

The bbob-constrained COCO Test Suite

This document briefly describes the bbob-constrained test suite implemented in the COCO software [4, 5] and provides some example code.¹ To cite this work, please refer to the following paper:

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Building scalable test problems for benchmarking constrained optimizers. 2022. To be submitted to the
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Contents

Table of the Functions in bbob-constrained	1
Functions Definitions	1
Running an Experiment	2
General Problem Definition	3
Principles of the Construction	3
Performance Assessment	3
Supplementary Material	5

Table of the Functions in bbob-constrained

Number of constraints			1	3	9	$9 + \lfloor 3n/4 \rfloor$	$9 + \lfloor 3n/2 \rfloor$	$9 + \lfloor 9n/2 \rfloor$
Number of active constraints			1	2	6	$6 + \lfloor n/2 \rfloor$	$6 + n$	$6 + 3n$
Objective	T	c_{scal}	Function IDs					
f_{sphere}	id	10	1	2	3	4	5	6
$f_{\text{ellipsoid}}$	T_{osz}	10^{-4}	7	8	9	10	11	12
f_{linear}	id	10	13	14	15	16	17	18
$f_{\text{elli_rot}}$	T_{osz}	10^{-4}	19	20	21	22	23	24
f_{discus}	T_{osz}	10^{-4}	25	26	27	28	29	30
$f_{\text{bent_cigar}}$	$T_{\text{asy}}^{0.5}$	10^{-4}	31	32	33	34	35	36
$f_{\text{diff_powers}}$	id	10^{-2}	37	38	39	40	41	42
$f_{\text{rastrigin}}$	$T_{\text{asy}}^{0.2} \circ T_{\text{osz}}$	10	43	44	45	46	47	48
$f_{\text{rast_rot}}$	$T_{\text{asy}}^{0.2} \circ T_{\text{osz}}$	10	49	50	51	52	53	54

Table 1: Identifiers of the bbob-constrained problems, where T is a non-linear search space transformations (described in [Non-linear transformations](#)) applied with each objective and $\text{id}(x) = x$. The 2-D contour plots of the first instance of each test problem can be found in the Appendix or by clicking the objective function name. Contour plots of other instances in 2-D are given at [this link](#).

Functions Definitions

The bbob-constrained test suite uses several COCO “raw” functions as previously used in the unconstrained settings. The functions are defined in Table 2.

¹To know more about the COCO software, go to the [GitHub page](#).

Function name	Formulation	Transformations
Sphere	$f_{\text{sphere}}(x) = z^\top z + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$z = x - x^{\text{uopt}}$
Separable ellipsoid	$f_{\text{ellipsoid}}(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n 10^{6 \frac{i-1}{n-1}} z_i^2 + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$z = x - x^{\text{uopt}}$
Linear slope	$f_{\text{linear}}(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n 5 s_i - s_i z_i + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$s_i = \text{sign}(x_i^{\text{uopt}}) 10^{\frac{i-1}{n-1}}$ $z_i = \begin{cases} x_i & \text{if } x_i^{\text{uopt}} x_i < 5^2 \\ x_i^{\text{uopt}} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$ for $i = 1, \dots, n$
Rotated ellipsoid	$f_{\text{elli_rot}}(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n 10^{6 \frac{i-1}{n-1}} z_i^2 + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$z = R(x - x^{\text{uopt}})$
Discus	$f_{\text{discus}}(x) = 10^6 z_1^2 + \sum_{i=2}^n z_i^2 + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$z = R(x - x^{\text{uopt}})$
Bent cigar	$f_{\text{bent_cigar}}(x) = z_1^2 + 10^6 \sum_{i=2}^n z_i^2 + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$z = R(x - x^{\text{uopt}})$
Different powers	$f_{\text{diff_powers}}(x) = \sqrt{10^6 \sum_{i=1}^n z_i ^{2+4 \frac{i-1}{n-1}}} + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$z = R(x - x^{\text{uopt}})$
Rastrigin	$f_{\text{rastrigin}}(x) = 10 \left(n - \sum_{i=1}^n \cos(2\pi z_i) \right) + z^\top z + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$z = x - x^{\text{uopt}}$
Rotated Rastrigin	$f_{\text{rast_rot}}(x) = 10 \left(n - \sum_{i=1}^n \cos(2\pi z_i) \right) + z^\top z + f_{\text{uopt}}$	$z = R(x - x^{\text{uopt}})$

Table 2: COCO raw function definitions and search space transformations (applied before T from Table 1), where $x^{\text{uopt}} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ is a randomly sampled vector locating the unconstrained minimum of the objective function such that $f(x^{\text{uopt}}) = f_{\text{uopt}} \in \mathbb{R}$. Rotations $R \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ are randomly sampled orthogonal matrices, fixed for each instance.

Running an Experiment

A Python code example how to benchmark a solver on the COCO constrained test suite is given in Listing 1. Running a full experiment requires, among other things, to attach an observer to the current problem, allow a sufficiently large budget (number of objective and constraints evaluations) and loop over all problems of the test suite.

```
import cocoex, cocopp
from scipy.optimize import fmin_cobyla as fmin
import os, webbrowser # to open post-processed results in the browser

def get_constraints(problem):
    """return the constraint function from 'problem'"""
    def constraint(x):
        """constraints for 'fmin_cobyla' where >= 0 means feasible"""
        return -problem.constraint(x)
    return constraint # a function

suite = cocoex.Suite('bbob-constrained', '', '')
observer = cocoex.Observer('bbob-constrained', 'result_folder: ' + fmin.__name__)
for problem in suite: # this for-loop takes a minute or two
    problem.observe_with(observer)
    fmin(problem, problem.initial_solution, get_constraints(problem),
        rhobeg=2, rhoend=1e-8, maxfun=1e2) # next step: increase maxfun to 1e3...

cocopp.main(observer.result_folder) # post-processing the data, takes two minutes
webbrowser.open("file://" + os.getcwd() + "/ppdata/index.html") # browse results
```

Listing 1: Benchmarking SciPy's COBYLA on the bbob-constrained test suite.

The interface yields a feasible starting point x^{init} as `problem.initial_solution`. If the experimental design includes restarts, further feasible starting points can be sampled from x^{init} following the procedure described in Algorithm 1.

A more comprehensive example for running a full experiment in practice can be found in the [COCO](#) repository².

Algorithm 1 Sampling a new feasible starting point

Require: x^{init} and $\sigma > 0$

```

1: while True do
2:   Sample  $z \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \text{id})$  and set  $x = x^{\text{init}} + \sigma z$ 
3:   if  $x$  is feasible then
4:     return  $x$  as the new starting point
5:   else
6:      $\sigma \leftarrow \sigma/2$ 

```

General Problem Definition

A constrained test problem is written in the standard form

$$\underset{x \in X}{\text{minimize}} \quad f(x) \quad \text{subject to} \quad g_k(x) \leq 0 \quad \text{for } k = 1, \dots, m \quad (1)$$

where X may be $[-5, 5]^n$ or \mathbb{R}^n , n is the dimension of the search space and m is the number of generally non-linear constraints.

