

# Accelerated Gradient Method

$$\min_x f(x) = g(x) + h(x)$$

- $g$ : convex and differentiable
- $h$ : convex

The algorithm:

$$y = (1 - \theta_k) x_{k-1} + \theta_k u_{k-1}$$

$$x_k = \text{prox}_{t_k h} (y - t_k \nabla g(y))$$

$$u_k = x_{k-1} + \frac{1}{\theta_k} (x_k - x_{k-1})$$

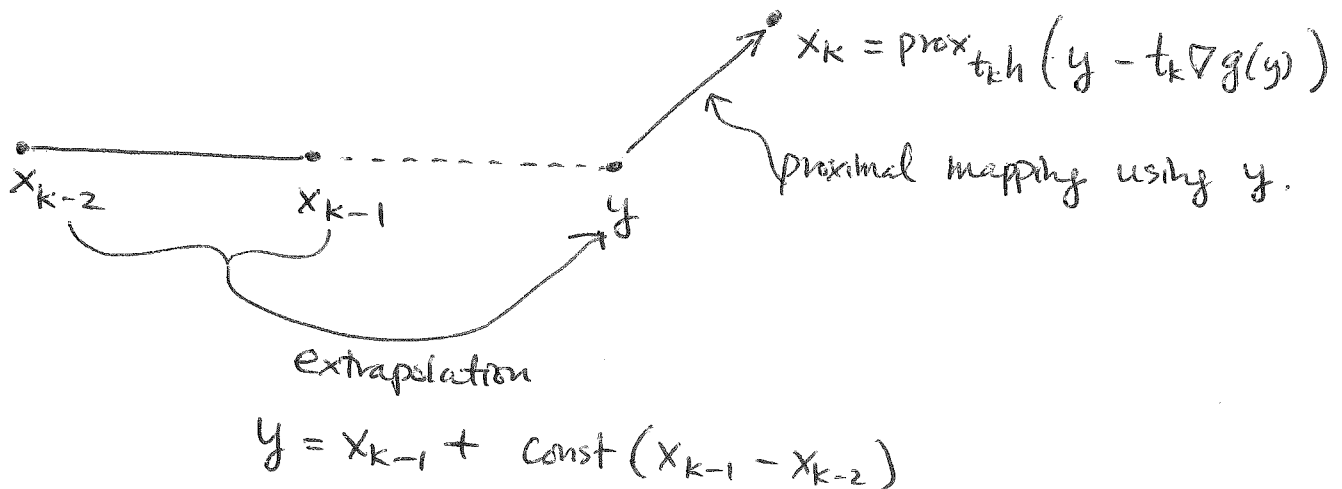
What is it doing?

$$y = (1 - \theta_k) x_{k-1} + \theta_k u_{k-1}$$

$$= (1 - \theta_k) x_{k-1} + \theta_k \left[ x_{k-2} + \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}} (x_{k-1} - x_{k-2}) \right]$$

$$= x_{k-1} + \theta_k \left( \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}} - 1 \right) (x_{k-1} - x_{k-2})$$

and  $x_k = \text{prox}_{t_k h} (y - t_k \nabla g(y))$ .



Example (logistic regression)

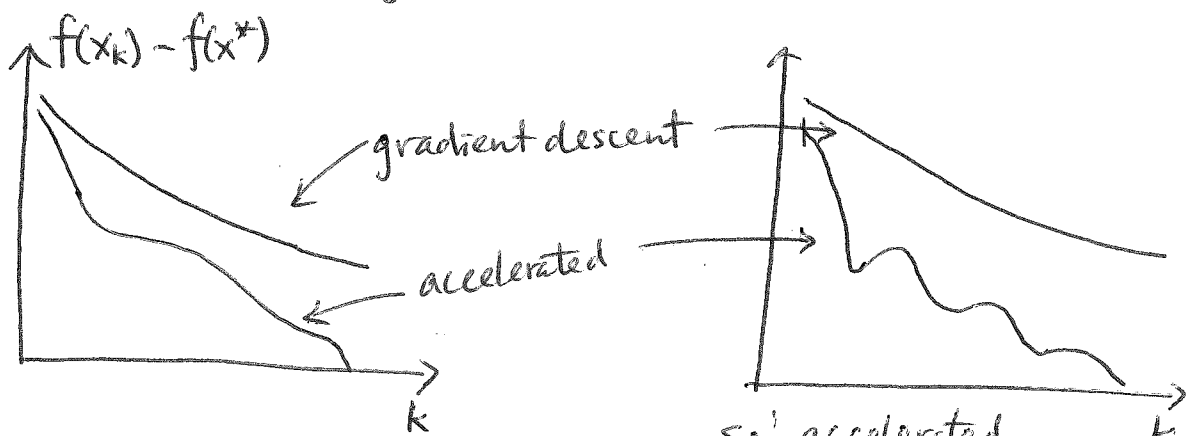
$$f(x) = \underbrace{\sum_{i=1}^n (-y_i a_i^T x + \log(1 + \exp(a_i^T x)))}_{g(x)} + \underbrace{0}_{h(x)}$$

