Convergence

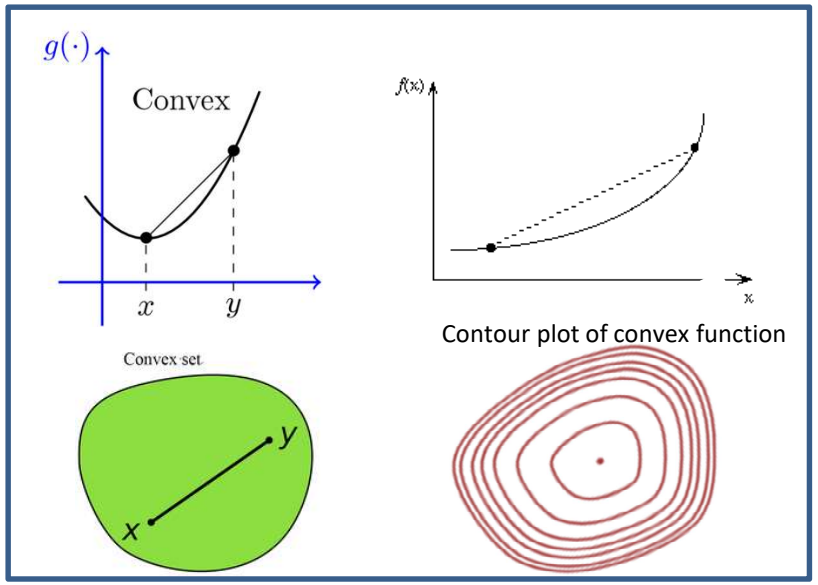
- In the discussion so far we have assumed the training arrives at a local minimum

- Does it always converge?
- How long does it take?

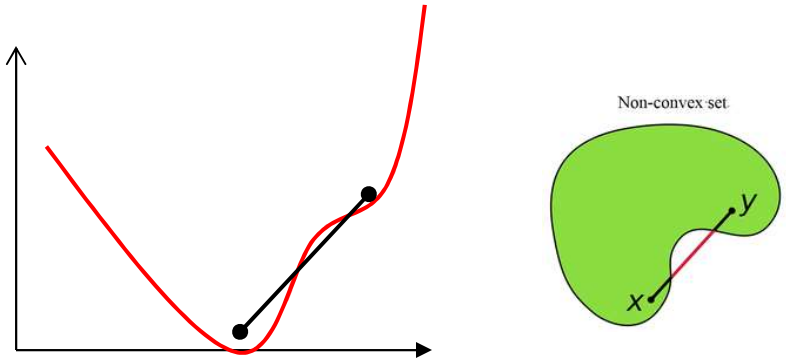
- Hard to analyze for an MLP, but we can look at the problem through the lens of convex optimization

Convex Loss Functions

- A surface is “convex” if it is continuously curving upward
  - We can connect any two points above the surface without intersecting it
  - Many mathematical definitions that are equivalent

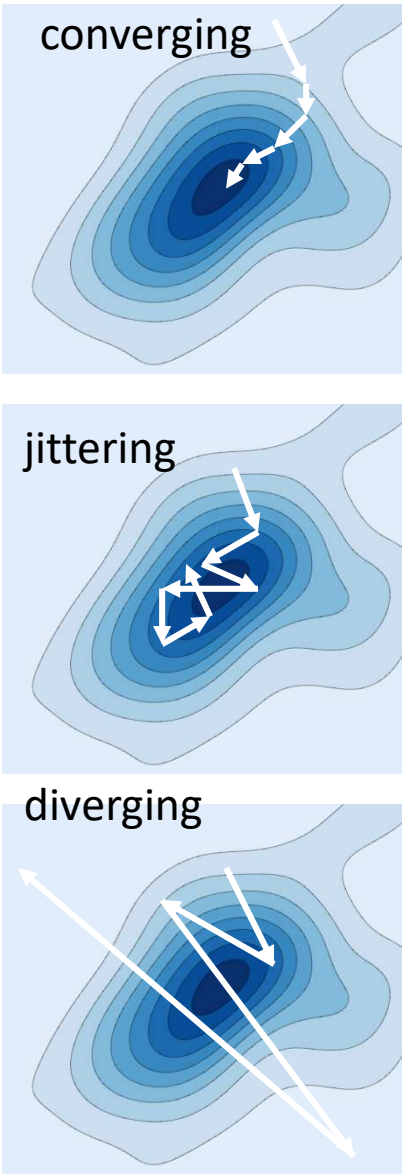


- Caveat: Neural network loss surface is generally not convex
  - Streetlight effect



Convergence of gradient descent

- An iterative algorithm is said to *converge* to a solution if the value updates arrive at a fixed point
  - Where the gradient is 0 and further updates do not change the estimate
- The algorithm may not actually converge
  - It may jitter around the local minimum
  - It may even diverge
- Conditions for convergence?