To create the constrained problems, each one of the 9 objective functions is composed with a non-linear transformation of the search space defined previously and is combined with $m' \in \{1, 2, 6, 6 + \lfloor n/2 \rfloor, 6 + n, 6 + 3n\}$ active constraints and $\lfloor m'/2 \rfloor$ inactive constraints, having overall $m = \lfloor 3m'/2 \rfloor$ constraints. This results in 54 constrained test problems, f_i , $i = 1, \dots, 54$, summarized in Table 1. In practice, x^{opt} is sampled randomly to define different instances of the same constrained problem. Additionally, the objective functions are scaled down by a factor $c_{\text{scal}} > 0$ which is specific to each function. The final optimization problem writes:

$$\underset{x \in X}{\text{minimize}} \quad c_{\text{scal}} f(v) \quad \text{subject to} \quad g_i(v) \leq 0 \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, m \quad (2)$$

where $v = T(x - x^{\text{opt}})$ and T is the non-linear transformation reported in Table 1 along with c_{scal} and the number of constraints associated to each problem. The considered dimensions are the same as for the `bbob` test suite, that is $n \in \{2, 3, 5, 10, 20, 40\}$.

Principles of the Construction

The theory allows to control the location of the constrained optimum $y^* \in \mathbb{R}^n$, provided that its gradient is non-zero. In the construction, f is an already shifted BBOB function, hence taking $y^* = 0$ generally provides $\nabla f(y^*) \neq 0$ (in some cases, e.g. the Rastrigin function, some additional conditions on y^* are needed [2]). From this point, following the gradient direction, an initial solution is determined

$$x^{\text{init}} = y^* + \rho \nabla f(y^*) + x^{\text{opt}} \quad (3)$$

where $x^{\text{opt}} \in X$ defines another (random) translation such that the global minimum of the constrained problem is not in $y^* = 0$ and $\rho > 0$ is a scaling factor ensuring that $x^{\text{init}} \in X$.

Performance Assessment

In order to assess the performance of optimization algorithms, we record the number of objective and constraint evaluations to reach a certain target value.

The target definition encompasses objective minimization and constraint satisfaction together using the merit function

$$\tilde{f}(x) := \max(f_{\text{opt}}, f(x)) + \sum_{k=0}^m \max(0, g_k(x)) \quad (4)$$

²See [coco/code-experiments/build/python/example_experiment2.py](#) (running the code requires the installation of [COCO](#)).

where $f_{\text{opt}} = f(\mathbf{x}^{\text{opt}})$. It is easy to see that $\min \tilde{f} = f_{\text{opt}}$.

The estimated Expected Runtime (ERT) [3] is computed from feasible points only and for 7 target values $f_{\text{target}} = f_{\text{opt}} + 10^i$, with $i \in \{1, 0, -1, -2, -3, -5, -6\}$.

Data points for the ECDFS [3] are collected for 41 target values $f_{\text{target}} = f_{\text{opt}} + 10^i$, with i evenly distributed in $[-6, 2]$.

Supplementary Material

Construction of the feasible region

The construction of any problem of the test suite is detailed in the full paper [2] and relies on Theorem 4.2.16 in [1, p. 195] stating that, if f is *pseudo-convex* at y^\star , and g_k is differentiable and *quasi-convex* at y^\star for all $k = 1, \dots, m$, then the KKT conditions are sufficient to ensure that y^\star is a global minimum of the constrained optimization problem. It is easy to show that, if f is *strictly pseudo-convex* at y^\star , then the global minimum is also unique [2]. We refer to the textbook of Bazaraa et al. [1] for the definitions and properties of pseudo- and quasi-convexity.

The algorithm to generate an instance of a constrained problem first builds a set of m linear constraints, of the form $g_k(x) = \alpha_k a_k^\top (x - y^\star) + b_k$ by setting $a_k \in \mathbb{R}^n$ where $\alpha_k > 0, b_k \geq 0 \in \mathbb{R}$ are input parameters. The first constraint is chosen such that $a_1 = -\alpha_1 \nabla f(y^\star) / \|\nabla f(y^\star)\|$ and $b_1 = 0$ hence $g_1(y^\star) = 0$. If $m = 1$, this is the only choice to satisfy the stationarity condition in the KKT equations. The remaining constraints are randomly sampled from an isotropic multivariate normal distribution. If $g_k(y^\star + \rho \nabla f(y^\star)) > 0$, the sign of a_k is flipped to make sure that $y^\star + \rho \nabla f(y^\star)$ is feasible. A constraint is inactive at the constructed optimum if $b_k > 0$.

The Lagrange multipliers associated to y^\star when the constraints are generated according to the aforementioned procedure are $[1, 0, \dots, 0] \in \mathbb{R}^m$. A second step of the algorithm modifies the set of constraints gradients in a randomized manner such that the first constraint is not any more aligned with the gradient direction at the optimum. The constraints' indices are also shuffled.

Non-linear transformations

Let $T : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n$ be a bijective transformation of the search space with inverse T^{-1} . Then $T^{-1}(y^\star)$ is the global optimum of the problem

$$\underset{x \in \mathcal{X}}{\text{minimize}} \quad f(T(x)) \quad \text{subject to} \quad g_i(T(x)) \leq 0 \quad i = 1, \dots, m \quad (5)$$

if y^\star is the global optimum of the original problem as described in Equation (1). This allows to apply non-linear transformations of the search space to the set of constructed linear constraints. For practical reasons, we consider in this work bijective transformations T that have y^\star as fixed point, i.e. $T(y^\star) = y^\star$. As a consequence, the optimum of the transformed problem in Equation (5) remains y^\star . This way, we avoid computing the inverse transformation at y^\star . The non-linear transformations implemented in the test suite are coordinate-wise, defined as T_{asy}^β , where $\beta > 0$, and T_{osz} , defined as follows:

$$T_{\text{asy}}^\beta(x) = \left(\begin{cases} x_i^{1+\beta \frac{i-1}{n-1} \sqrt{x_i}} & \text{if } x_i > 0 \\ x_i & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \right)_{i=1, \dots, n}, \quad (6)$$