$$\nabla g(x) = -A^T \left( y - \text{EXP}(A^T x) P(x) \right),$$

$$\text{where } P_i(x) = \frac{\exp(a_i^T x)}{1 + \exp(a_i^T x)}.$$

$\text{prox}_h(x) = x$  because  $h(x) = 0$ .

Typical convergence plot



Choice of  $\theta_k$ :

Require:

$$\frac{\theta_k^2}{t_k} \geq (1 - \theta_k) \left( \frac{\theta_{k-1}^2}{t_{k-1}} \right).$$

$t_k$  can be fixed, e.g.  $t_k = \frac{1}{L}$ ,  $L = \text{Lipschitz constant of } \nabla g$ .

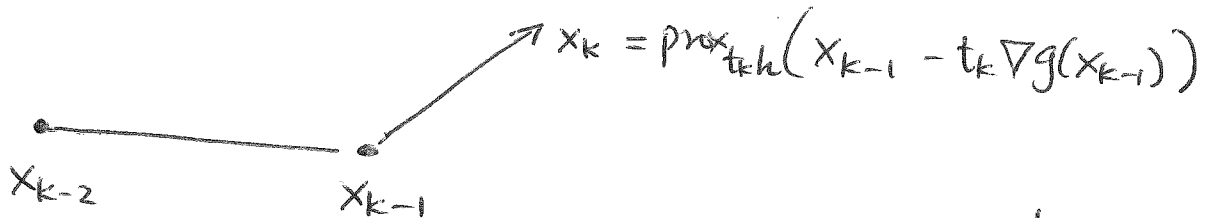
then,

$$\theta_k^2 \geq (1 - \theta_k) \theta_{k-1}^2$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{1 - \theta_k}{\theta_k^2} \leq \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}^2}$$

if  $\theta_k = 0$ , then

$y = x_{k-1}$ ,  $x_k = \text{prox}_{t_k h}(x_{k-1} - t_k \nabla g(x_{k-1}))$   
is the classic gradient projection



Example

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{2} \|Ax - b\|^2 + \lambda \|x\|_1$$

$$g(x) = \frac{1}{2} \|Ax - b\|^2$$

$$\nabla g(x) = A^T(Ax - b)$$

$$h(x) = \lambda \|x\|_1$$

algorithm:

$$y = x_{k-1} + \theta_k \left( \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}} - 1 \right) (x_{k-1} - x_{k-2})$$

$$x_k = \text{prox}_{t_k h}(y - t_k \nabla g(x_k))$$

$$= \underset{v}{\text{argmin}} \left\{ \lambda t_k \|v\|_1 + \frac{1}{2} \|v - (y - t_k \nabla g(x_k))\|^2 \right\}$$

$$= S_{\lambda t_k}(y - t_k \nabla g(x_k))$$

$$= \max \left\{ |y - t_k \nabla g(x_k)| - \lambda t_k, 0 \right\} \text{sgn}(y - t_k \nabla g(x_k))$$

Example of  $\theta_k$ :

$$(i) \theta_k = \frac{2}{k+1}$$

$$\frac{1-\theta_k}{\theta_k^2} \stackrel{?}{\leq} \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}^2} \iff \frac{1}{\theta_k^2} - \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}^2} \stackrel{?}{\leq} \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}^2}$$

