

Theory of 2D-Rockets basically

Zhao H.Q.

January 30, 2026

1 Assumption

1. 2Dimensional motion: Our rockets only consider 2Dimension, x-z flat (The z-axis points upward, and the x-axis is horizontal.)
2. rigid body: The rocket is treated as a rigid body, meaning it does not deform during flight.
3. Translation and rotation: The rocket's motion includes both translation (movement through space) and rotation (spinning around its center of mass).
4. Aerodynamic force only acts as drag.
5. Gravity acts downward along the z-axis with a constant acceleration of $g = 9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$.
6. constant air density of $\rho = 1.225 \text{ kg/m}^3$ (sea level standard conditions).

2 Coordinate system and state variables

2.1 1. Definition of system coordinate

1. Inertial frame of reference: origin at launch point
2. Body axis system: origin at the center of gravity (CG), \hat{x}_b forward along the rocket's longitudinal axis, \hat{y}_b laterally (right-hand rule), and \hat{z}_b upward.

2.2 2. State variables

We can use 6 variables to describe the state of the rocket at any time t : $s(t) = \begin{bmatrix} x(t) \\ z(t) \\ v_x(t) \\ v_z(t) \\ \theta(t) \\ \omega(t) \end{bmatrix}$

where:

- $x(t)$: Horizontal position of the rocket's center of mass (CG) at time t .
- $z(t)$: Vertical position of the rocket's center of mass (CG) at time t .
- $v_x(t)$: Horizontal velocity component of the rocket at time t .
- $v_z(t)$: Vertical velocity component of the rocket at time t .
- $\theta(t)$: Pitch angle of the rocket relative to the horizontal axis at time t .
- $\omega(t)$: Angular velocity (rate of change of pitch angle) of the rocket at time t .

$$\omega = \frac{d\theta}{dt}$$