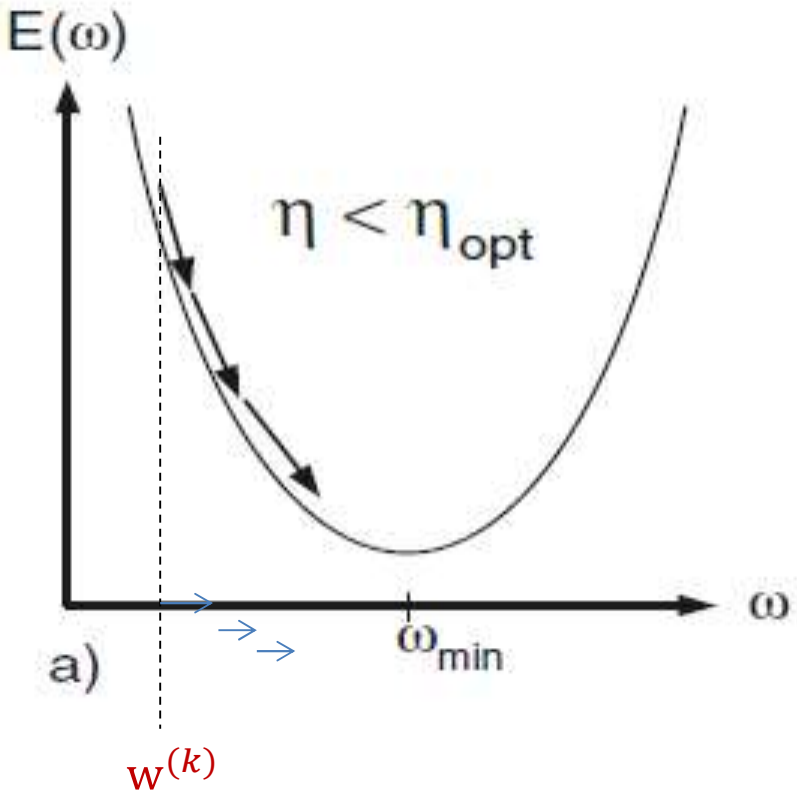


Convergence for quadratic surfaces

$$Minimize\ E = \frac{1}{2}aw^2 + bw + c$$

$$\mathrm{w}^{(k+1)} = \mathrm{w}^{(k)} - \eta \frac{dE\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)}{d\mathrm{w}}$$

Gradient descent with fixed step size η to estimate *scalar* parameter w



- Gradient descent to find the optimum of a quadratic, starting from $\mathrm{w}^{(k)}$
- Assuming fixed step size η
- What is the optimal step size η to get there fastest?

Convergence for quadratic surfaces

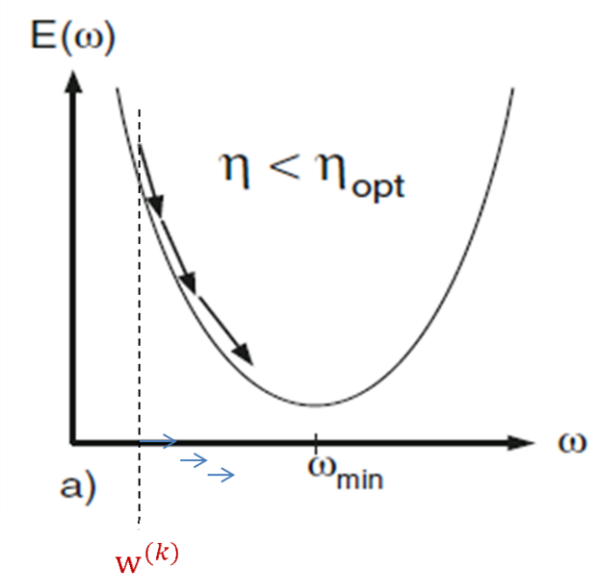
$$E = \frac{1}{2}aw^2 + bw + c$$

$$\mathrm{w}^{(k+1)} = \mathrm{w}^{(k)} - \eta \frac{dE\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)}{d\mathrm{w}}$$

- Any quadratic objective can be written as

$$E(w) = E\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right) + E'\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)\left(w - \mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right) + \frac{1}{2}E''\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)\left(w - \mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)^2$$

  - Taylor expansion



- Minimizing w.r.t w, we get (Newton's method)

$$w_{min} = \mathrm{w}^{(k)} - E''\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)^{-1} E'\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)$$

- Note:

$$\frac{dE\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)}{d\mathrm{w}} = E'\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)$$

