LEBREF2D: a 2D mesh-refinement toolbox

A short documentation

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LEBREF2D is a MATLAB package for the mesh-refinement of 2D polygonal domains based on an efficient usage of MATLAB built-in functions as well as vectorization features. The package includes functions for uniform mesh-refinements and local mesh-refinements based on the longest edge bisection (LEB) algorithm which is a variant of the newest vertex bisection (NVB) algorithm. LEBREF2D can be easily incorporated into, e.g., an adaptive Finite Element algorithm for solving partial differential equations.

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1 Data structures

Consider a two-dimensional domain $D \subset \mathbb{R}^2$, with a regular polygonal boundary denoted by ∂D . Let \mathcal{T} be a *conforming* mesh (or triangulation) of the domain D, i.e.,

- (i) $T = \{K_1, ..., K_M\}$ is a finite set of M > 0 triangles (*elements*) $K_i := \text{conv}\{x_j, x_m, x_n\}$ such that $|K_i| > 0$, i = 1, ..., M. Here, x_j , x_m , and x_n are the *nodes* (or vertices) of K_i and $|\cdot|$ denotes the area;
- (ii) the triangulation \mathcal{T} covers the closure \overline{D} of D;
- (iii) the intersection of two elements is either empty, a common node, or a common edge (an *edge* is naturally defined as the one-dimensional segment connecting two nodes, i.e., $conv\{x_m, x_n\}$);
- (iv) a boundary edge (i.e., those edges lying on ∂D) belongs to one element only.

Figure 1 shows three examples of *non-conforming* meshes where, in particular, property (iii) above is not satisfied.

Let N be the number of nodes (including the boundary ones), i.e., N := #N, where $\mathcal{N} := \{x_1, \dots, x_N\}$ denotes the set of nodes. Also, let M bet the number of elements of the mesh, i.e., M := #T. The mesh is represented by a structure MESH which contains five fields, coord, elem, int, bnd, elbnd:

• MESH. coord is a $N \times 2$ matrix containing the physical coordinates of all nodes of the mesh. The i-th row of MESH. coord stores the coordinates of the i-th node $x_i = (x_i, y_i) \in \overline{D}$:

MESH.coord(i,:) =
$$[x_i \ y_i]$$
.

• MESH.elem is a $M \times 3$ matrix containing the elements nodes' numbers. That is, the ℓ -th element $K_{\ell} = \{x_i, x_j, x_k\} \in \mathcal{T}$ with nodes $x_i, x_j, x_k \in \mathcal{N}$ is stored in

MESH.elem
$$(\ell,:) = [i \ j \ k],$$

with the nodes counted in counterclockwise order.

• MESH. int is a $N_D \times 1$ vector containing the interior nodes' numbers (here, N_D denotes the number of interior nodes). For example, if the interior nodes are x_3 , x_9 , x_{15} , and x_{21} , then

MESH.int =
$$[3 \ 9 \ 15 \ 21]^T$$
.

• MESH. bnd is a $N_{\partial D} \times 1$ vector containing the boundary nodes' numbers (here, $N_{\partial D}$ denotes the number of boundary nodes). For example, if the boundary nodes are the x_2 , x_{10} , x_{19} , then

MESH.bnd =
$$[2 \ 10 \ 19]^T$$
.

Notice that $N = N_D + N_{\partial D}$ and that {MESH.int, MESH.bnd} = {1,..., N}.

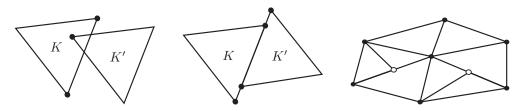


Figure 1. Example of *non conforming* triangulations. Intersection of two elements which is not a node (left). Intersection of two elements which is not an edge (middle). *Hanging nodes* of a mesh represented by white dots (right).

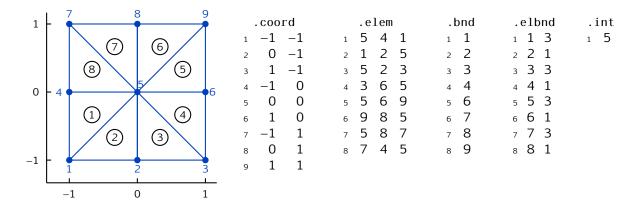


Figure 2. Mesh \mathcal{T} of the square domain $D = (-1,1)^2$ with M = 8 elements (circled numbers in black) specified by the MESH. elem matrix and N = 9 vertices (numbers in blue) specified by MESH. coord matrix. Interior and boundary vertices are stored in MESH. int and MESH. bnd vectors, respectively.

