
First-order methods in optimization - Evaluation

Olivier Leblanc, Guillaume Thiran.

1 Part 1 - Slide 45

1.1 6. (with code)

$$f(\mathbf{x}) = 2x_{[1]} + x_{[2]} = \max_{\mathbf{y}} \left\{ \sum_i y_i x_i; \sum_i y_i = 3, 0 \leq y_i \leq 2 \right\} = \sigma_{\{\mathbf{y} | \mathbf{1}^\top \mathbf{y} = 3, 0 \leq \mathbf{y} \leq 2\mathbf{1}\}}.$$

Hence,

$$\text{prox}_f(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{x} - \mathcal{P}_{\{\mathbf{y} | \mathbf{1}^\top \mathbf{y} = 3, 0 \leq \mathbf{y} \leq 2\mathbf{1}\}}(\mathbf{x}).$$

Writing $C = \{\mathbf{y} | \mathbf{1}^\top \mathbf{y} = 3, 0 \leq \mathbf{y} \leq 2\mathbf{1}\}$, it can be compared with $H_{\mathbf{a},\mathbf{b}} \cap \text{Box}[\mathbf{l}, \mathbf{u}]$, with $\mathbf{a} = \mathbf{1}, \mathbf{b} = 3, \mathbf{l} = \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{u} = 2$.

```
import numpy as np
def error_fct(a,b,l,u,x,mu):
    y = projbox(x-mu*a,l,u)
    return error = a@y-b

def projbox(x, l, u):
    return np.minimum(np.maximum(x,l), u)

def proj_H_inter_box(a,b,l,u,x):
    mu_low = -1 #start with guesses for mu-levels
    mu_high = 1
    #check that the levels give respectively negative and positive values
    #for the function error = a@y-1 with y = proj_box(l,u,x-mu*a)
    #positive for lower bound
    j=0
    j_max = 100
    error_l = -1
    while (error_l<0) & (j<j_max) :
        mu_low = mu_low*2 #more negative
        error_l=error_fct(a,b,l,u,x,mu_low)
        j=j+1
    #negative for upper bound
    k=0
    k_max = 10
    error_h = 1
    while (error_h>0) & (k<k_max) :
        mu_high = mu_high*2 #more positive
        error_h=error_fct(a,b,l,u,x,mu_high)
        k=k+1

    i = 0
    i_max = 100
    tol = 1e-8
    error = 2*tol
    while (np.abs(error)>tol) & (i<i_max) :
        mu_mid = (mu_low+mu_high)/2
        error = error_fct(a,b,l,u,x,mu_mid)
        if error>0:
            mu_low = mu_mid
        else:
            mu_high = mu_mid
        i=i+1

    #Compute the solution with the good level
    return projbox(x-mu_mid*a,l,u)

def proxf(x):
    return x - proj_H_inter_box(np.ones(len(x)),3,np.zeros(len(x)),2*np.ones(len(x)),x)

x = np.array([2,1,4,1,2,1])
```

```
print(proxf(x))
```

The output is : [1.5, 1., 2., 1., 1.5, 1.].

1.2 8.

$$f(t) = \begin{cases} 1/t, & t > 0, \\ \infty, & \text{else.} \end{cases}$$

$$\text{prox}_{\lambda f}(t) = \arg \min_u \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \lambda/u, & u > 0, \\ \infty, & \text{else.} \end{array} \right. + \frac{1}{2} \|u - t\|_2^2$$

Clearly, the minimum occurs when $u > 0$, i.e. on the differentiable part. Hence,

$$\frac{-\lambda}{u^2} + u - t = 0 \Leftrightarrow u^3 - tu^2 - \lambda = 0,$$

and it can be checked the second derivative is always positive on $u > 0$, implying it exists a unique solution of the above and it corresponds to a minimum. Finally,

$$\text{prox}_{\lambda f}(t) = \{u > 0 | u^3 - tu^2 - \lambda = 0\}. \quad (1)$$

1.3 9.