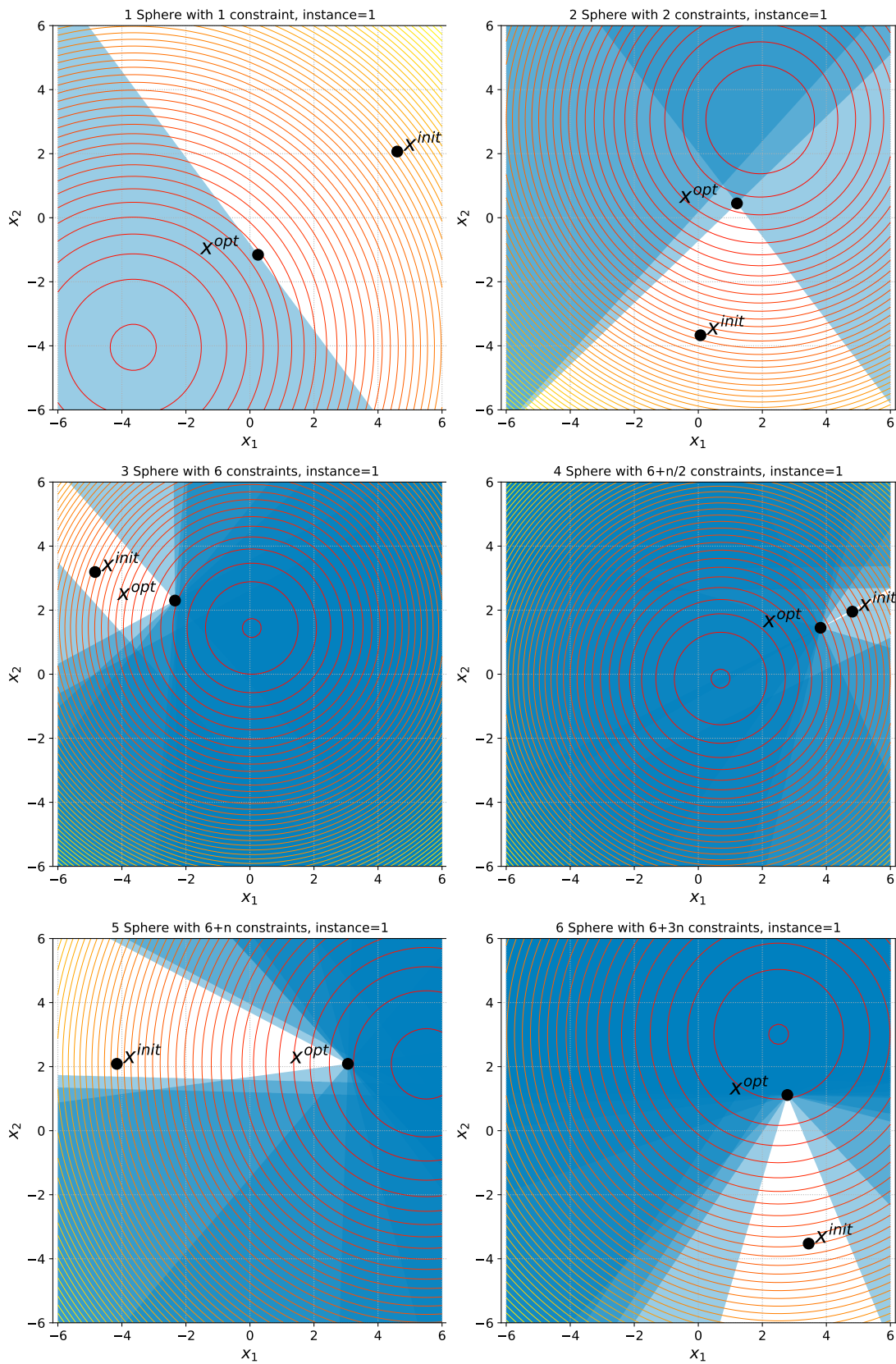
$$T_{\text{osz}}(x) = (\text{sign}(x_i) \exp(\hat{x}_i + 0.049(\sin(c_1 \hat{x}_i) + \sin(c_2 \hat{x}_i))))_{i=1, \dots, n}, \quad (7)$$

with $\hat{x}_i = \log(|x_i|) \mathbb{1}_{\{x_i \neq 0\}}$ and $\text{sign}(x_i)$ is the sign function with convention $\text{sign}(0) = 0$. The value for the constants c_1 and c_2 are $c_1 = \begin{cases} 10 & \text{if } x_i > 0 \\ 5.5 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$, and $c_2 = \begin{cases} 7.9 & \text{if } x_i > 0 \\ 3.1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$. The idea is that T_{asy}^β introduces asymmetry, as it only changes positive coordinates, and $T_{\text{osz}} : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n$ oscillates around the origin. Both transformations are bijective, continuous, sign-preserving hence have fixed point 0.