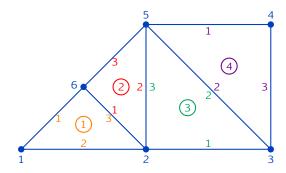


Figure 3. Local enumeration of the edges of a conforming mesh \mathcal{T} with four elements; numbers in blues are vertices' global numbers of \mathcal{T} whereas circled numbers are elements' numbers. Coloured numbers denote local elements' edges. The longest edges of the elements are the second ones. Note that the i-th edge of an element may not be the the i-th edge of a neighbour element (i = 1, 2, 3). For instance, the edge conv{x₅, x₂} is the 2-nd edge of element K_2 as well as the 3-rd edge of element K_3 .

• MESH.elbnd is a $M_{\partial D} \times 2$ matrix containing the boundary elements and the (local) number of the corresponding edge lying on the boundary (here, $M_{\partial D}$ denotes the number of boundary elements). A *boundary element*, is an element which has at least one (or at most two) edge lying on the boundary. For example, if the first 4 boundary elements of a mesh are K_6 , K_{10} , K_{22} , and K_{34} , with the 1-st, 3-th, 2-nd, and 3-th edges on the boundary, respectively, then

MESH.elbnd =
$$\begin{bmatrix} 6 & 1 \\ 10 & 3 \\ 22 & 2 \\ 34 & 3 \\ ... & ... \end{bmatrix}$$

Figure 2 shows a visual representation of the data structure MESH for the default mesh of the square domain $D = (-1,1)^2$.

Two important features/assumptions of LEBREF2D are the following:

- (A1) (**enumeration of edges**). Given the element $K = \{x_i, x_j, x_k\} \in \mathcal{T}$, with the 1-st node being x_i , the 2-nd node $beingx_j$, and 3-rd node being x_k , counted counterclockwise, we assume that
 - the 1-st edge of K is the one in front of x_i , i.e., $conv\{x_i, x_k\}$,

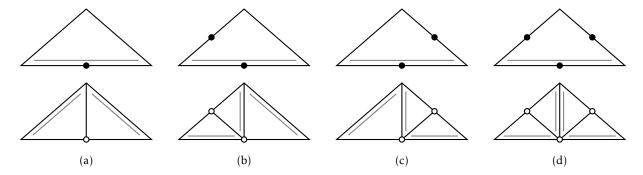


Figure 4. NVB bisections. (a) One, (b)-(c) two, and (d) three bisections of the edges of an element in \mathcal{T} . Double lines denote the reference edges, black dots denote the edges to be bisected, and white dots denote the newest vertices. Reference edges are always bisected first.

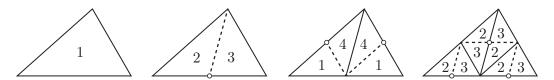


Figure 5. Similarity classes which occur using iterated longest edge bisections on a two-dimensional element.

- the 2-nd edge of K is the one in front of x_i , i.e., $conv\{x_k, x_i\}$,
- the 3-rd edge of K is the one in front of x_k , i.e., $conv\{x_i, x_i\}$.
- (A2) (**longest edge**). The local enumeration is such that the longest edge of the generic element K_{ℓ} is the **second one** (i.e., conv{ x_k, x_i }).

See Figure 3 for an example.

2 Longest Edge Bisection

The Longest Edge Bisection (LEB) algorithm [5] is a special case of the Newest Vertex Bisection algorithm [2, 4, 7].

Let $K \in \mathcal{T}_{\ell}$ be an element of the mesh \mathcal{T}_{ℓ} at the ℓ -th iteration (in other words, after 0 refinements). The NVB algorithm chooses a *reference* edge of K. In the LEB algorithm, the reference edge is chosen to be the longest edge. Given a set of elements $\mathcal{M}_{\ell} \subseteq \mathcal{T}_{\ell}$ to be refined, successive NVB refinements of \mathcal{T}_{ℓ} are as follows:

- (a) for each elements $K \in \mathcal{M}_{\ell}$, the midpoint x_L of the longest edge is connected with the vertex of K in front of the longest edge. Then, x_L becomes a new vertex;
- (b) such bisection (for all $K \in \mathcal{M}_{\ell}$) produces two new elements (the *children* of K) whose reference edges are the edges in front of the newest vertex x_L ; see Figure 4(a);

Usually, one iteration of the following steps above will results in *hanging nodes*. An hanging node appears in the interior of those edges $E = K_1 \cap K_2$, with $K_1, K_2 \in \mathcal{T}_\ell$, for which the refinement of only one between T_1 and T_2 involves the bisection of E. Therefore, additional bisections have to be performed in order to obtain a refined conforming mesh. This is typically referred to as *completion*, or *mesh-closure*, step.

