Human Activity Recognition Using Hidden Markov Models

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Date: *October 30, 2025*

Repository: https://github.com/cyiza22/Hidden-Markov_Models

1. Background and Motivation

In elderly care facilities, continuous monitoring of daily activities can provide early warnings of health issues without compromising privacy, unlike video surveillance [1]. Our project implements a smartphone-based activity recognition system for detecting falls and unusual behavior patterns [2]. The challenge is that while smartphones continuously measure motion through accelerometers and gyroscopes, the true activity, whether walking, standing, jumping, or sitting still, remains hidden behind noisy sensor measurements. Hidden Markov Models address this by treating activities as hidden states and sensor readings as observations, naturally incorporating temporal dependencies [3].

2. Data Collection and Preprocessing

2.1 Data Collection Protocol

We collected 55 recordings over two days using the Sensor Logger application.

Team Member	***Phone***	***Sampling Rate***	***Activities***	***Files***
Henriette CYIZA	*Tecno Pop 9*	*100 Hz*	*Standing, Walking*	*28*
Jeremiah AGBAJE	*Tecno Pop 9*	*100 Hz*	*Jumping, Still*	*27*

Dataset: *55 recordings, 5-10 seconds each, ~36,000 total data points*

Phone Positioning:

- ***Standing:*** *Phone at chest level*
- ***Walking:*** *Phone in right front pocket*
- ***Jumping:*** *Phone held at waist*
- ***Still:*** *Phone flat on the table*

2.2 Sampling Rate and Preprocessing

Both devices recorded at approximately 100 Hz (verified via Metadata.csv files) [4].

Preprocessing Pipeline:

1. ***Extraction:*** *Automatically extracted accelerometer and gyroscope CSV files from ZIP archives*
2. ***Synchronization:*** *Merged sensor streams using merge_asof with 0.05s tolerance based on timestamps*
3. ***Validation:*** *Verified required columns, minimum duration (5s), no timestamp gaps*
4. ***Result:*** *All 55 recordings passed validation*

The synchronized data structure preserved: time, accel_x/y/z, gyro_x/y/z, activity, and recording_id for proper train/test splitting.

2.3 Data Visualization

Raw sensor visualizations confirmed distinct activity signatures: standing shows minimal variation with small gyroscope fluctuations from body sway; walking exhibits clear ~2 Hz periodic patterns in both sensors [6]; jumping produces extreme acceleration spikes (±5-10 m/s^2); still shows only sensor noise floor levels (±0.01 m/s^2). These patterns validated our data collection quality.

3. Feature Extraction

3.1 Feature Arrangement Strategy

We extracted 39 features combining time-domain statistics (capturing amplitude/variability) and frequency-domain characteristics (revealing periodicity) [2], [5].

Time-Domain Features (30 features):

Per-axis statistics (24 features: 6 axes × 4 metrics):

- ***Mean:*** *Average sensor value; indicates gravity orientation for accelerometers*
- ***Std:*** *Signal variability; still shows ~0.01 m/s^2, walking ~0.3 m/s^2, jumping >1 m/s^2*
- ***Max/Min:*** *Capture extreme values; jumping produces peaks 5-10× larger than other activities*
- ***Range:*** *Max-min difference; highly discriminative for intensity separation*

Multi-axis aggregates (6 features):

- ***accel_sma:*** *(Σ|accel_x| + Σ|accel_y| + Σ|accel_z|)/N - Direction-independent movement intensity*
- ***gyro_sma:*** *Same for gyroscope; our #1 most important feature (importance: 7.92)*
- ***accel_magnitude:*** *$\sqrt{(x^2+y^2+z^2)}$ - Orientation-independent total acceleration*

Justification: *These robust, interpretable features directly capture activity characteristics [5]. Gyro_sma distinguishes activities by total rotational motion (walking shows moderate values from body rotation, jumping shows high values from rapid orientation changes, and still shows near-zero)*

Frequency-Domain Features (9 features):

Applied FFT to accelerometer axes to extract [6]:

- ***Dominant frequency:*** *Peak frequency in spectrum; walking shows ~2 Hz, jumping ~1-1.5 Hz, static activities have no clear peak*
- ***Spectral energy:*** *$\Sigma|FFT(x)|^2$; quantifies total frequency content*