Put  $\theta_k = \frac{2}{k+1}$ , i.e.  $\frac{1}{\theta_k} = \frac{k+1}{2}$ , then

$$\left(\frac{k+1}{2}\right)^2 - \frac{k+1}{2} = \frac{k^2 + 2k + 1 - 2k - 2}{4} = \frac{k^2 - 1}{4}$$

$$\leq \frac{k^2}{4} = \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}^2}$$

if we choose  $\theta_k = \frac{2}{k+1}$ , then the algorithm becomes

$$\begin{cases} y = x_{k-1} + \frac{k-2}{k+1}(x_{k-1} - x_{k-2}) \\ x_k = \text{prox}_{th}(y - t \nabla g(y)) \end{cases}$$

$$(ii) \theta_k = \frac{2}{1 + \sqrt{1 + \frac{4}{\theta_{k-1}^2}}} \quad (\text{FISTA}).$$

A constructive proof:

let  $\rho_k = \frac{1}{\theta_k}$ . Then

$$\frac{1-\theta_k}{\theta_k^2} = \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}^2} \iff \rho_k^2 - \rho_k = \rho_{k-1}^2$$

$$\implies \rho_k = \frac{1 + \sqrt{1 + 4\rho_{k-1}^2}}{2}$$

## Convergence of Accelerated Gradient Method

Suppose we want to solve

$$\min_x f(x) = g(x) + h(x)$$

- $g$  is convex, differentiable,  $\nabla g$  is Lipschitz with constant  $L > 0$ .
- $h$  is convex, and proximal function can be evaluated.

Algorithm:

$$x_0 = u_0$$

$$y = (1 - \theta_k) x_{k-1} + \theta_k u_{k-1}$$

$$\theta_k = \frac{2}{k+1}$$

$$x_k = \text{prox}_{th}(y - t \nabla g(y)), \quad t \leq \frac{1}{L}$$

$$u_k = x_{k-1} + \frac{1}{\theta_k} (x_k - x_{k-1})$$

Theorem:

$$f(x_k) - f(x^*) \leq \frac{2 \|x_0 - x^*\|^2}{t (k+1)^2}$$

That means, the algorithm has  $O(\frac{1}{k^2})$  rate of convergence, and this is a first-order method!

Lemma 1:

The function  $g$  satisfies

$$g(x) \leq g(y) + (x-y)^T \nabla g(y) + \frac{L}{2} \|x-y\|^2$$

Proof:

$$\begin{aligned} g(x) &= g(y) + \int_0^1 (x-y)^T \nabla g(y + t(x-y)) dt \\ &= g(y) + \int_0^1 [(x-y)^T \nabla g(y + t(x-y)) - \nabla g(y) + \nabla g(y)] dt \\ &= g(y) + (x-y)^T \nabla g(y) + \int_0^1 (x-y)^T [\nabla g(y + t(x-y)) \\ &\quad - \nabla g(y)] dt \\ &\leq g(y) + (x-y)^T \nabla g(y) + \int_0^1 \|x-y\| \|\nabla g(y + t(x-y)) - \nabla g(y)\| dt \\ &\leq g(y) + (x-y)^T \nabla g(y) + \int_0^1 \|x-y\| L t \|x-y\| dt \\ &= g(y) + (x-y)^T \nabla g(y) + \frac{L}{2} \|x-y\|^2. \end{aligned}$$

Lemma 2:

The function  $h$  satisfies

$$h(x_{k+1}) \leq h(z) + \frac{1}{L} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (z - x_{k+1}) + \nabla g(y)^T (z - x_{k+1})$$

for any  $z$ .