Figure 4(left) shows one iteration of steps (a)-(b). If there is an hanging node of *K*, we then assume that the edge on which the hanging node lies has to be bisected *together with* the longest edge of *K* which needs to be bisected first (see Figure 4(middle-left and middle-right)). If there are two hanging nodes, then all edges have to be bisected, that is, three bisections are

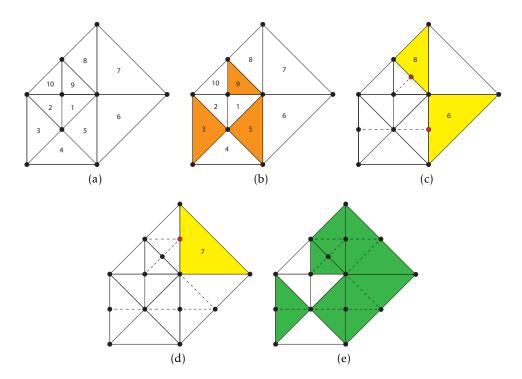


Figure 6. (a) Initial mesh \mathcal{T} with 10 elements. (b) Marked elements \mathcal{M} (in orange). (c) Refinement of the marked elements may introduce hanging nodes. Elements sharing the introduced hanging nodes are also marked for refinement. (d) Refinement of the new marked elements. (e) Final refined mesh (total refined elements in green).

performed as shown in Figure 4(right). This way, an element can generate 2, 3, or 4 children according to the number of edges bisected. Obviously, the procedure terminates after a finite number of bisections due to the finite number of edges of the mesh. Notice that the longest edge bisection iterations lead to only 4 similarity classes of elements (see Figure 5).

Figure 6 shows how the LEB iterations are performed in LEBREF2D: (a) It is given an example mesh \mathcal{T} with 10 elements. (b) Initially 3 elements are marked for refinement. These elements are $\mathcal{M} = \{K_3, K_5, K_9\} \subseteq \mathcal{T}$. (c) Their longest edges are bisected. This introduces two hanging nodes, the red midpoints of the edges shared by elements K_9 and K_8 , and K_5 and K_6 , respectively. In order to eliminate the hanging nodes, elements K_8 , K_6 are marked for refinement. (d) Refinement of K_6 does not lead to further hanging nodes. Instead, the bisection of the longest edge of K_8 introduces one more hanging node on the edge shared by K_7 . (e) As before, also K_7 is marked for refinement. Once K_7 is refined, no further hanging nodes are introduced. The mesh-refinement is then terminated. Notice that although $\#\mathcal{M} = 3$, the final number of elements that have been refined is 6.

3 Detail-grid

We first define what a uniform refinement is. We say that \widehat{T} is a *uniform refinement* of a given mesh \mathcal{T} if all edges of \mathcal{T} are bisected, i.e., the refinement of each element produces 4 children; in particular $\#\widehat{T} = 4 \cdot \#\mathcal{T}$.

By *detail-grid* we refer to as the "mesh" of edge-midpoints that should be introduced, or added, to the current mesh $\mathcal T$ in order to obtain the uniformly refined mesh $\widehat{\mathcal T}$. That is, given a mesh stored in MESHX, its associated detail-grid is the data structure MESHY containing information about all edge-midpoints coordinates, position, and numbers.