$$f(\mathbf{X}) = \begin{cases} \text{tr } \mathbf{X}^{-1}, & \mathbf{X} \succ 0, \\ \infty, & \text{else.} \end{cases} = \begin{cases} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{\lambda_i}, & \mathbf{X} \succ 0, \\ \infty, & \text{else.} \end{cases}$$

As one can write $f(\mathbf{X}) = g(\lambda_1(\mathbf{X}), \dots, \lambda_n(\mathbf{X})) = \sum_{i=1}^n h(\lambda_i)$, f is a *symmetric spectral function*. With the EigenValue Decomposition (EVD) of \mathbf{X} as $\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{U} \text{diag } \lambda(\mathbf{X}) \mathbf{U}^T$, this gives

$$\begin{aligned} \text{prox}_{\lambda f}(\mathbf{X}) &= \mathbf{U} \text{diag}(\text{prox}_{\lambda g}[\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n]) \mathbf{U}^T \\ &= \mathbf{U} \text{diag}(\text{prox}_{\lambda h}(\lambda_1), \dots, \text{prox}_{\lambda h}(\lambda_n)) \mathbf{U}^T \\ &= \mathbf{U} \text{diag}(\{u > 0 | u^3 - \lambda_i u^2 - \lambda = 0\}_{i=1}^n) \mathbf{U}^T, \end{aligned}$$

with $h(t) = \frac{1}{t}$ for $t > 0$.

1.4 10.

$$\lambda f(\mathbf{x}) = \lambda (\|\mathbf{x}\|_2 - 1)^2 = \lambda \|\mathbf{x}\|_2^2 - 2\lambda \|\mathbf{x}\|_2 + \lambda.$$

Using the provided tables, one identifies it with $g(\mathbf{x}) + \frac{c}{2} \|\mathbf{x}\|_2^2 + \langle \mathbf{a}, \mathbf{x} \rangle + \gamma$, with $g(\mathbf{x}) = -2\lambda \|\mathbf{x}\|_2$, $c = 2\lambda$, $\mathbf{a} = \mathbf{0}$, $\gamma = 0$. Hence,

$$\text{prox}_{\lambda f}(\mathbf{x}) = \text{prox}_{\frac{-2\lambda \|\cdot\|_2}{1+2\lambda}} \left(\frac{\mathbf{x}}{1+2\lambda} \right) = \begin{cases} \left(1 + \frac{2\lambda}{\|\mathbf{x}\|_2}\right) \frac{\mathbf{x}}{1+2\lambda}, & \mathbf{x} \neq \mathbf{0}, \\ \{\mathbf{u} : \|\mathbf{u}\| = \frac{2\lambda}{1+2\lambda}\}, & \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{0}. \end{cases}$$

2 Part 2 - Exercise 0 - slide 40

$$\min_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n} \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{b}\|_2^2 + \underbrace{\frac{\lambda_1}{2} \|\mathbf{x}\|_2^2 + \lambda_2 \|\mathbf{x}\|_1}_{\text{elastic net}},$$

where $\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times n}$, $\mathbf{b} \in \mathbb{R}^m$ and $\lambda_1, \lambda_2 > 0$. Choosing $f(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{b}\|_2^2 + \frac{\lambda_1}{2} \|\mathbf{x}\|_2^2$ as the σ -strongly convex and differentiable part and $g(\mathbf{x}) = \lambda_2 \|\mathbf{x}\|_1$ as the closed convex but non differentiable part, one has $\nabla f(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{A}^T(\mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{b}) + \lambda_1 \mathbf{x}$ and $\text{prox}_{\alpha g}(\mathbf{x}) = \mathcal{T}_{\alpha \lambda_2}(\mathbf{x})$.

- (*Proximal Gradient*)

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x}^{k+1} &= \text{prox}_{\frac{1}{L}g}(\mathbf{x}^k - \frac{1}{L} \nabla f(\mathbf{x}^k)) \\ &= \mathcal{T}_{\frac{\lambda_2}{L}} \left(\mathbf{x}^k - \frac{1}{L} (\mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{A} + \lambda_1 \mathbf{I}) \mathbf{x}^k + \frac{1}{L} \mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{b} \right), \end{aligned}$$

with $L = \|\mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{A} + \lambda_1 \mathbf{I}\| = \lambda_{\max}(\mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{A}) + \lambda_1 = \|\mathbf{A}\|_2^2 + \lambda_1$.