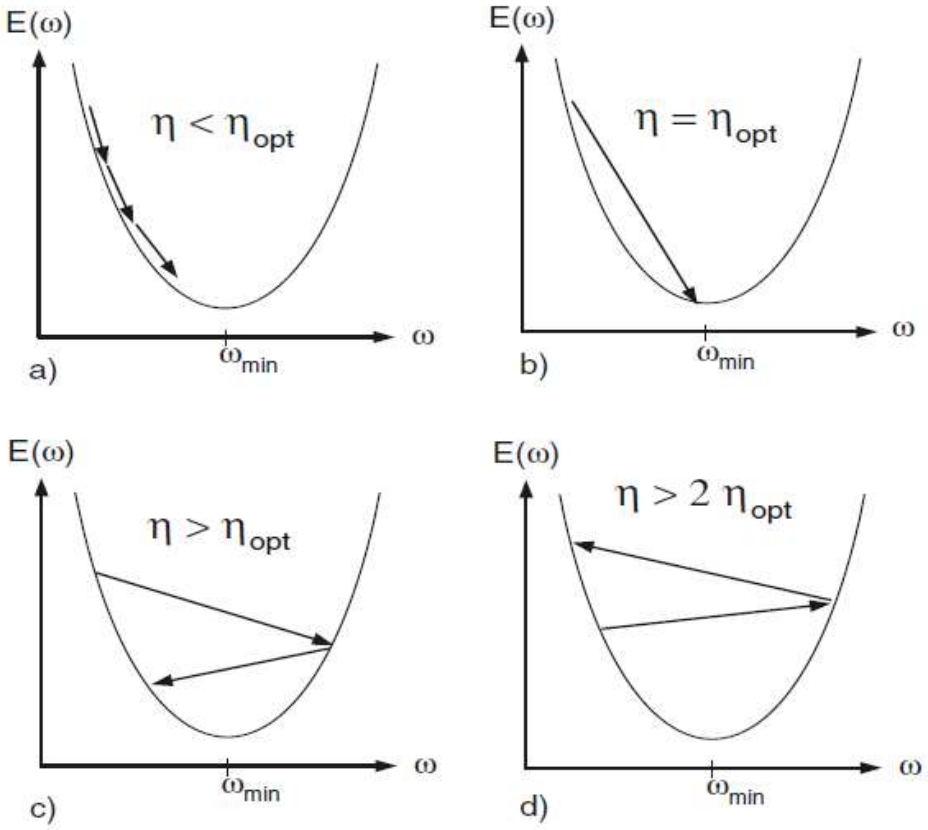
- Comparing to the gradient descent rule, we see that we can arrive at the optimum in a single step using the optimum step size

$$\eta_{opt} = E''\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)^{-1} = \boldsymbol{a^{-1}}$$

With non-optimal step size

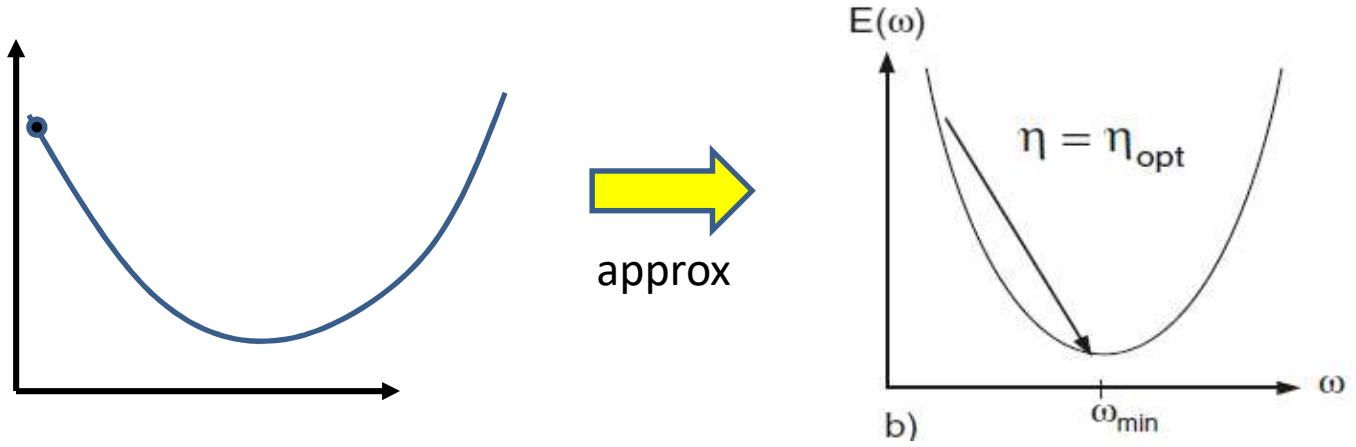
$$\mathrm{w}^{(k+1)} = \mathrm{w}^{(k)} - \eta \frac{dE\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)}{d\mathrm{w}}$$