The terminology comes from the Finite Element Method. Suppose that X = X(T) is the

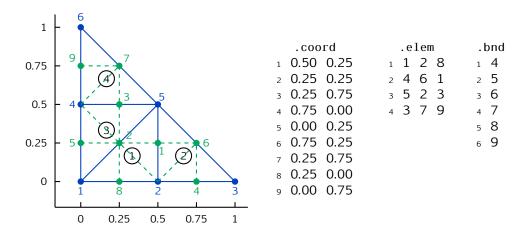


Figure 7. A detail grid associated with a given mesh \mathcal{T} (in blue) with 4 elements. Representation of the associated MESHY structure's fields storing information about all edge-midpoints of \mathcal{T} . The detail grid is returned by the function detailgrid.

space of first-order piecewise-linear basis functions (*hat* functions) associated with the nodes of the mesh \mathcal{T} and let $Y = Y(\mathcal{T})$ be the space of first-order piecewise-linear basis functions associated with the edge midpoints of \mathcal{T} (i.e., these hat functions attain the value 1 at edge-midpoints and 0 at mesh nodes). The space Y is called the *detail space* (with respect to X). In particular, the enriched space $\widehat{X} = \widehat{X}(\widehat{\mathcal{T}}) = X \oplus Y$ is associated with the uniform refinement $\widehat{\mathcal{T}}$ of \mathcal{T} .

Figure 7 shows an example of a detail-grid for a given mesh \mathcal{T} (in blue) with 4 elements. In green, it is shown the uniform refinement which would introduces the edge-midpoints. Here, the refinement is done by 3 longest edge bisection iterations on each element (see Figure 4(d)). Notice that edge-midpoints have their own enumeration which is independent by the enumeration of the nodes. In particular, this means that the edge-midpoints' numbers are also the (global) numbers of the edges of the mesh. Moreover, the edge-midpoints of an element K are stored so that the j-th local midpoint of K is the one lying on the j-th edge of K, j = 1, 2, 3; see MESHY.elem in Figure 7 and cf. Figure 3.

The function detailgrid (see Section 5) takes in input a mesh MESHX and returns the associated MESHY, which is a data structure composed of three field, coord, elem, and bnd, which store the coordinates of all midpoints, the element-mapping matrix with respect to the edge, and the midpoints lying on the boundary, respectively.

The function detailgrid is used by the adaptive refinement routines in order to store information about those midpoints that will become the new nodes of the refined mesh.

4 Solving PDEs

The local refinement routines can be particularly useful if LEBREF2D is incorporated in, e.g., an adaptive Finite Element code for solving Partial Differential Equations (PDEs). In such a case, at current iteration ℓ , one computes a discrete solution u_{ℓ} to the problem under consideration on a given underlying mesh \mathcal{T}_{ℓ} of the domain D, and then estimates the local error contributions from each element of the mesh using some strategy (e.g., some *a posteriori* error estimation technique, see [1]). This way, a set of marked elements $\mathcal{M}_{\ell} \subseteq \mathcal{T}_{\ell}$ can be determined and a new mesh $\mathcal{T}_{\ell+1}$ is obtained by refining this set of marked elements.

Although this is not the primal goal of the package, the routines of LEBREF2D can be easily adapted and used in the setting of adaptive Finite Elements codes [6, 3].

5 List of functions

In the following, we list the functions of LEBREF2D:

- [MESHX] = adjustunstructmesh(MESHX)

 If the input MESHX contains an unstructured mesh, the function changes the local order of the elements in MESHX.elem so that the longest edges of all elements are the second ones (a generic unstructured mesh may not satisfy this condition which is required by the refinement routine; see assumption (A2)). More info in help adjustunstructmesh.
- [MESHX.elem] = bisection(MMele,MMedge,markedge,MESHX.elem,MESHY.elem); Main routine performing the bisection of the marked elements. In particular, MMele is the overall set of marked elements, including the extra elements which have to be refined in order to avoid hanging nodes (see Figure 6), and MMedge is the associated set of overall marked edges which will be bisected.

The output MESHX.elem is the element mapping matrix of the new refined mesh.

• [MESH] = crackdomain(reflev,slith) Structured crack domain $D = (-1,1)^2 \setminus (-1,0) \times \{0\}$ grid generation (square domain $(-1,1)^2$ with a crack along the line $(-1,0) \times \{0\}$).

reflev is an optional input which denotes the initial *refinement level*. This is a non negative integer (i.e., 0, 1, 2,...) which indicates how many uniform refinements the default mesh (for reflev=0) consists of. The default mesh for reflev=0 has 9 vertices and 8 elements.

slith denotes instead half of the maximum "height" of the crack. That is, the crack is created by connecting two points, (-1,-slith) and (-1,+slith) with the origin (0,0). Default value slith = 0.01.