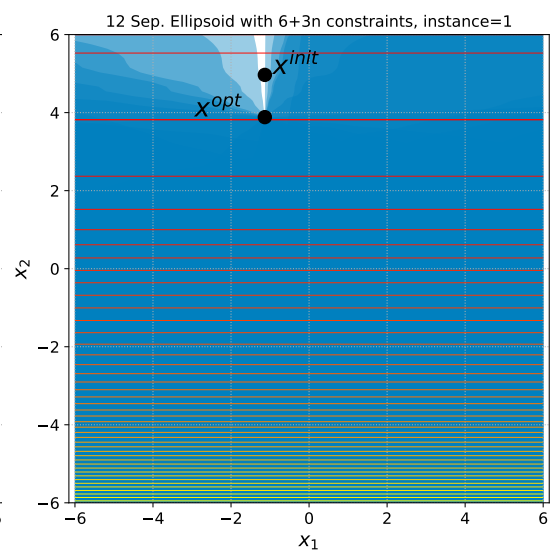
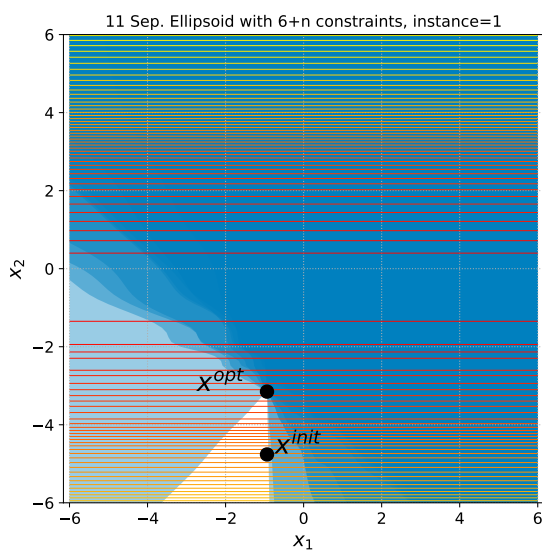
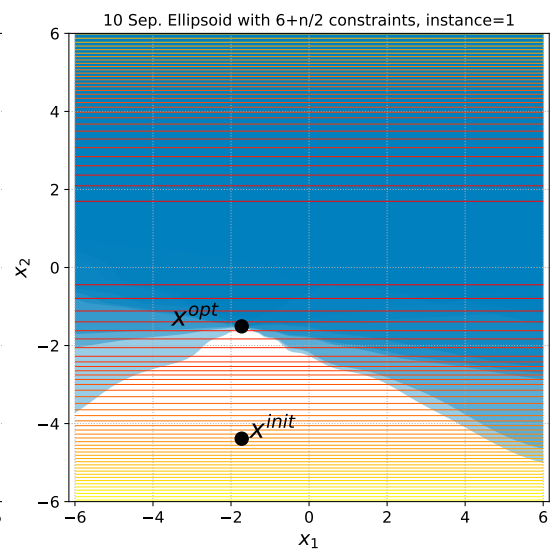
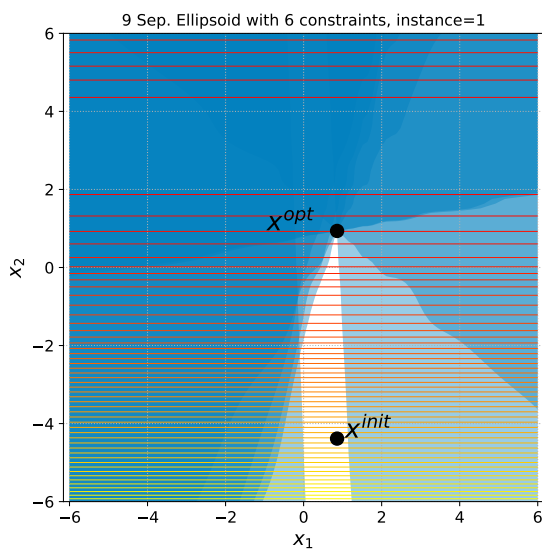
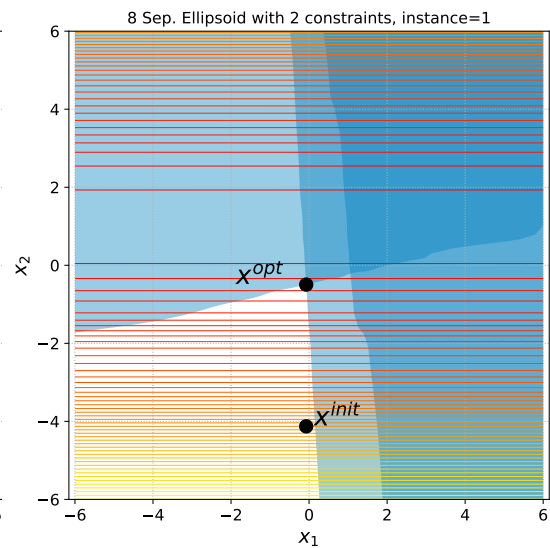
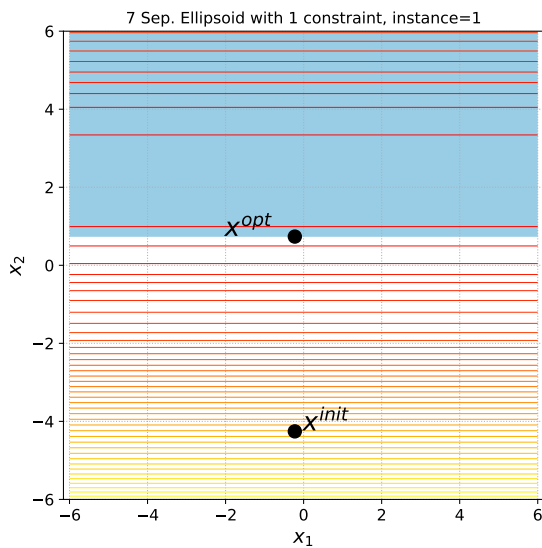
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- [2] Paul Dufossé, Nikolaus Hansen, Dima Brockhoff, Phillipe R. Sampaio, Asma Atamna, and Anne Auger. Building scalable test problems for benchmarking constrained optimizers. 2022. To be submitted to the *SIAM Journal of Optimization*.