Gradient descent with fixed step size η to estimate scalar parameter w



- For $\eta < \eta_{opt}$ the algorithm will converge monotonically
- For $2\eta_{opt} > \eta > \eta_{opt}$ we have oscillating convergence
- For $\eta > 2\eta_{opt}$ we get divergence

For generic differentiable convex objectives



- Any differentiable convex objective $E(w)$ can be approximated as

$$E \approx E\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right) + \left(w - \mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)\frac{dE\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)}{dw} + \frac{1}{2}\left(w - \mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)^2 \frac{d^2E\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)}{dw^2} + \cdots$$

  - Taylor expansion
- Using the same logic as before, we get (Newton's method)

$$\eta_{opt} = \left(\frac{d^2E\left(\mathrm{w}^{(k)}\right)}{dw^2}\right)^{-1}$$

- We can get divergence if $\eta \geq 2\eta_{opt}$

For functions of *multivariate* inputs

$E = g(\mathbf{w})$, $\mathbf{w}$ is a vector $\mathbf{w} = [w_1, w_2, \ldots, w_N]$

- Consider a simple quadratic convex (paraboloid) function

$$E = \frac{1}{2}\mathbf{w}^T\mathbf{A}\mathbf{w} + \mathbf{w}^T\mathbf{b} + c$$

  - Since $E^T = E$ (E is scalar), $\mathbf{A}$ can always be made symmetric
    - For **convex** E, $\mathbf{A}$ is always positive definite, and has positive eigenvalues

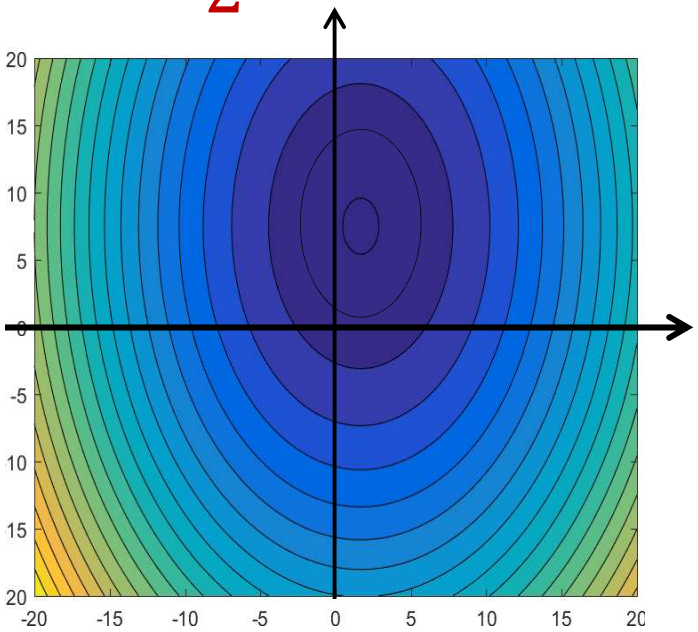
- When $\mathbf{A}$ is diagonal:

$$E = \frac{1}{2}\sum_i \left(a_{ii}w_i^2 + b_i w_i\right) + c$$

  - The w_is are *uncoupled*
  - For *convex* (paraboloid) E, the a_{ii} values are all positive
  - Just an sum of N independent quadratic functions

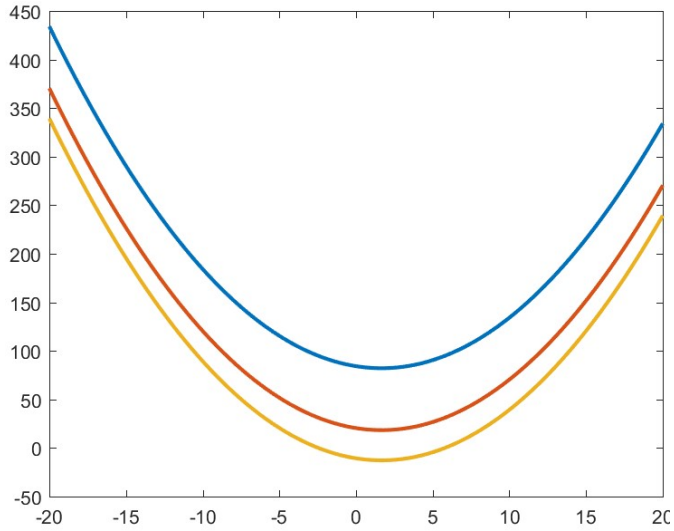
Multivariate Quadratic with Diagonal $\mathbf{A}$