• [MESHY,edgelep] = detailgrid(MESHX,ixy) Linear detail-grid generator. For an input MESHX which contains information about a mesh \mathcal{T} , the function returns the data structure MESHY associated with all edge-midpoints that would be introduced by a uniform refinement of \mathcal{T} ; cf. description in the Section 3 and Figure 7 to see how the data structure MESHY looks like.

The extra output edgelep is the edge-midpoint element-position $N_E \times 4$ matrix (here, N_E is the number of edges of the mesh). Suppose that its *i*-th row is as follows:

This mean that the i-th (global) edge-midpoint lies on the (i-th) edge of the mesh in common with elements K_3 and K_4 , and that it lies on the 3-rd local edge of K_3 and on the 1-st local edge of K_4 . For example, this is the case of the row number 3 for the edgelep matrix (i.e., the 3-rd edge of the mesh) in the example showed in Figure 7.

Basically, the first two entries (1-st, 2-nd columns) indicate which elements the edge-midpoints are shared by, while the second two entries (3-rd, 4-th columns) indicate which local edges of these elements the edge-midpoint lie on.

The full edgelep matrix for the example in Figure 7 is the following:

edgelep =
$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 1 & 3 \\ 1 & 3 & 2 & 2 \\ 3 & 4 & 3 & 1 \\ 2 & 2 & 1 & 1 \\ 3 & 3 & 1 & 1 \\ 2 & 2 & 2 & 2 \\ 4 & 4 & 2 & 2 \\ 1 & 1 & 3 & 3 \\ 4 & 4 & 3 & 3 \end{bmatrix}$$

Notice that for boundary edge-midpoints, the 1-st and 2-nd columns as well as the 3-rd and 4-th columns are repeated (in the example there are only 3 internal edge-midpoints and 6 boundary edge-midpoints).

Finally, ixy is an optional input to decide whether or not the coordinates of the edge-midpoints, i.e. the field MESHY.coord, have to be computed or not.

- [edgenodes] = edge2nodes(MESHX,edgenum,edgelep)
 Given in input the edge number edgenum, it returns their two extremal nodes x_k, x_m , i.e., such that the edgenum-th edge of the mesh MESHX is $conv\{x_k, x_m\}$.

 edgelep is an optional input to be used when the detail grid is not available; see detail-grid.
- [MMele,MMedge] = getallmarkelem(Mele,MESHY.elem,edgelep)
 Given in input the set Mele of marked elements for refinement, it returns the set of overall marked elements to be refined so that no hanging nodes will be introduced during the mesh refinement step. Then, the output MMele is the union of the set Mele and all the additional elements containing hanging nodes that would be introduced during the refinement of Mele (see example in Figure 6).

The second output MMedge is the set of overall marked edges associated with MMele that have to be bisected.

Note that no real mesh refinement is performed in this function.

• lebdemo(domain)

Demo performing automatic adaptive mesh refinements of 4 available domains according to the optional input domain:

- domain = 1 for structured square domain $D = (-1, 1)^2$; see squaredomain;
- domain = 2 for structured the L-shaped domain $D = (-1,1)^2 \setminus (-1,0]^2$; see 1shapedomain;
- domain = 3 for unstructured L-shaped domain $D = (-1,1)^2 \setminus (-1,0]^2$; see 1shapedomainunstruct;
- domain = 4 for structured crack domain $D = (-1,1)^2 \setminus (-1,0) \times \{0\}$; see crackdomain.

Default domain = 1. Throughout iterations, the number of marked elements are chosen randomly using a certain threshold parameter markpar $\in (0,1]$ and the MATLAB built-in function randperm:

Here, nel is the number of current elements of the mesh. Notice that if markpar = 1, all elements are marked.

- [MESHX,MMele] = lebmeshref (MESHX,Mele) Main routine for the mesh refinement step. It takes in input the current mesh \mathcal{T}_ℓ stored in MESHX and the set Mele of marked elements $\mathcal{M}_\ell \subseteq \mathcal{T}_\ell$ and returns the new refined mesh $\mathcal{T}_{\ell+1}$ as well as the set MMele of overall elements that have been refined from $\mathcal{T}_\ell \to \mathcal{T}_{\ell+1}$.
- [MESH] = 1shapedomainunstruct Unstructured L-shaped domain $D = (-1,1)^2 \setminus (-1,0)^2$ grid generation;
- [MESH] = lshapedomain(reflev) Structured L-shaped domain $D = (-1,1)^2 \setminus (-1,0]^2$ grid generation; reflev is an optional input which denotes the initial refinement level; cf. description in crackdomain.
- plotmarkedelem(MESH,Mele,plotelem,plotvtx)
 Plots an input mesh and a set of marked elements Mele with colour. Default colour is orange.

plotelem and plotvtx are optional inputs to plot also the elements' numbers and the nodes' numbers, respectively.