Proof: (Requires sub-gradients)

## Proof of Theorem:

First of all, we observe these two equations using lemmas:

$$g(x_{k+1}) \leq g(y) + \nabla g(y)^T (x_{k+1} - y) + \frac{1}{2t} \|x_{k+1} - y\|^2$$

$$h(x_{k+1}) \leq h(z) + \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (z - x_{k+1}) + \nabla g(y)^T (z - x_{k+1})$$

Summing the two equations yields

$$f(x_{k+1}) = g(x_{k+1}) + h(x_{k+1})$$

$$\leq g(y) + \nabla g(y)^T [(x_{k+1} - y) + (z - x_{k+1})] + \frac{1}{2t} \|x_{k+1} - y\|^2 + \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (z - x_{k+1}) + h(z)$$

$$= \underbrace{g(y) + \nabla g(y)^T [z - y]}_{g \text{ convex}} + \frac{1}{2t} \|x_{k+1} - y\|^2 + \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (z - x_{k+1}) + h(z)$$

$$\leq g(z) + h(z) + \frac{1}{2t} \|x_{k+1} - y\|^2 + \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (z - x_{k+1})$$

$$= f(z) + \frac{1}{2t} \|x_{k+1} - y\|^2 + \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (z - x_{k+1}).$$

Since  $z$  is arbitrary, we put  $z = x_k$  and  $z = x^*$ :

$$\begin{cases} f(x_{k+1}) \leq f(x^*) + \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (x^* - x_{k+1}) + \frac{1}{2t} \|x_{k+1} - y\|^2 \\ f(x_{k+1}) \leq f(x_k) + \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (x_k - x_{k+1}) + \frac{1}{2t} \|x_{k+1} - y\|^2 \end{cases}$$

Subtracting the two equations yields

$$0 \leq f(x^*) - f(x_k) + \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (x^* - x_k)$$

$$\Leftrightarrow f(x_k) - f(x^*) \leq \frac{1}{t} (x_{k+1} - y)^T (x^* - x_k)$$





$$= \frac{-1}{2t} \left\{ \left\| x_{k+1} - y - \theta_k(x^* - u_k) \right\|^2 - \theta_k^2 \|x^* - u_k\|^2 \right\}$$

$\uparrow$   
 $\theta_k(u_{k+1} - x_k) + x_k$

So  $x_{k+1} - y - \theta_k(x^* - u_k)$

$$= \theta_k(u_{k+1} - x_k) + x_k - y - \theta_k(x^* - u_k)$$

$$= \theta_k u_{k+1} + \underbrace{(1 - \theta_k)x_k - y + \theta_k u_k}_{=0} - \theta_k x^*$$

$$= \theta_k(u_{k+1} - x^*)$$

$$= \frac{-\theta_k^2}{2t} \left\{ \|u_{k+1} - x^*\|^2 - \|u_k - x^*\|^2 \right\}$$

$$= \frac{\theta_k^2}{2t} \left\{ \|u_k - x^*\|^2 - \|u_{k+1} - x^*\|^2 \right\}$$

Thus, we have shown that

$$f(x_{k+1}) - f(x^*) - (1 - \theta_k)[f(x_k) - f(x^*)]$$

$$\leq \frac{\theta_k^2}{2t} \left\{ \|u_k - x^*\|^2 - \|u_{k+1} - x^*\|^2 \right\}$$

$$\Leftrightarrow \frac{t}{\theta_k^2} [f(x_{k+1}) - f(x^*)] + \frac{1}{2} \|u_{k+1} - x^*\|^2 \leq \frac{(1 - \theta_k)t}{\theta_k^2} [f(x_k) - f(x^*)] + \frac{1}{2} \|u_k - x^*\|^2$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{t}{\theta_k^2} [f(x_{k+1}) - f(x^*)] + \frac{1}{2} \|u_{k+1} - x^*\|^2$$

$$\leq \frac{t}{\theta_{k-1}^2} [f(x_k) - f(x^*)] + \frac{1}{2} \|u_k - x^*\|^2, \quad \frac{1 - \theta_k}{\theta_k^2} \leq \frac{1}{\theta_{k-1}^2}$$

$$\leq \frac{t}{\theta_1^2} \left( \frac{1 - \theta_1}{\theta_1} \right) [f(x_0) - f(x^*)] + \frac{1}{2} \|u_0 - x^*\|^2$$