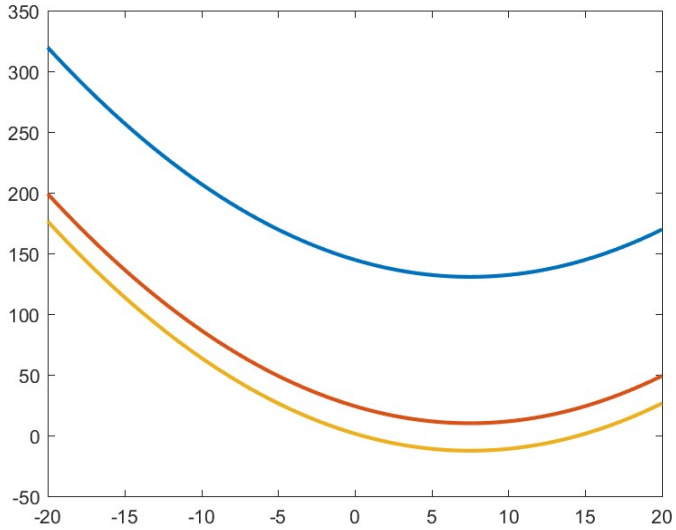
$$E = \frac{1}{2}\mathbf{w}^T\mathbf{A}\mathbf{w} + \mathbf{w}^T\mathbf{b} + c = \frac{1}{2}\sum_i \left(a_{ii}w_i^2 + b_i w_i\right) + c$$



- Equal-value contours will be parallel to the axis

“Descents” are uncoupled





$$E = \frac{1}{2}a_{11}w_1^2 + b_1 w_1 + c + C(\neg w_1)$$

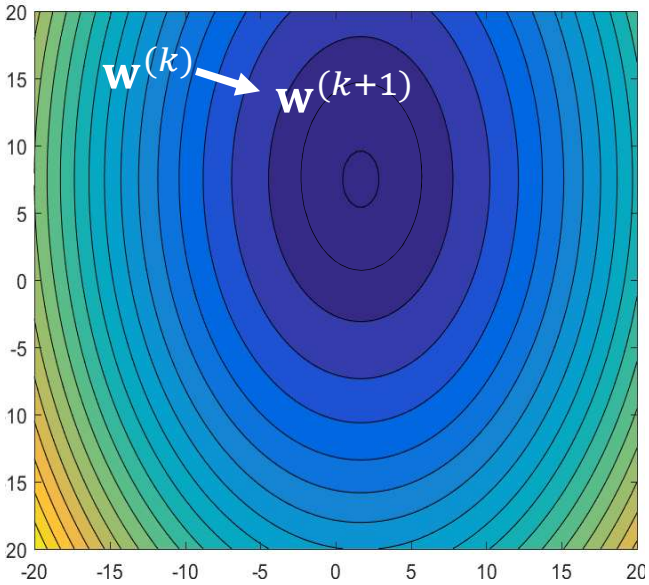
$$\eta_{1,opt} = a_{11}^{-1}$$

$$E = \frac{1}{2}a_{22}w_2^2 + b_2 w_2 + c + C(\neg w_2)$$

$$\eta_{2,opt} = a_{22}^{-1}$$

- The optimum of each coordinate is not affected by the other coordinates
  - I.e. we could optimize each coordinate independently
- **Note: Optimal learning rate is different for the different coordinates**

Vector update rule



$$\mathbf{w}^{(k+1)} \leftarrow \mathbf{w}^{(k)} - \eta \nabla_{\mathbf{w}} E$$

$$w_i^{(k+1)} = w_i^{(k)} - \eta \frac{dE\left(w_i^{(k)}\right)}{d\mathrm{w}}$$

- Conventional vector update rules for gradient descent: update entire vector against direction of gradient
  - Note : Gradient is perpendicular to equal value contour
  - The same learning rate is applied to all components