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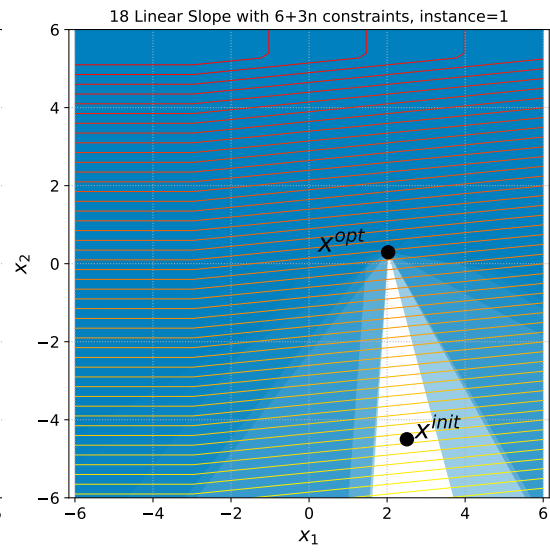
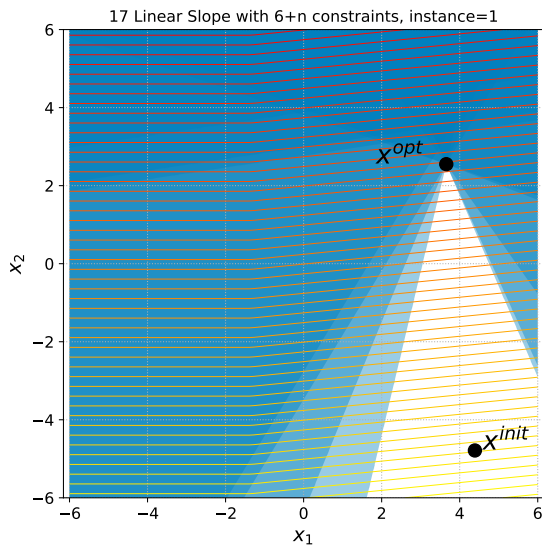
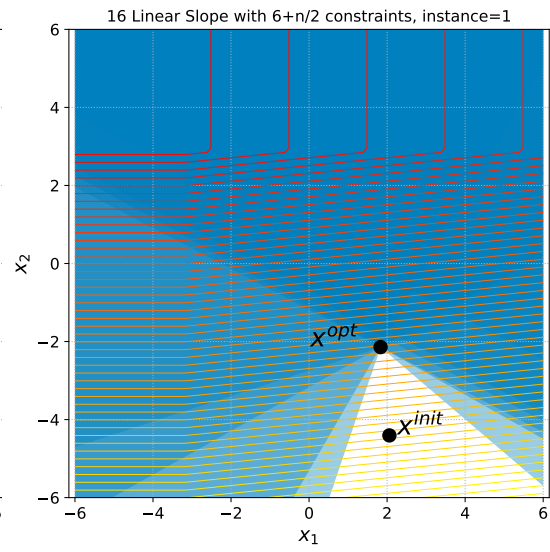
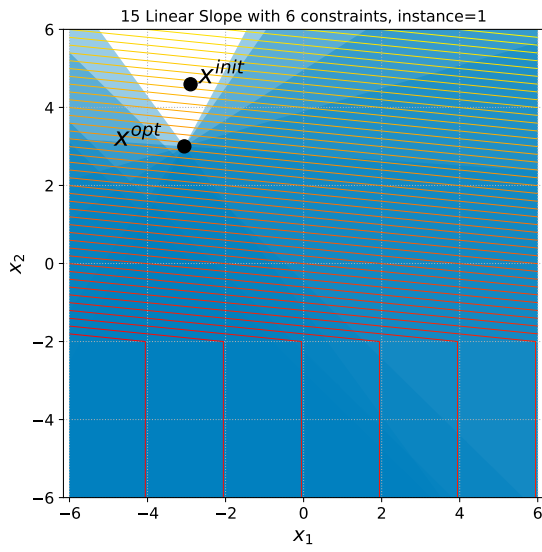
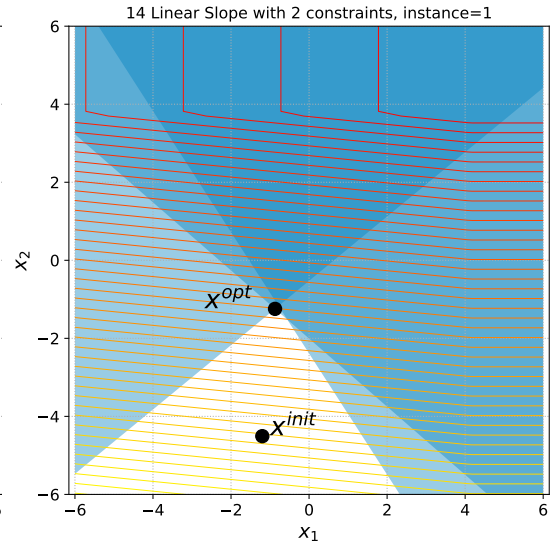
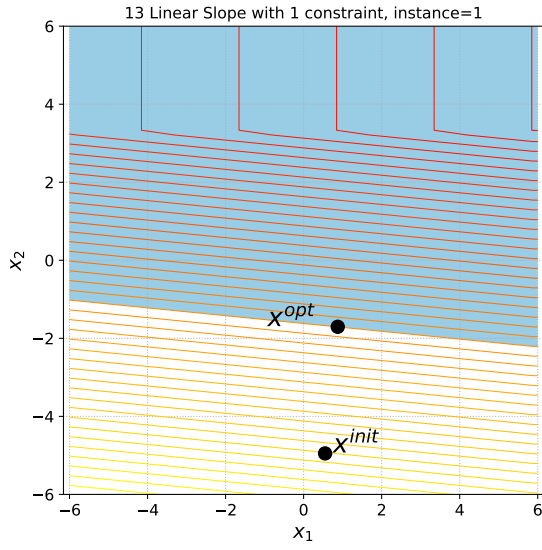
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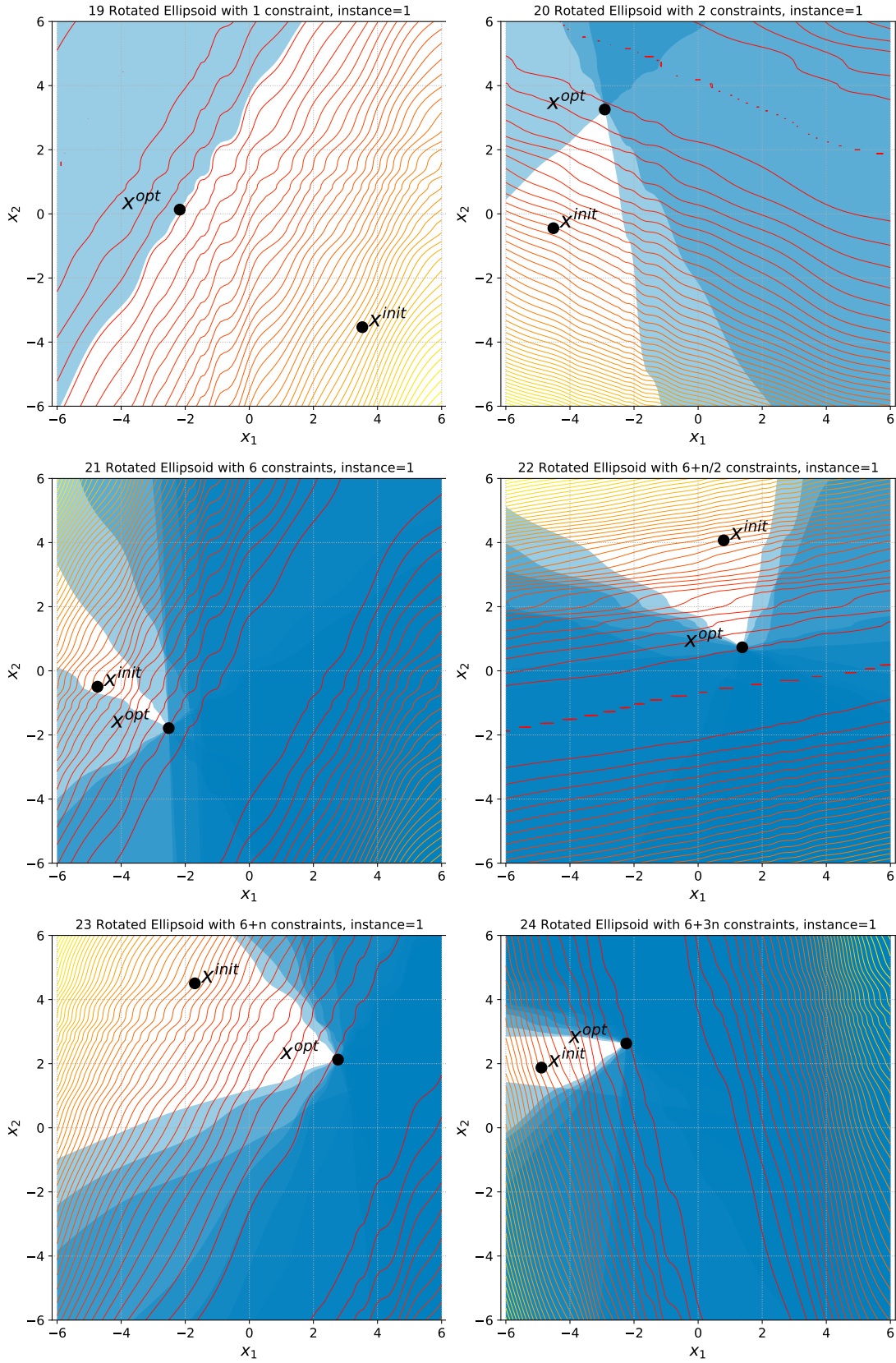
Ellipsoid



