. 1) → Feynman/Leigton/Sands (Narosa) ⇒ Good for concept building from not so conventional thinking.
4. Berkeley Physics Course (vol 1) → Kittel/Knight/Ruderman/Helmholtz/Moyer (Tata Mc Grow Hill) ⇒ Very good book for concept development.
5. Fundamentals on Physics → Halliday/Resnick/Walker (John Wiley & Sons) ⇒ Less theoretic, more application oriented, good for practical knowledge.

Newton's law & inertial systems (recapitulation) ⇒

→ Describe the behaviour of point masses (where size of the body is small compared with the interaction distance)

→ Applies to particulate system and not suitable for continuous medium like fluid.

→ Interaction between two charged objects violates Newton's 3rd law as the interaction produced by the created electric fields is not instantaneously transmitted but propagates at the speed of light $c \sim 3\times10^8$ m/sec. Within the propagation time, violation occurs

1st law: $\vec{a} = 0$ when $\vec{F} = 0$

2nd law: $\vec{F} = m\vec{a}$, if $\frac{dm}{dt} = 0$ $(v \ll c)$

3rd law: $\vec{F}_{12} = -\vec{F}_{21}$ [unit $1N = 10^3\, gm \times 10^2\, cm/s^2 = 10^5\, dyn$]

Newton's laws hold true (1st & 2nd law) only when observed in inertial reference frame, in which a body devoid of a force or torque is not accelerating, either at rest or moving at a constant speed. But suppose, if the reference frame is at rest on a rotating merry-go-round, one doesn't have zero acceleration in the absence of applied forces. One can stand still on the merry-go-round only by pushing some part or causing that part to exert a force $m\omega^2 r$ on someone toward the axis of rotation, ω = angular acceleration. Or suppose the reference frame is at rest in an aircraft that accelerates rapidly during takeoff, where someone is pressed back against the seat by the acceleration & someone is at rest relative to the airplane by the force exerted on someone by the back of the seat.

Example: Ultracentrifuge: Moving out of inertial frame of reference have enormous effect on practical applications, e.g. to increase acceleration of a molecule suspended in a liquid compared to acceleration due to gravity g.

If the molecule rotates at 10 cm from the axis of rotation with 1000 revolutions/sec or 6×10^4 rpm, then angular velocity

$$\omega = 2\pi \times 10^3 \simeq 6\times 10^3 \text{ rad/sec.}$$ & linear velocity

$$v = \omega r \simeq 6\times10^3 \times 10 \simeq 6\times10^4 \text{ cm/s}$$

$$a = \omega^2 r \simeq (6\times10^4)^2\times 10 \simeq 4\times10^8 \text{ cm/s}^2, \quad g = 980 \text{ cm/s}^2$$

$$\therefore \frac{a}{g} \simeq \frac{4\times10^8}{980} \simeq 4\times10^5.$$ Due to such high acceleration, molecules having density different from surrounding fluid will

see a strong force to separate out from the fluid.

To a fixed frame (laboratory), molecule wants to remain at rest or move with constant speed in straight line & not dragged with high ω. So to an observer at rest in the ultracentrifuge, molecule is exerted a "centrifugal" force $m\omega^2 r$ to pull it away from the axis of rotation.

If $m = 10^5 \times$ mass of proton $= 10^5 \times 1.7 \times 10^{-24} \simeq 2 \times 10^{-19}$ gm

then $f = ma = m\omega^2 r \simeq 2 \times 10^{-19} \times 4 \times 10^8 \simeq 8 \times 10^{-11}$ dyne.

Centrifugal force outward is balanced by the drag force by the surrounding liquid on the molecule. Due to density differance there will be stratification of layer, so that in the reference frame of the ultracentrifuge, centrifugal force is like an artificial gravity directed outward with increasing intensity with distance from axis.