Problem with vector update rule

$$\mathbf{w}^{(k+1)} \leftarrow \mathbf{w}^{(k)} - \eta \nabla_{\mathbf{w}} E^T$$

$$w_i^{(k+1)} = w_i^{(k)} - \eta \frac{dE\left(w_i^{(k)}\right)}{d\mathrm{w}}$$

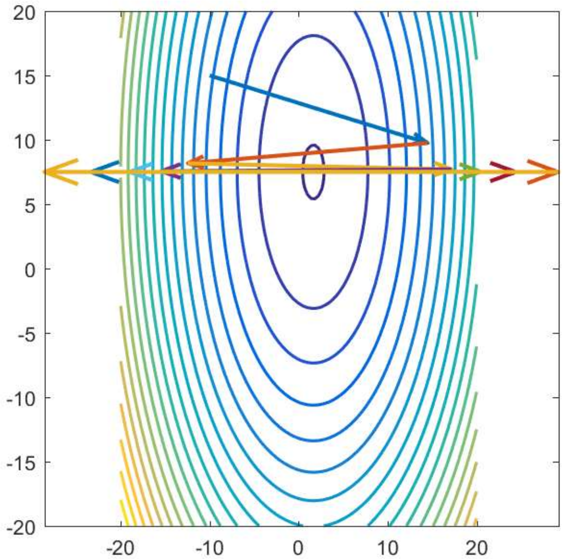
$$\eta_{i,opt} = \left(\frac{d^2 E\left(w_i^{(k)}\right)}{dw_i^2}\right)^{-1} = a_{ii}^{-1}$$

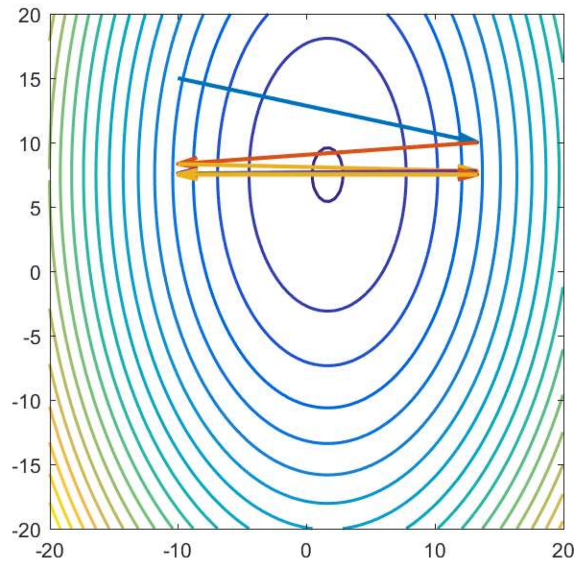
- The learning rate must be lower than twice the *smallest* optimal learning rate for any component

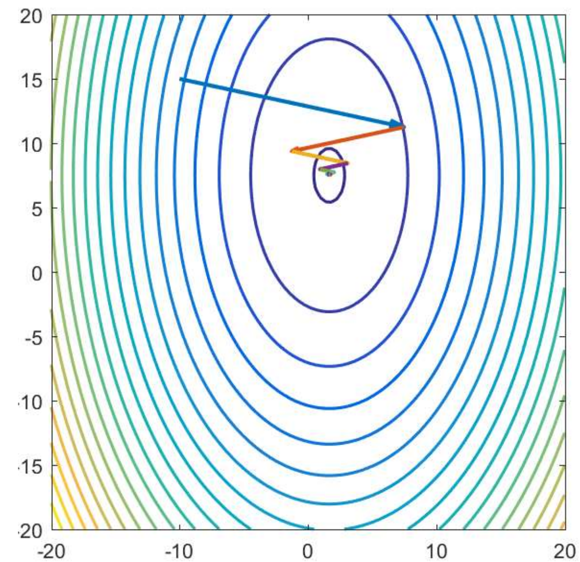
$$\eta < 2 \min_i \eta_{i,opt}$$

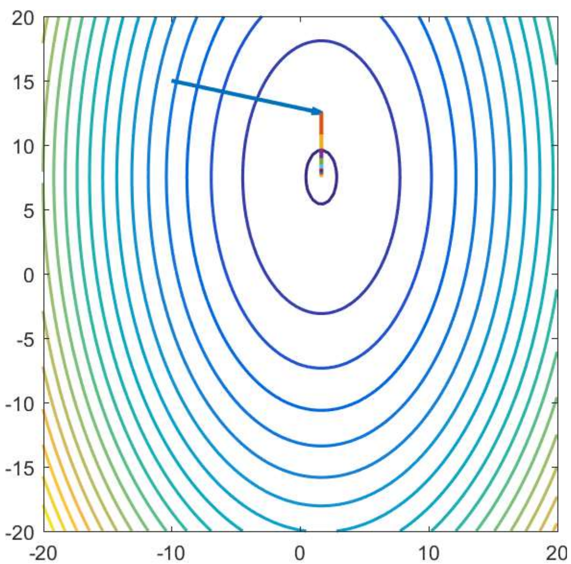
  - Otherwise the learning will diverge
- This, however, makes the learning very slow
  - And will oscillate in all directions where $\eta_{i,opt} \leq \eta < 2\eta_{i,opt}$