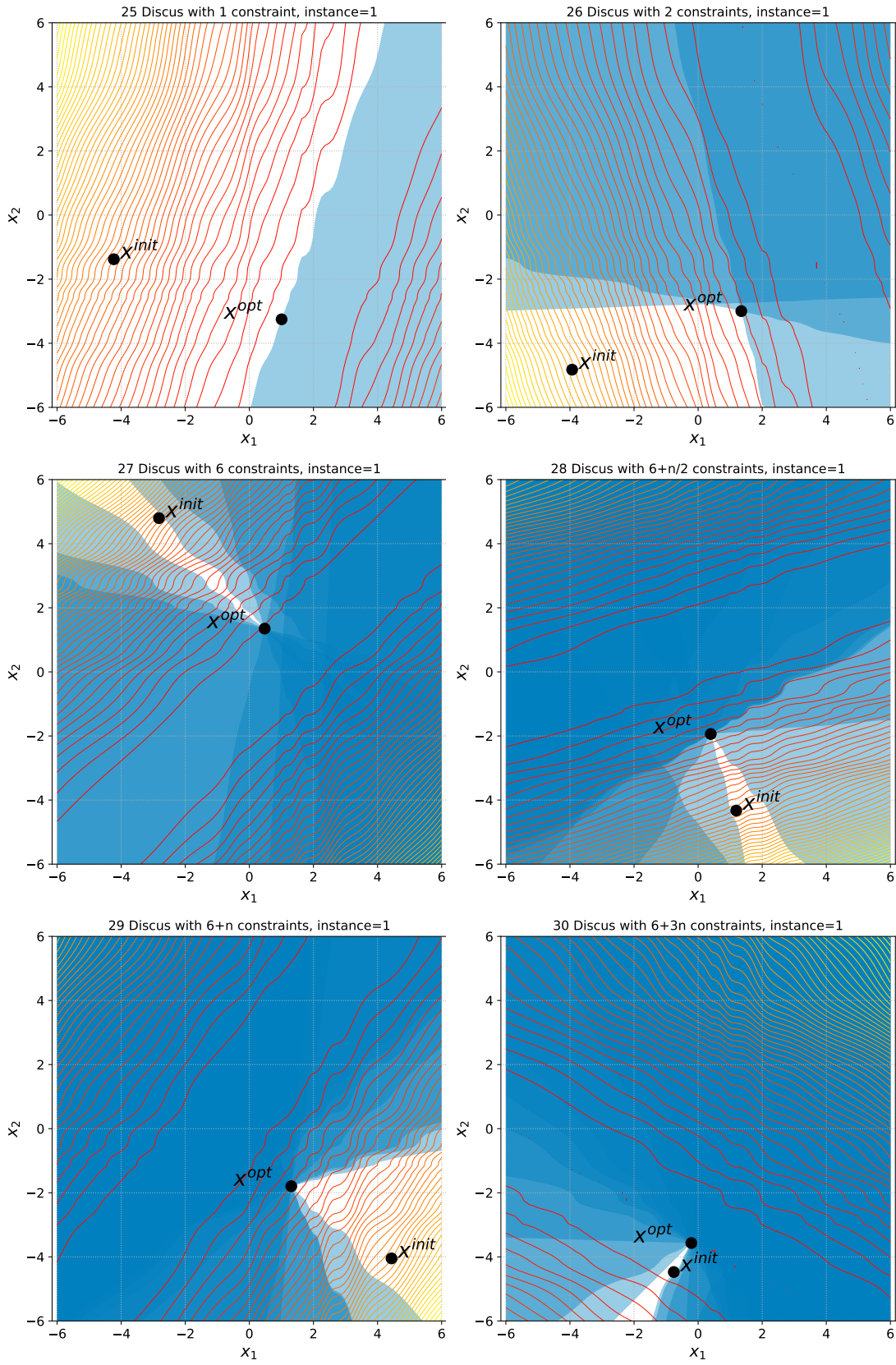
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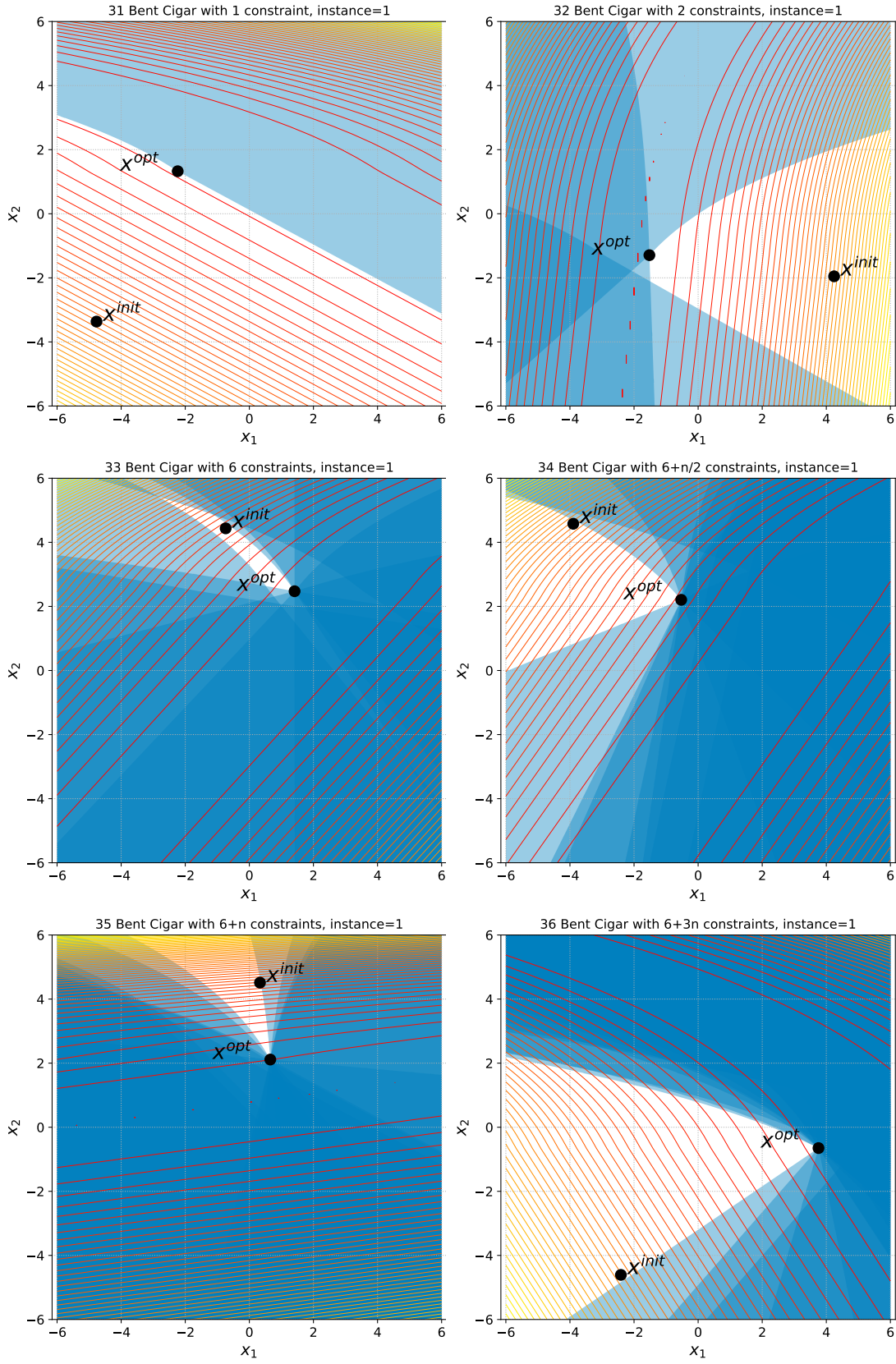
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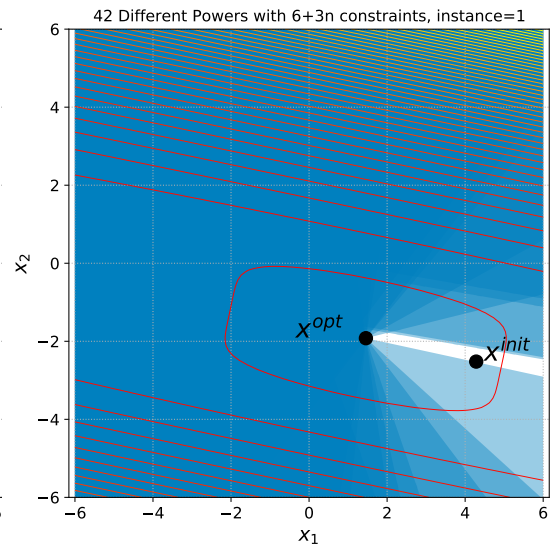
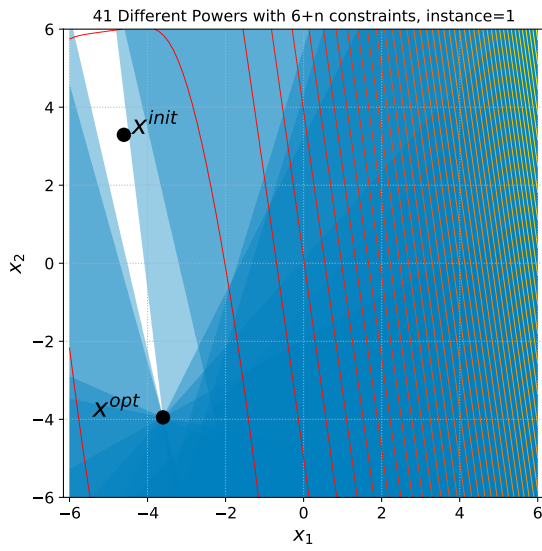