- (FISTA)

$$\begin{cases} \mathbf{x}^{k+1} &= \mathcal{T}_{\frac{\lambda_2}{L}} \left(\mathbf{y}^k - \frac{1}{L} (\mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{A} + \lambda_1 \mathbf{I}) \mathbf{y}^k + \frac{1}{L} \mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{b} \right) \\ t_{k+1} &= \frac{1 + \sqrt{1 + 4t_k^2}}{2} \\ \mathbf{y}^{k+1} &= \mathbf{x}^{k+1} + \left(\frac{t_k - 1}{t_{k+1}} \right) (\mathbf{x}^{k+1} - \mathbf{x}^k) \end{cases}$$

- (V-FISTA)

$$\begin{cases} \mathbf{x}^{k+1} &= \mathcal{T}_{\frac{\lambda_2}{L}} \left(\mathbf{y}^k - \frac{1}{L} (\mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{A} + \lambda_1 \mathbf{I}) \mathbf{y}^k + \frac{1}{L} \mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{b} \right) \\ \mathbf{y}^{k+1} &= \mathbf{x}^{k+1} + \left(\frac{\sqrt{\kappa} - 1}{\sqrt{\kappa} + 1} \right) (\mathbf{x}^{k+1} - \mathbf{x}^k), \end{cases}$$

with $\kappa = L/\sigma$, and $\sigma = \lambda_{\min}(\mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{A}) + \lambda_1 = \lambda_1$ if \mathbf{A} is not full rank.

Now, if one chooses $f(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{Ax} - \mathbf{b}\|_2^2$ as the differentiable (but not strongly convex) part and $\alpha g(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{\alpha \lambda_1}{2} \|\mathbf{x}\|_2^2 + \alpha \lambda_2 \|\mathbf{x}\|_1$ as the closed convex but non differentiable part, one has $\nabla f(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{A}^\top (\mathbf{Ax} - \mathbf{b})$ and, by identification with $g'(\mathbf{x}) + \frac{c}{2} \|\mathbf{x}\|_2^2 + \langle \mathbf{a}, \mathbf{x} \rangle + \gamma$ with $g'(\mathbf{x}) = \alpha \lambda_2 \|\mathbf{x}\|_1, c = \alpha \lambda_1, \mathbf{a} = \mathbf{0}, \gamma = 0$, $\text{prox}_{\alpha g}(\mathbf{x}) = \text{prox}_{\frac{\alpha}{\alpha \lambda_1 + 1} \lambda_2 \|\cdot\|_1} \left(\frac{\mathbf{x}}{\alpha \lambda_1 + 1} \right) = \mathcal{T}_{\frac{\alpha \lambda_2}{\alpha \lambda_1 + 1}} \left(\frac{\mathbf{x}}{\alpha \lambda_1 + 1} \right)$.

- (V-FISTA2)

$$\begin{cases} \mathbf{x}^{k+1} &= \mathcal{T}_{\frac{\lambda_2/L_2}{\lambda_1/L_2 + 1}} \left(\frac{\mathbf{y}^k - \frac{1}{L_2} \mathbf{A}^\top (\mathbf{A} \mathbf{y}^k - \mathbf{b})}{\frac{\lambda_1}{L_2} + 1} \right) = \mathcal{T}_{\frac{\lambda_2}{\lambda_1 + L_2}} \left(\frac{L_2 \mathbf{y}^k - \mathbf{A}^\top (\mathbf{A} \mathbf{y}^k - \mathbf{b})}{\lambda_1 + L_2} \right) \\ \mathbf{y}^{k+1} &= \mathbf{x}^{k+1} + \left(\frac{\sqrt{\kappa_2} - 1}{\sqrt{\kappa_2} + 1} \right) (\mathbf{x}^{k+1} - \mathbf{x}^k), \end{cases}$$

with $L_2 = \|\mathbf{A}\|_2^2$, $\kappa_2 = L_2/\sigma$, and $\sigma = \lambda_1$ (given by the statement).