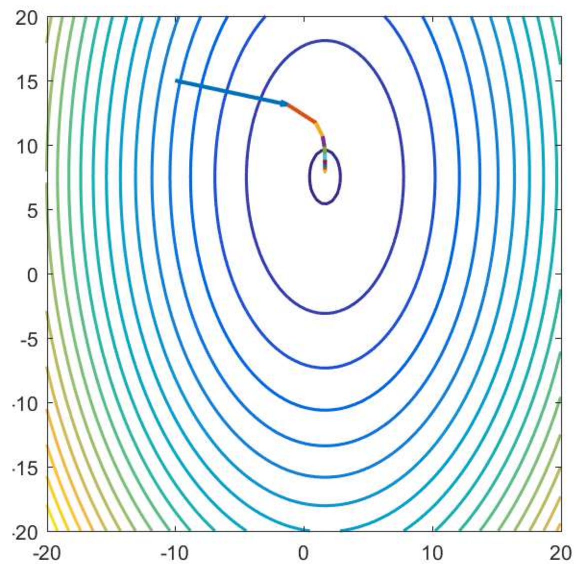
Dependence on learning rate











- $\eta_{1,opt} = 1;\ \eta_{2,opt} = 0.33$
- $\eta = 2.1\eta_{2,opt}$
- $\eta = 2\eta_{2,opt}$
- $\eta = 1.5\eta_{2,opt}$
- $\eta = \eta_{2,opt}$
- $\eta = 0.75\eta_{2,opt}$

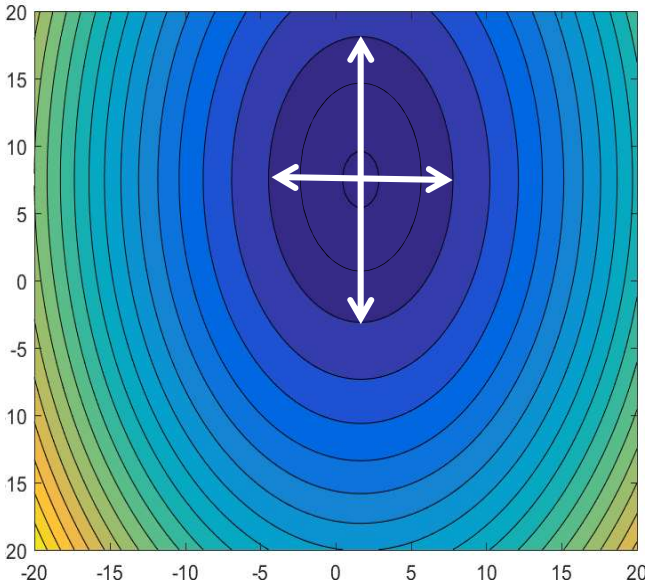
Convergence

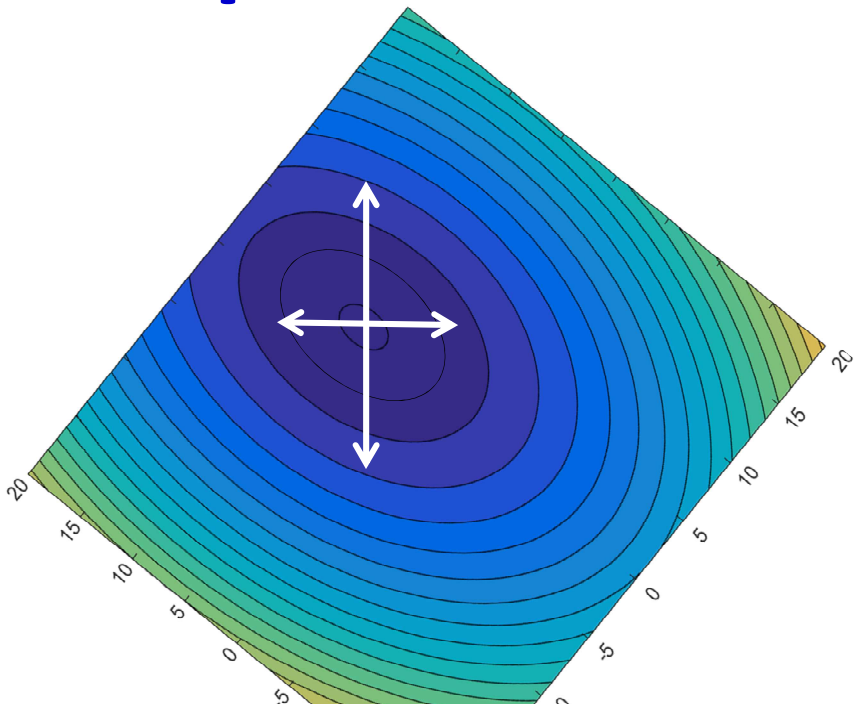
- Convergence behaviors become increasingly unpredictable as dimensions increase