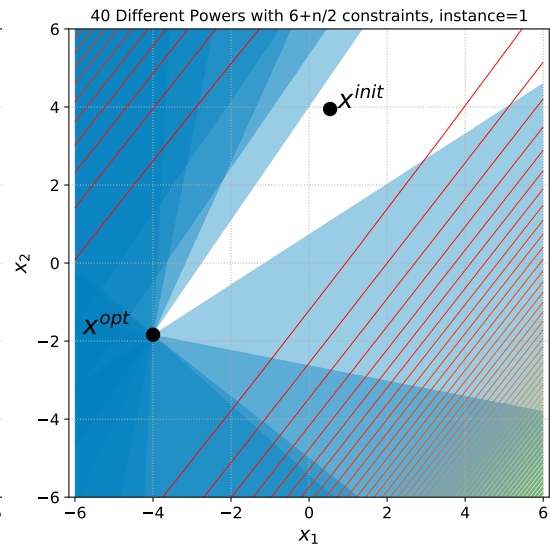
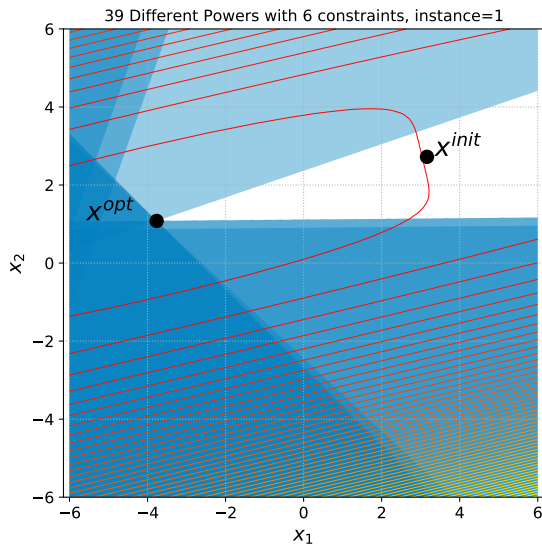
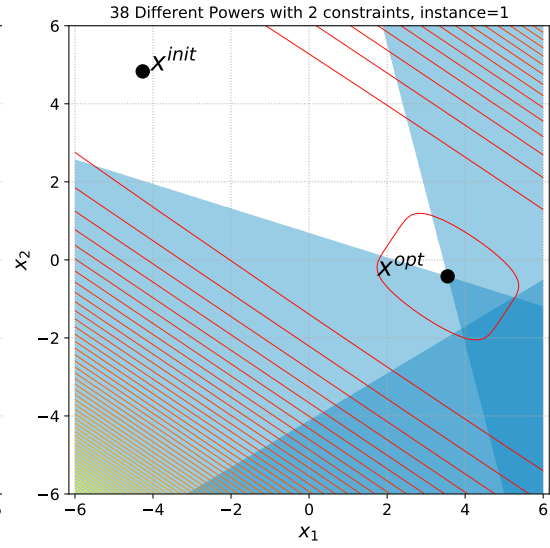
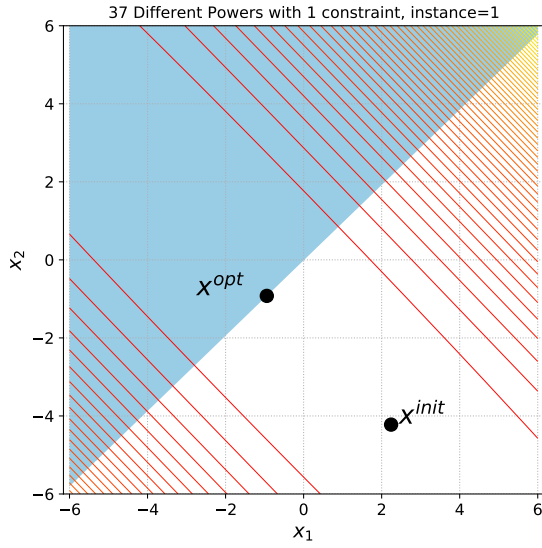
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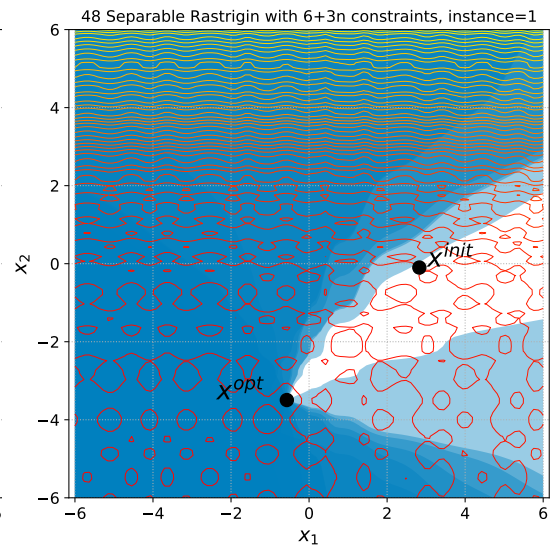
