

# The Autopilot Auto throttle relationship

The Autopilot and Autothrottle only need to talk to each other in the Vertical Flight Path Modes.

When the Autopilot is carrying out a “path” such as a climb gradient, or an altitude hold, the autothrottle must do the speed (IAS or Mach)

The autopilot is capable of controlling Airspeed, but only when told to for an “open” climb or descent or level change.

Below is a table of **Vertical modes** showing what the AP and AT are doing.

Vertical Autoflight Mode	Autopilot	Autothrottle
Vertical Speed (VS)	Controls VS	Controls Speed (IAS)
Level Change (Climb)	Controls Speed (IAS)	Sets Climb Thrust
Level Change (Descent)	Controls Speed (IAS)	Sets Idle for descent
Altitude Hold	Follows Altitude	Controls Speed (IAS)
Approach Glideslope (GS)	Follows Glideslope	Controls Speed (IAS)
VNAV CLB	Controls Speed (IAS)	Sets Climb Thrust
VNAV Descent	Controls Speed (IAS)	Sets Idle for descent
VNAV PTH (Path)	Follows VNAV gradient	Controls Speed (IAS)
VNAV ALT	Follows Altitude	Controls Speed (IAS)
ALT ACQ (Acquire)	Captures Altitude	Controls Speed (IAS)
Airbus Modes		
NAV	Can be any of the VNAV modes	Matching VNAV mode
ALT*	Captures Altitude	Controls Speed (IAS)
Open Climb	Controls Speed (IAS)	Sets Climb Thrust
Open Descent	Controls Speed (IAS)	Sets Idle for descent
ALT	Follows Altitude	Controls Speed (IAS)