- For the fastest convergence, ideally, the learning rate η must be close to both, the largest $\eta_{i,opt}$ and the smallest $\eta_{i,opt}$
  - To ensure convergence in every direction
  - Generally infeasible

- Convergence is particularly slow if $\frac{\max_i \eta_{i,opt}}{\min_i \eta_{i,opt}}$ is large
  - The "condition" number is small

One reason for the problem

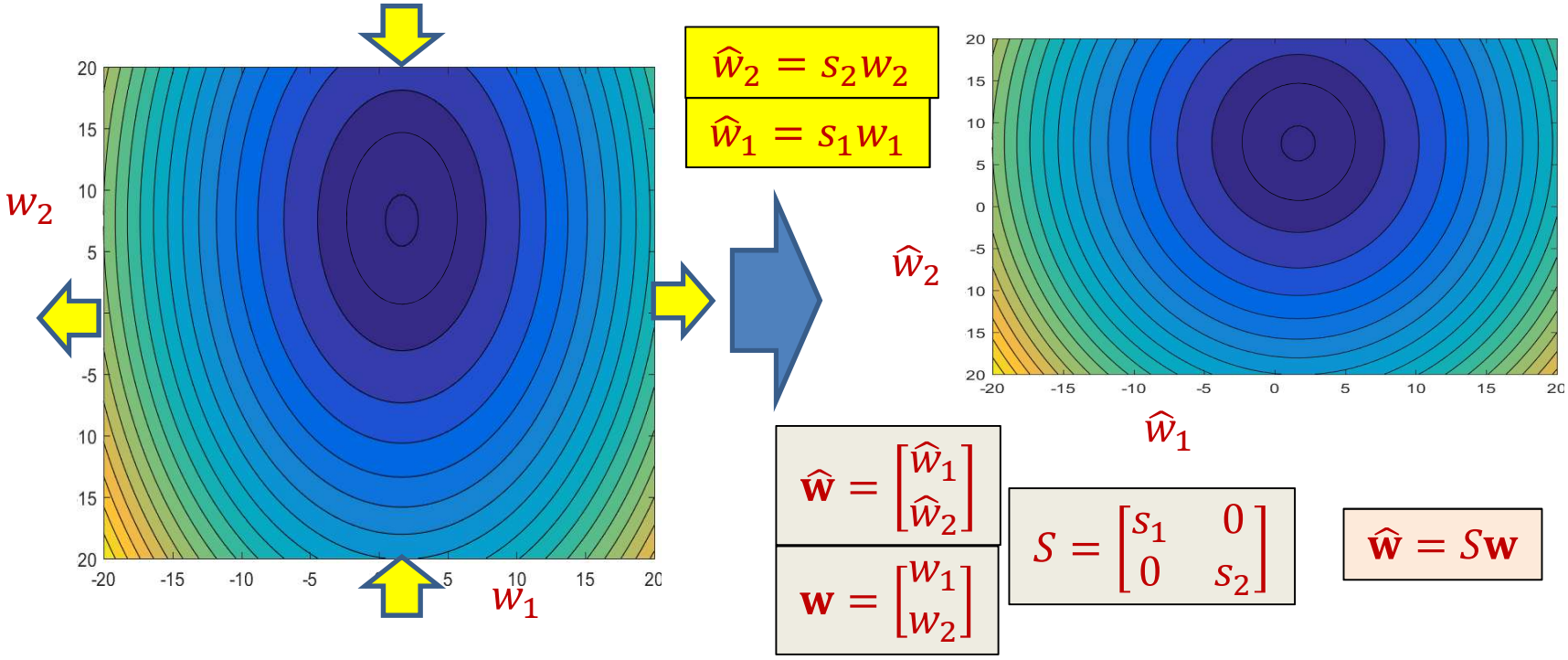




- The objective function has different eccentricities in different directions
  - Resulting in different optimal learning rates for different directions
  - The problem is more difficult when the ellipsoid is not axis aligned: the steps along the two directions are coupled! Moving in one direction changes the gradient along the other

- Solution: *Normalize* the objective to have identical eccentricity in all directions
  - Then all of them will have identical optimal learning rates
  - Easier to find a working learning rate

Solution: Scale the axes



- Scale (and rotate) the axes, such that all of them have identical (identity) "spread"
  - Equal-value contours are circular
  - Movement along the coordinate axes become independent
- **Note:** equation of a quadratic surface with circular equal-value contours can be written as

$$E = \frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{w}}^T\hat{\mathbf{w}} + \hat{\mathbf{b}}^T\hat{\mathbf{w}} + c$$