$u_0 = x_0$

$$= 0 \text{ because } \theta_1 = 1. \quad = \frac{1}{2} \|x_0 - x^*\|^2$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{t}{\theta_k^2} [f(x_{k+1}) - f(x^*)] \leq \frac{1}{2} \|x_0 - x^*\|^2 - \frac{1}{2} \|x_k - x^*\|^2$$
$$\leq \frac{1}{2} \|x_0 - x^*\|^2$$

$$\Rightarrow f(x_{k+1}) - f(x^*) \leq \frac{\theta_k^2}{2t} \|x_0 - x^*\|^2.$$

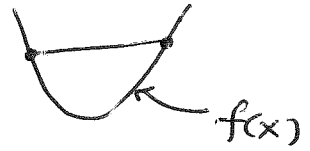
So if  $\theta_k = \frac{2}{k+1}$ , then

$$f(x_{k+1}) - f(x^*) \leq \frac{2}{t(k+1)^2} \|x_0 - x^*\|^2.$$

# Subgradients

## 1. Convex Review

A function is convex if



$$f(tx + (1-t)y) \leq tf(x) + (1-t)f(y), \quad 0 \leq t \leq 1.$$

Strictly convex:

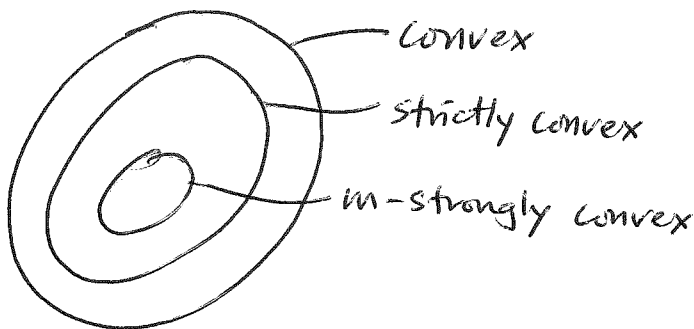
the " $\leq$ " becomes " $<$ ".

$$f(tx + (1-t)y) < tf(x) + (1-t)f(y)$$

m-Strongly convex:

$$f(x) + \frac{m}{2}\|x\|^2 \text{ is convex.}$$

i.e.  $f(x)$  is "at least quadratic".



Claim: if  $f$  is  $m$ -strongly convex, then  $f$  is convex.

Proof:

$$\text{Let } g(x) = f(x) - \frac{m}{2}\|x\|^2.$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Then, } g(tx + (1-t)y) &= f(tx + (1-t)y) - \frac{m}{2}\|tx + (1-t)y\|^2 \\ &\leq tg(x) + (1-t)g(y) = t\left\{f(x) - \frac{m}{2}\|x\|^2\right\} + (1-t)\left\{f(y) - \frac{m}{2}\|y\|^2\right\} \\ &= [tf(x) + (1-t)f(y)] - \frac{m}{2}\{t\|x\|^2 + (1-t)\|y\|^2\} \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{So } f(tx + (1-t)y) \leq tf(x) + (1-t)f(y) + \frac{m}{2}\{ \|tx + (1-t)y\|^2 - (t\|x\|^2 + (1-t)\|y\|^2) \} \leq 0$$

Note that

$$\begin{aligned} \|tx + (1-t)y\|^2 &= t^2\|x\|^2 + 2t(1-t)x^T y + (1-t)\|y\|^2 \\ - (t\|x\|^2 + (1-t)\|y\|^2) &= -t\|x\|^2 - (1-t)\|y\|^2 \\ &= -t(1-t)\|x\|^2 + 2t(1-t)x^T y + t(1-t)\|y\|^2 \\ &= -t(1-t)\|x - y\|^2 \leq 0. \end{aligned}$$

## Examples of Convex-Functions

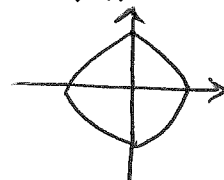
(i)  $f(x) = a^T x + b$  affine function

(ii)  $f(x) = \frac{1}{2} x^T A x + b^T x + c, A \geq 0.$

(iii)  $f(x) = \frac{1}{2} \|Ax - b\|^2$ , because  $\frac{1}{2} x^T A^T A x$  has  $A^T A \geq 0.$