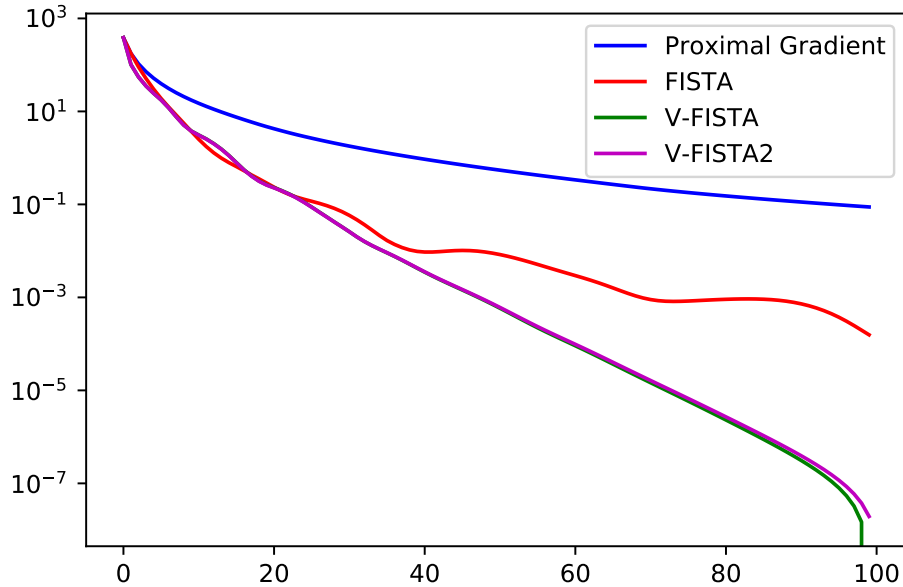


Figure 1: $F(\mathbf{x}^k) - F_{\text{opt}}$ in log-scale along the y-axis for the first 100 iterations of each of the methods with all-zeros vectors and a constant stepsize.

As can be observed in Fig. 2, the V-FISTA methods worked the best, with a slight improvement in V-FISTA which does not follow the theory. The four first elements are:

- (-0.40403765 0.18475212 0.97264407 -0.99645397])
- (-0.43969331 0.01974521 1.42280231 -0.87819581)

- (-0.4319773 0.02881602 1.43373682 -0.9066518)
- (-0.43210834 0.0295975 1.43437285 -0.90583213)
- (-0.43210892 0.02959727 1.43437048 -0.9058291)

for the Ground truth, and the four methods, PG, FISTA, V-FISTA, V-FISTA2, respectively.

3 Part 2 - Exercise 1 - slide 41

$$\min_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^{30}} \sqrt{\mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c} + 0.2 \|\mathbf{D} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{1}\|_1,$$

where $\mathbf{Q} \in \mathbb{R}^{30 \times 30}$, $\mathbf{b} \in \mathbb{R}^{30}$, $c \in \mathbb{R}$, $\mathbf{D} \in \mathbb{R}^{30 \times 30}$. The matrix \mathbf{Q} is positive definite.

(a) The first step of the problem is to show it is well-defined (i.e. $\mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c \geq 0$ if $c > \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \mathbf{b}$). To that aim, letting the Cholesky factorisation of \mathbf{Q} being denoted as $\mathbf{Q} = \mathbf{L}^\top \mathbf{L}$,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c &= \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{L}^{-1} \mathbf{L} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{L}^\top \mathbf{L}^{-\top} \mathbf{b} + \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{L}^{-1} \mathbf{L}^{-\top} \mathbf{b} - \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{L}^\top \mathbf{L}^{-\top} \mathbf{b} + c, \\ &= \left\| \mathbf{L} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{L}^{-\top} \mathbf{b} \right\|_2^2 + c - \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \mathbf{b}. \end{aligned}$$

From the above, as a norm is always nonnegative, one can conclude the problem is well-defined if $c > \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \mathbf{b}$.