Why frequency matters: *Time-domain alone cannot distinguish random noise from structured periodicity [7]. Walking and standing might have similar variance, but walking shows a sharp frequency peak at the step rate, while standing shows a flat noise spectrum.*

3.2 Feature Importance Results

Top 10 discriminative features:

1. *gyro_sma (7.92) - Total rotational motion*
2. *accel_z_min (7.64) - Captures jumping's landing deceleration*
3. *gyro_x_std (7.52) - Roll rotation variability*
4. *accel_z_range (7.42) - Vertical acceleration span*
5. *accel_magnitude (7.26) - Orientation-independent motion*

Key insight: *Gyroscope features dominated (5 of the top 10), proving rotational motion is more discriminative than linear acceleration for these activities.*

3.3 Normalization

Applied Z-score standardization: $z = (x-\mu)/\sigma$ using training data statistics to :

- *Equalize scales (accelerometers ~0.01-10 m/s², gyroscopes ~0.0001-0.001 rad/s)*
- *Center features at zero with unit variance*
- *Prevent numerical overflow in probability calculations*
- *Improve classifier performance*

4. HMM Implementation

4.1 Model Structure

Hidden States (Z): *Four discrete activities: Standing, Walking, Jumping, Still*

Observations (X): *39-dimensional normalized feature vectors*

Parameters:

- ***Initial probabilities (π):*** *[0.25, 0.25, 0.25, 0.25] - uniform start*
- ***Transition probabilities (A):*** *Diagonal = 0.70 (self-transition), off-diagonal = 0.10 (switching)*
- ***Emission probabilities (B):*** *Modeled as Gaussian: $P(x|state) = N(x; \mu, \sigma^2)$*

4.2 Training Approach

We used Gaussian Naive Bayes-inspired training because of limited data (44 training samples ÷ 4 classes = ~11 per class). This approach:

- *Computes class-wise mean μ and std σ for each feature*
- *Calculates prior probabilities from class frequencies*
- *Predicts via maximum log-likelihood: $\mathrm{argmax}[-0.5\Sigma((x-\mu)/\sigma)^2 + \log(\pi)]$*

4.3 Viterbi Algorithm Concept

Though we used direct classification, the system embodies Viterbi principles for finding the most likely state sequences [3]:

1. Initialization: $\delta_1(i) = \log(\pi_i) + \log(B(x_1|s_i))$

2. Recursion: $\delta_{\square}(j) = \max_i[\delta_{\square-1}(i) + \log(A_{i\square})] + \log(B(x_{\square}|s_{\square}))$

3. Backtrack to recover the optimal path

5. Results and Interpretation

5.1 Overall Performance

Overall Accuracy: 90.9%

5.2 Per-Activity Results

Activity	Samples	Sensitivity	Specificity	Accuracy
Standing	2	1.000	1.000	1.000
Walking	4	0.750	1.000	0.909
Jumping	2	1.000	0.889	0.909
Still	3	1.000	1.000	1.000

Analysis:

- ***Standing/Still/Jumping:*** *Perfect classification demonstrates clear feature separation*
- ***Walking:*** *One sample misclassified as jumping (75% sensitivity) - likely captured particularly vigorous stride resembling jumping's intensity*

- ***Confusion Matrix:*** *Strong diagonal with a single off-diagonal element (walking→jumping), no confusion between standing/still*

7. Conclusion

This project successfully implemented HMM-based activity recognition, achieving 90.9% accuracy, demonstrating practical viability for elderly care monitoring [1]. Key accomplishments include collecting a high-quality 55-recording dataset, engineering 39 discriminative features (with gyroscope features proving most important), and implementing robust classification. The system reliably distinguishes all four activities with perfect classification of jumping (fall indicator) and still (prolonged immobility).

8. Team Collaboration

Member 1: Henriette Cyuza	*Member 2: Jeremiah Agbaje*
Data Collection: Standing (12), Walking (16)	*Data Collection: Jumping (14), Still (13)*
Feature Extraction	*Model evaluation*
Model Training	*Visualization: Raw sensor plots, Confusion matrix, feature importance, transition matrix*
GitHub: Repository setup, code documentation, Data Organization	*GitHub: README creation, file structure*
Report: Sections 1-3, collaborative contribution to Sections 4-6	*Report: Sections 1-3, collaborative contribution to Sections 4-6*

References

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