(iv)  $f(x) = \|x\|_p = (\sum x_i^p)^{1/p}$

(v)  $f(x) = \mathbb{1}_\Omega(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & x \in \Omega \\ +\infty & x \notin \Omega \end{cases}$ , where  $\Omega$  is convex



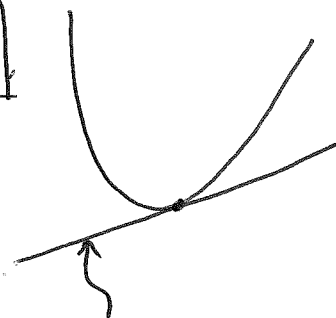
(vi)  $f(x) = \max(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n).$

## Properties of a convex function

(i) Suppose that  $f$  is differentiable. Then  $f$  is convex if and only if  $\text{dom } f$  is convex and

$$f(y) \geq f(x) + \nabla f(x)^T (y-x)$$

for all  $x, y \in \text{dom } f.$



(ii) Suppose that  $f$  is twice differentiable.

Then  $f$  is convex if and only if  $\text{dom } f$  is convex and

$$\nabla^2 f(x) \geq 0,$$

for all  $x \in \text{dom } f.$

(iii) Jensen's Inequality:

If  $f$  is convex, and  $X$  is a Random Variable, then

$$f(\mathbb{E}[X]) \leq \mathbb{E}(f(X)).$$

Proof: Consider the discrete case:

$$E[X] = \sum_{i=1}^n \pi_i x_i, \quad \pi_i = P(X=x_i)$$

$$\text{So } f(E[X]) = f\left(\sum_{i=1}^n \pi_i x_i\right) \leq \sum_{i=1}^n \pi_i f(x_i) = E[f(X)].$$

↑  
Convexity of  $f$ .

## Operations Preserving Convexity

(i) Non-negative linear combination

if  $f_1, f_2, \dots, f_m$  convex,

then  $\sum_{i=1}^m w_i f_i$  is also convex,  $w_i \geq 0$ .

Example:  $(a_i^T x - b_i)^2$  is convex, so  
 $\sum_{i=1}^n (a_i^T x - b_i)^2$  is also convex

(ii) Affine Composition

if  $f$  is convex, then  $f(Ax+b)$  is also convex

Example:  $-\sum_{i=1}^n \log(x_i)$  is convex.

So  $-\sum_{i=1}^n \log(a_i^T x + b_i)$  is also convex

(iii) log-sum-exp

The function

$$g(x) = \log\left(\sum_{i=1}^n e^{a_i^T x + b_i}\right) \text{ is convex.}$$

Proof: Just need to show  $f(x) = \log\left(\sum_{i=1}^n e^{x_i}\right)$  is convex.

$$(\nabla f)_i = \frac{e^{x_i}}{\sum_{i=1}^n e^{x_i}}, \quad (\nabla^2 f)_{ij} = \frac{e^{x_i}}{\sum_{i=1}^n e^{x_i}} \mathbb{1}\{i=j\} - \frac{e^{x_i} e^{x_j}}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^n e^{x_i}\right)^2}$$

We can show that

$$|(\nabla^2 f)_{ii}| = \left| \frac{e^{x_i}}{\sum_{i=1}^n e^{x_i}} - \frac{(e^{x_i})^2}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^n e^{x_i}\right)^2} \right|$$

$$\sum_{j \neq i} |(\nabla^2 f)_{ij}| = \sum_{j \neq i} \frac{e^{x_i} e^{x_j}}{\left(\sum e^{x_i}\right)^2} = \left| \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{e^{x_i} e^{x_j}}{\left(\sum e^{x_i}\right)^2} - \frac{(e^{x_i})^2}{\left(\sum e^{x_i}\right)^2} \right|$$

$$= \left| \frac{e^{x_i}}{\sum e^{x_i}} - \frac{(e^{x_i})^2}{\left(\sum e^{x_i}\right)^2} \right|$$

So  $|(\nabla^2 f)_{ii}| = \sum_{j \neq i} |(\nabla^2 f)_{ij}|$ , and this implies  $\nabla^2 f$  is diagonally dominant. Then by Gershgorin Disk Theorem,  $\nabla^2 f$  is positive semi-definite.