- plotmesh(MESH, titleplot, plotelem, plotvtx)
 Plots the input mesh. titleplot is an optional input for the title of the plot.
 plotelem and plotvtx are also optional inputs; see description in plotmarkedelem.
- plotmeshxandy(MESHX,MESHY,reftype,plotelem,plotvtx) Plots the mesh MESHX and its associated detail-grid MESHY.

ref type decides the type of uniform refinements the detail-grid is associated with. They are the red (ref type = 1) and bisec3 (ref type = 2) refinement.

Figure 8 shows an example. The *red* uniform refinement refines an element by connecting the 3 edge-midpoints. This introduces a "central" child in the middle of the element (Figure 8(a)). The *bisec3* uniform refinement is the result of 3 longest edge bisection iterations on each element (Figure 8(c)). The plots on the right show the resulted uniformly refined meshes if either red or bisec3 refinement is done (Figure 8(b) and (d), respectively).

Remind that a detail-grid MESHY does not provide information about the type of bisections to be done. It only store information about midpoints. However, a mesh resulted by a bisec3 uniform refinement, as in Figure 8(d), is what naturally follows by longest edge bisection iterations.

plotelem and plotvtx are optional inputs; see description in plotmarkedelem.

- [MESH] = squaredomain(reflev) Structured square domain $D = (-1,1)^2$ grid generation.
 - reflev is an optional input which denotes the initial refinement level; cf. description in crackdomain.
- [MESHREF] = unimeshref(MESH,reftype,iplot) Given an input mesh MESH, it returns the uniformly refined mesh MESHREF. The input reftype decides the refinement-type, red (reftype = 1) or bisec3 (reftype = 2); see Figure 8.

iplot is an optional input to plot the uniformly refined mesh.

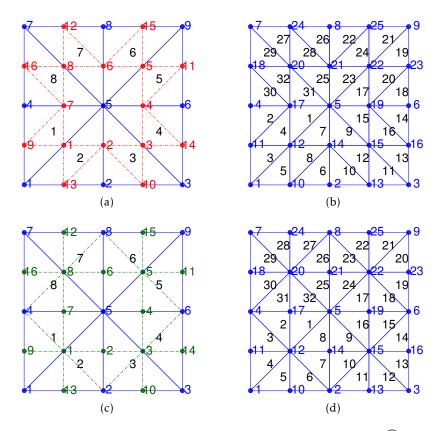


Figure 8. Two detail-grids for a given mesh \mathcal{T} and associated uniformly refined meshes $\widehat{\mathcal{T}}$. Blue numbers denotes the nodes of \mathcal{T} and black numbers the elements. (a)-(b) Detail-grid (edge-midpoints in red) corresponding to a *red* uniform refinement; (c)-(d) Detail-grid (edge-midpoints in green) corresponding to a *bisec3* uniform refinement.

6 Useful commands

• number of elements and number of nodes of the mesh, respectively:

```
nel = size(MESH.elem,1);
nvtx = size(MESH.coord,1);
```

• recover coordinates of internal and boundary nodes, respectively:

```
xyint = MESH.coord(MESH.int,:);
xybd = MESH.coord(MESH.bnd,:);
```

• get the nodes of the *k*-th element:

• get all elements sharing the node x_k :

```
find( sum( ismember(MESH.elem, k ), 2) );
```

• number of edge-midpoints (and then edges) of the mesh (using MESHY):

• get the midpoints of the *k*-th element (using MESHY):

```
midpel = MESHY.elem(k,:);
```

• recover the two elements sharing the *k*-th edge of the mesh (using MESHY):

```
find( sum( ismember(MESHY.elem, k ), 2) );
```

• recover the 3 edge-neighbors of the *i*-th element K_i , i.e., the elements which share at most one edge with K_i (using MESHY and edgelep):

```
neigh = edgelep(MESHY.elem(i,:), 1:2);
neigh = neigh(neigh ~= i );
```

If K_i is a boundary element, then #neigh = 2 instead of 3.

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