Force measured in inertial frame is called true force. The Earth as a reference (inertial) frame is a good approximation, but not completely. A mass at rest on Earth surface at the equator experiences a centripetal acceleration $a = \frac{v^2}{R_e} = \omega_e^2 R_e$

Now $\omega_e = 2\pi f_e = \frac{2\pi}{T_e} = \frac{2\pi}{1\text{ day}} = \frac{2\pi}{8.64 \times 10^4} = 7.3 \times 10^{-5}$ sec^{-1}

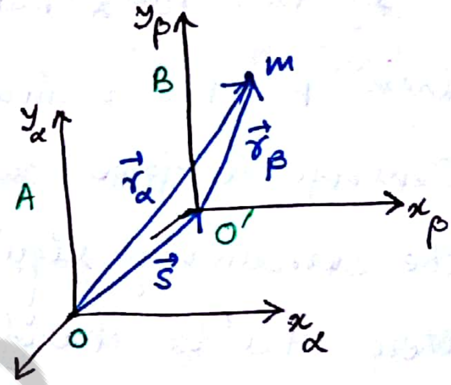
with $R_e = 6.4 \times 10^8$ cm, $a = (7.3 \times 10^{-5})^2 \times 6.4 \times 10^8 \simeq 3.4$ cm/s^2

As this is the force supplied to a point mass at equator, force necessary to hold the mass in equilibrium against gravity is 3.4 m dynes less than that of mg. Rest of the variation in g is due to the ellipsoidal shape & pole to equator variation is 5.2 cm/s^2

Since 1 year $\simeq \pi \times 10^7$ sec, angular velocity of Earth about the Sun is $\omega \simeq \frac{2\pi}{\pi \times 10^7} \simeq 2\times 10^{-7}$ sec^{-1}. With $R \simeq 1.5\times 10^{13}$ cm, the centripetal acceleration of Earth about Sun is

$a = \omega^2 R \simeq (2\times 10^{-7})^2 \times 1.5 \times 10^{13} \simeq 0.6$ cm/s^2 which is one order of magnitude smaller than the acceleration at equator due to the rotation of Earth.

Galilean Transformation :



Let us consider two frames of reference A & B such that A is at rest & B moves with a constant velocity $\vec{v}$ with respect to A. We want to find the transformation that relates the coordinates $\vec{r}_\alpha$ & time t_α as measured from A frame to the coordinates $\vec{r}_\beta$ & time t_β as measured from B. At $t=0$, both O & O$'$ origins coincide. Suppose Newton's law is read on A & B as

$\vec{F}_\alpha = m\vec{a}_\alpha$, $\vec{F}_\beta = m\vec{a}_\beta$. We know $\vec{F}_\alpha$ is inertial frame measured true force & seek a relation between $\vec{F}_\alpha$ & $\vec{F}_\beta$.

By construction $\vec{s} = \vec{v}t$, if we define a set of transformation

$$\boxed{\vec{r}_\alpha = \vec{r}_\beta + \vec{v}t, \quad t_\alpha = t_\beta}$$

then we see, by differentiation, $\vec{v}_\alpha = \vec{v}_\beta + \vec{v}$ & $\vec{a}_\alpha = \vec{a}_\beta$ as $\frac{d\vec{v}}{dt} = 0$. $\therefore \vec{F}_\beta = m\vec{a}_\beta = m\vec{a}_\alpha = \vec{F}_\alpha$.

So the above set of transformation leads $\vec{F}_\beta$ to be also true force or B frame to be inertial. These are called the Galilean transformation, where axiomatically (without thinking much) we have considered $t_\alpha = t_\beta$ or time is independent of the frame of reference. This is incorrect if $v \approx c$ while $t_\beta = t_\alpha\sqrt{1-\frac{v^2}{c^2}}$. Similarly we assumed same scale is used in A & B for measuring distance, but near $v \approx c$ $L_\beta = L_\alpha\sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}$ which is known in Special theory of Relativity as "Lorentz contraction" of a moving rod. For practical purpose, say velocity of a satellite around Earth is 8 Km/s & so $v^2/c^2 \approx 10^{-9}$.

Similarly moving mass differs from rest mass as $m = m_0/\sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}$

Principle of relativity → laws of physics are same in all inertial systems. In Einstein's relativity, not Galilean but Lorentz transformation is valid.

Uniformly Accelerating Systems (Non inertial):

Suppose now frame B accelerates at constant rate $\vec{A}$ w.r.t. inertial frame A. We label quantities in noninertial frame B with prime. As $\frac{d\vec{v}}{dt} = \vec{A} \neq 0$ now,

$$\vec{a} = \vec{a}' + \vec{A}$$

So in the accelerated system, the measured (apparent) force is

$$\vec{F}' = m\vec{a}' = m\vec{a} - m\vec{A} = \vec{F} - m\vec{A} = \vec{F}_{true} + \vec{F}_{fict}$$

true force as measured in A

fictitious force $-m\vec{A}$

Fictitious force is oppositely directed and proportional to mass (just like Gravitational force). But origin of such force is not physical interaction, but acceleration of the coordinate system.