(iv) Composition:

$$f = h \circ g$$

$$\Rightarrow f''(x) = h''(g(x)) g'(x)^2 + h'(g(x)) g''(x)$$

So

f	h		g
Convex	Convex	non-decreasing	Convex
Convex	Convex	non-increasing	Concave
Concave	Concave	non-decreasing	Concave
Concave	Concave	non-increasing	Convex

## 2. Subgradients

The subgradient of a convex function  $f$  is any  $g \in \mathbb{R}^n$  s.t.

$$f(y) \geq f(x) + g^T(y-x).$$

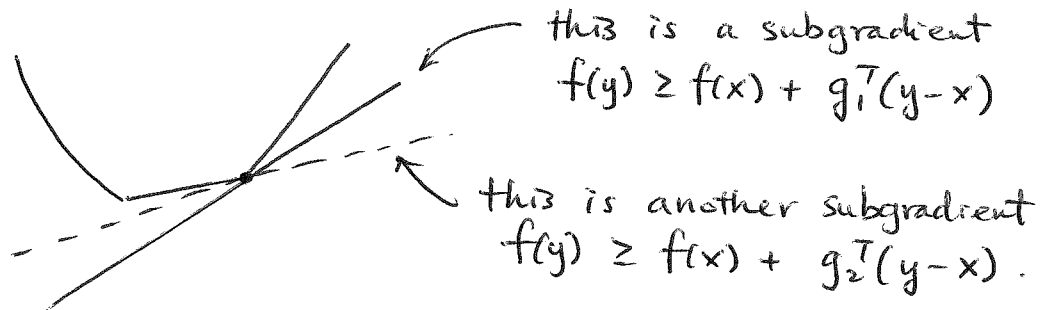
Why this definition?

Recall that a convex function  $f$  always have

$$f(y) \geq f(x) + \nabla f(x)^T(y-x).$$

So a subgradient is a generalization for non-diff. functions.

Pictorial illustration:



Sub-differential:

$$\partial f(x^*) = \left\{ g \mid f(y) \geq f(x^*) + g^T(y-x^*) \right\}$$

↑  
the set containing all the subgradients at  $x^*$ .

- $\partial f(x^*)$  is closed and convex
- $\partial f(x^*)$  is non-empty
- if  $f$  is differentiable at  $x^*$ , then  $\partial f(x^*) = \{ \nabla f(x^*) \}$ .

• For any  $f$ ,

$$x^* = \operatorname{argmin}_x f(x) \iff 0 \in \partial f(x^*)$$

or, in other words,

$$f(y) \geq f(x^*) + 0^T(y - x^*) = f(x^*), \forall y \in \operatorname{dom} f.$$

(this of course implies  $x^*$  is the minimizer.)

Lemma 2 of Accelerated Gradient Method

$$h(x_{k+1}) \leq h(z) + \frac{1}{t}(x_{k+1} - y)^T(z - x_{k+1}) + \nabla g(y)^T(z - x_{k+1}).$$

proof: Note that

$$x_{k+1} = \operatorname{argmin}_x \left\{ h(v) + \frac{1}{2t} \|v - (y - t\nabla g(y))\|^2 \right\}$$

$\Rightarrow 0 \in \partial(\cdot)$  implies that

$$\Rightarrow 0 \in \partial h(x_{k+1}) + \frac{1}{t}(x_{k+1} - (y - t\nabla g(y)))$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{1}{t}(y - t\nabla g(y) - x_{k+1}) \in \partial h(x_{k+1})$$

def of subgrad  $\Rightarrow$   ~~$h(z) \geq h(x_{k+1}) + \frac{1}{t}(y - t\nabla g(y) - x_{k+1})^T(z - x_{k+1})$~~

$$\Rightarrow h(x_{k+1}) \leq h(z) + \frac{1}{t}(x_{k+1} - (y - t\nabla g(y)))^T(z - x_{k+1})$$

$$= h(z) + \frac{1}{t}(x_{k+1} - y)^T(z - x_{k+1})$$

$$+ \nabla g(y)^T(z - x_{k+1}).$$