(b) Starting from the norm expression, one can obtain

$$\sqrt{\mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c} + 0.2 \|\mathbf{D} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{1}\|_1 = \left\| \frac{\mathbf{L} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{L}^{-\top} \mathbf{b}}{\sqrt{c - \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \mathbf{b}}} \right\|_2 + 0.2 \|\mathbf{D} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{1}\|_1.$$

As a norm is convex, as a composition with a linear mapping preserves convexity and since a sum of convex functions is convex, the problem is convex.

(c) To fit the framework of FISTA, we denote by $f(\mathbf{x}) = \sqrt{\mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c}$ and $g(\mathbf{x}) = 0.2 \|\mathbf{D} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{1}\|_1$ where g is proper, closed and convex, and f is L_f -smooth and convex. More precisely, the Lipschitz constant of f can be identify by computing its Hessian:

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla f(\mathbf{x}) &= \frac{\mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c}}, \\ \nabla^2 f(\mathbf{x}) &= \frac{\mathbf{Q}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c}} - \frac{(\mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b})(\mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b})^\top}{\left(\mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c\right)^{\frac{3}{2}}}. \end{aligned}$$

The latter can be bounded as

$$\nabla^2 f(\mathbf{x}) \preceq \frac{\mathbf{Q}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x} + c}} = \frac{\mathbf{Q}}{\sqrt{c - \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \mathbf{b}} \sqrt{1 + \frac{\|\mathbf{L} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{L}^{-\top} \mathbf{b}\|_2^2}{c - \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \mathbf{b}}}} \preceq \frac{\mathbf{Q}}{\sqrt{c - \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \mathbf{b}}},$$

leading to $L_f = \frac{\lambda_{\max}(\mathbf{Q})}{\sqrt{c - \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \mathbf{b}}}$. In the case of the exercise, we obtain $L_f = 53.54$ and thus a step size of 0.019.

As $\mathbf{D} \mathbf{D}^\top = \mathbf{I}$, one can compute the proximal operator of αg as

$$\begin{aligned} \text{prox}_{\alpha g}(\mathbf{x}) &= \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{D}^\top (\mathcal{T}_{0.2\alpha}(\mathbf{D} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{1}) - \mathbf{D} \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{1}), \\ &= \mathbf{D}^\top \mathcal{T}_{0.2\alpha}(\mathbf{D} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{1}) - \mathbf{D}^\top \mathbf{1}. \end{aligned}$$

This leads to

- (*Proximal gradient*):

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x}^{k+1} &= \text{prox}_{\frac{1}{L_f} g}(\mathbf{x}^k - \frac{1}{L_f} \nabla f(\mathbf{x}^k)) \\ &= \mathbf{D}^\top \mathcal{T}_{\frac{0.2}{L_f}} \left[\mathbf{D}(\mathbf{x}^k - \frac{1}{L_f} \nabla f(\mathbf{x}^k)) + \mathbf{1} \right] - \mathbf{D}^\top \mathbf{1} \\ &= \mathbf{D}^\top \mathcal{T}_{\frac{0.2}{L_f}} \left[\mathbf{D}(\mathbf{x}^k - \frac{1}{L_f} \frac{\mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x}^k + \mathbf{b}}{\sqrt{(\mathbf{x}^k)^\top \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{x}^k + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{x}^k + c}}) + \mathbf{1} \right] - \mathbf{D}^\top \mathbf{1}. \end{aligned}$$

- (FISTA):

$$\begin{cases} \mathbf{x}^{k+1} &= D^\top \mathcal{T}_{\frac{0.2}{L_f}} \left[D(\mathbf{y}^k - \frac{1}{L_f} \frac{Q\mathbf{y}^k + \mathbf{b}}{\sqrt{(\mathbf{y}^k)^\top Q\mathbf{y}^k + 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{y}^k + c}}) + \mathbf{1} \right] - D^\top \mathbf{1} \\ t_{k+1} &= \frac{1 + \sqrt{1 + 4t_k^2}}{2} \\ \mathbf{y}^{k+1} &= \mathbf{x}^{k+1} + \left(\frac{t_k - 1}{t_{k+1}} \right) (\mathbf{x}^{k+1} - \mathbf{x}^k) \end{cases}$$

