

Transistor Capacitance Multiplier Circuit

A transistor capacitance multiplier can be used to give additional levels of gain in many areas of electronics

Other Circuit Types Include:

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Transistor circuit design

A capacitance multiplier is a very useful circuit in many respects - it provides a significant improvement in gain, benefitting from the gain of the transistor.

A transistor capacitance multiplier is not only able to provide improved performance, but it can also save on high value capacitors as they can often take up large amounts of space and therefore the transistor capacitance multiplier can help reduce the size of the capacitor and hence reduce space.

Usually the capacitance multiplier circuit is important in areas where good noise performance is important. It is often found that many linear voltage regulators, or even within switch mode regulators which operate at high levels of noise as a result of the switching mechanism.

In RF circuits, good noise performance is paramount. For example in RF circuits using phase locked loops where noise is often crucial, especially where data is transmitted using phase modulation. Any noise on the signal path can manifest itself as phase noise, which in turn results in increased bit error rates.

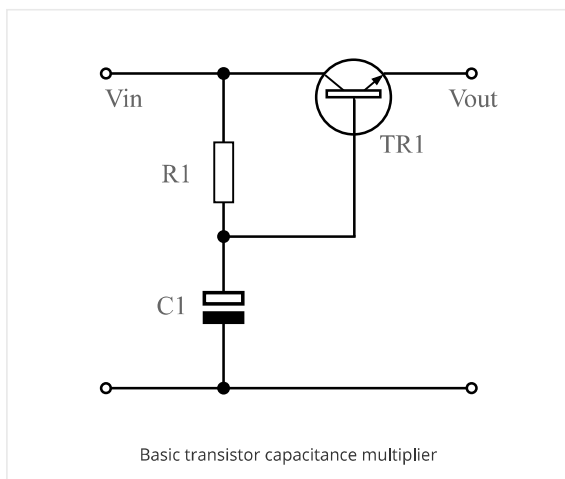
Positioning systems also require very low noise in power rails. High resolution digital to analogue converters require low noise rails otherwise the noise can exceed the D/A resolution negating the high precision and resolution levels.

In high fidelity audio systems, noise performance is paramount. Any noise on power rails, especially in the amplifier stages can result in annoying hiss in the output.

There are just a few applications where an active transistor capacitance multiplier circuit can be used to reduce noise and improve the power rail performance.

Transistor capacitance multiplier circuit

A transistor capacitance multiplier circuit is essentially a simple emitter follower with a capacitor on the base and a resistor from the input to the base to turn the transistor on. A capacitor from the base to ground does the smoothing.



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Fact of the day: It was on this day in 1924 that the first radio contact was made between the UK and New Zealand. It was made by radio amateurs. Then in 1969 Apollo 12 astronauts Alan Bean and Charles Conrad made man's second landing on the moon.

Quote: *The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.* Socrates

Fact: Total production of the type TM valve (tube) made in France during the First World War exceeded 100 000. By the end of the war they were being produced at a rate of over 1000 a day.

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capacitance multiplier circuit operation is quite straightforward. It acts as a simple emitter follower. The $R1$ provides bias for the base emitter junction, and the capacitor provides smoothing. This considerably reduces the levels of noise on the output, i.e. V_{out} .

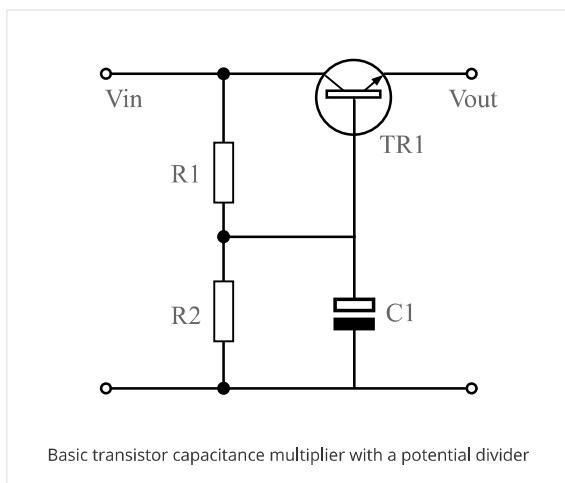
One of the advantages of placing the transistor in the circuit is that it effectively multiplies the capacitance on the base by its current gain of the transistor, i.e. by β .

A capacitance multiplier circuit is not a voltage regulator. The output voltage varies directly with the input V_{in} and there is no voltage reference. Generally the output voltage is about 0.65V less than the base voltage, and about 3 V less than V_{in} when a load is applied.

The ripple and noise levels on the output can be reduced to very low levels by increasing the values of $R1$ and $C1$. Increasing the output ripple, and increasingly at low frequencies. On the downside large values of $R1$ and $C1$ cause the output to rise slowly towards the required value after turn on, because of the large time constant of $R1$ and $C1$.

Improved capacitance multiplier

A drawback of the circuit is that in its basic form, there is very little voltage drop across the series pass transistor, and noise reduction is not as high as it may be. To overcome this, some people place a resistor in the base and this provides a potential divider reducing the voltage at the base and increasing the voltage drop across the transistor. This enables it to provide better noise reduction, although it does increase dissipation and reduces the voltage at V_{out} .



One advantage of the capacitance multiplier circuit includes an additional resistor from the base to ground to provide a voltage drop across the transistor for improved smoothing. This is important when the levels of ripple are higher.

The voltage through the potential divider should be sufficient to maintain the base voltage sufficiently. Care must be taken regarding the level of current through the potential divider, but often in these types of circuits it may be ten times the base current. This would ensure that the emitter voltage is maintained over a wide range of output current levels.

Typical application for a capacitance multiplier

The power supply shown here provides only smoothing at this stage and no stabilisation or voltage regulation. The supply is taken from the mains and rectified by the bridge rectifier. It then passes into a smoothing capacitor, $C1$, to provide the first smoothing and remove the major ripple. This capacitor should have a large current capability if the supply is to be used for high current levels.

It must be remembered that the capacitance multiplication effect can only be realised if there is a sufficient voltage drop across the series transistor. Typically this should be a minimum of 3 volts at all times.

Capacitor $C2$ is connected to the base of the transistor $TR1$. This provides the capacitance for the capacitance multiplication effect.

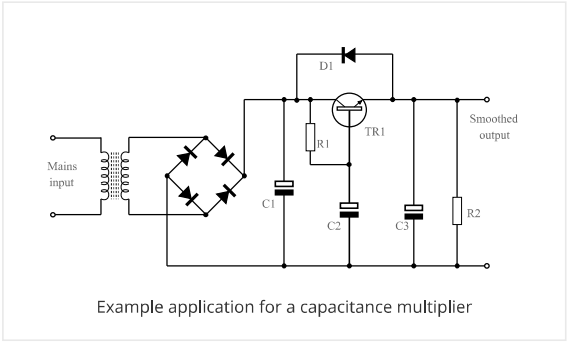
The main pass transistor and must be able to drop the required voltage and at the required current, so power dissipation may need to be calculated.

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utput there is a capacitor to provide a little further decoupling and to ensure that the circuit remains
re resistor ensures the output voltage drains away at power removal. The diode D1 ensures that the
r does not become reverse biased.

like this can be used in many areas including audio amplifiers and many other applications.

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