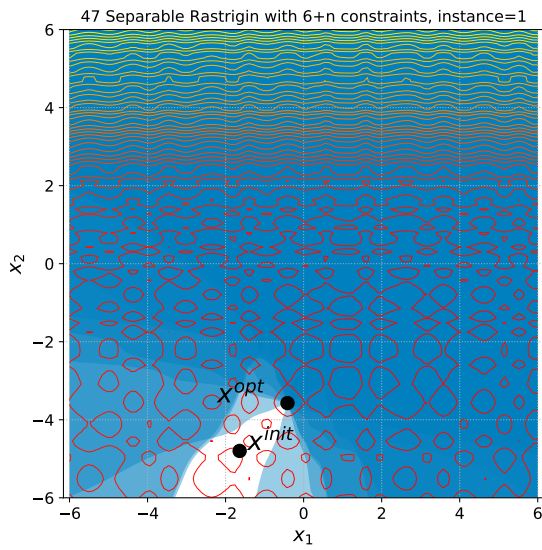
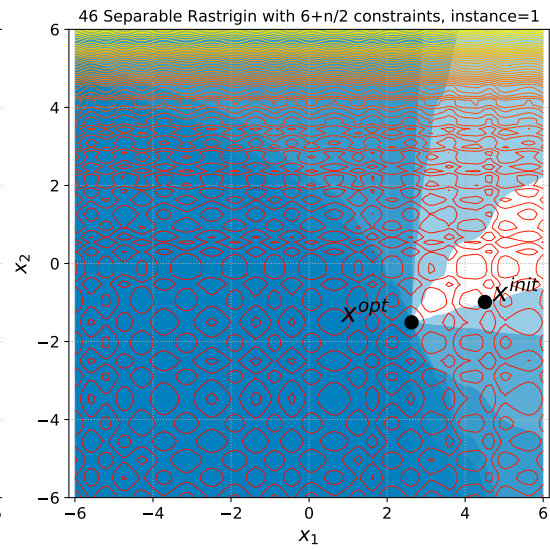
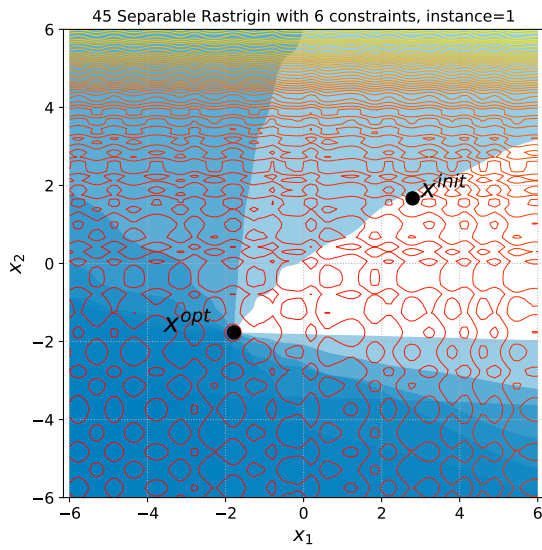
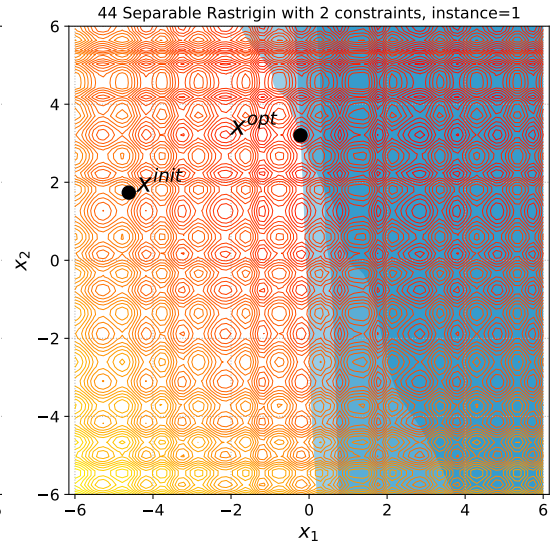
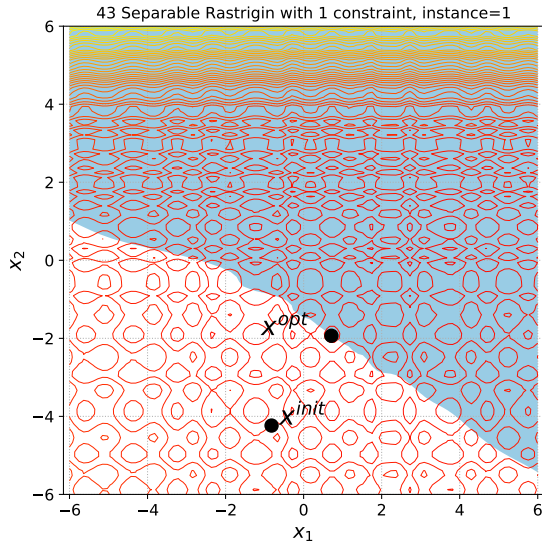
Bent Cigar



Different Powers



Rastrigin



Rotated Rastrigin