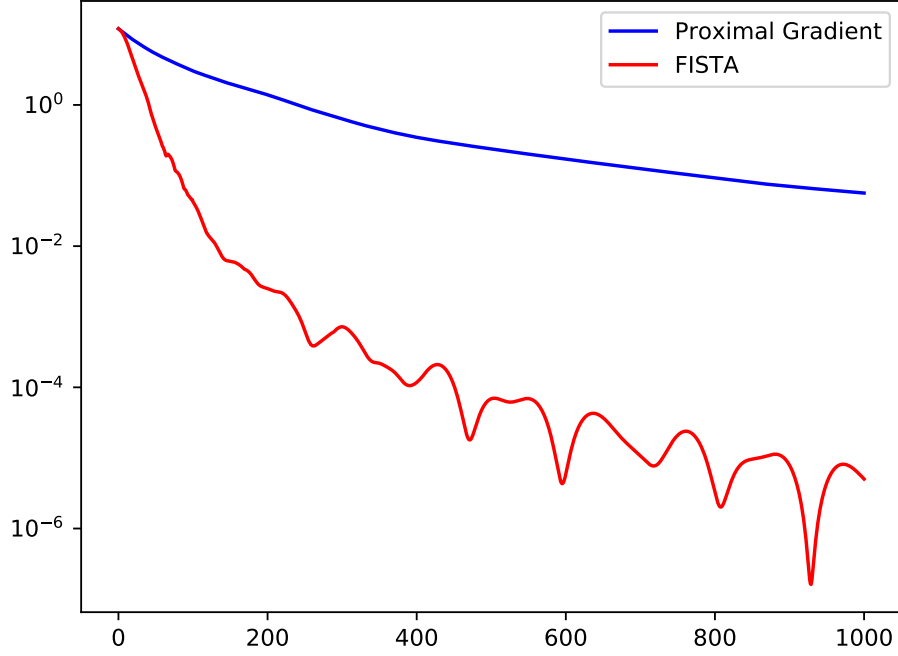


Figure 2: $F(\mathbf{x}^k) - F_{\text{opt}}$ in log-scale along the y-axis for the first 1001 iterations of each of the methods with all-zeros vectors and a constant stepsize. The optimal solution has been computed as the best one across 10000 iterations.

Vector found by PG:

$$\mathbf{x}^{*,\text{PG}} = [0.406, -0.093, -0.093, -0.874, -1.025, -0.044, 0.521, -1.16, 0.877, 0.129, -0.242, 1.664, 1.32, -0.561, -0.079, -1.764, -1.351, -0.387, -1.158, 0.844, 0.43, -0.715, -0.349, -0.037, 1.408, -0.971, 1.206, 0.795, 0.568, 1.284].$$

Vector found by FISTA:

$$\mathbf{x}^{*,\text{FISTA}} = [-0.455, -0.389, 0.291, -1.149, -1.309, -0.43, 0.667, -1.434, 1.082, -0.019, -0.416, 1.732, 1.293, -0.541, -0.143, -1.704, -1.396, -0.742, -1.539, 0.335, -0.218, -0.662, -0.151, -0.085, 1.801, -0.566, 1.321, 0.849, 0.701, 1.091].$$

4 Part 2 - Exercise 3 - slides 71-72

Given a set of data points $\mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{x}_2, \dots, \mathbf{x}_n \in \mathbb{R}^d$ and corresponding labels y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n . The soft margin SVM problem is given by

$$\min \left\{ \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{w}\|_2^2 + C \sum_{i=1}^n \max \{0, 1 - y_i \mathbf{w}^\top \mathbf{x}_i\} \right\}$$

(a)

(b)

5 Part 3 - Exercise 2 - slides 35-36