

Coupled oscillations

RECORD AND EVALUATE OSCILLATION OF TWO IDENTICAL COUPLED PENDULUMS.

- Record the oscillations when they are in phase and determine the period T_+ .
- Record the oscillations when they are out of phase and determine the period T_- .
- Record the oscillations of a coupled pendulum at the maximum beat amplitude and determine the period T of the oscillations and the period T_{\square} of the beats.
- Compare the measurements for the two periods with the values calculated from the intrinsic periods T_- and T_+ .
- Determine the spring constant of the spring coupling the two pendulums.

UE1050600
06/24 CW/UD

BASIC PRINCIPLES

For oscillation of two coupled pendulums, the oscillation energy is transferred from one pendulum to the other and back again. If the two pendulums are identical and the oscillation is started from a position where one is suspended in its rest position while the other is at a point of maximum deflection, then all the energy in the system is transferred between the pendulums. I.e., one pendulum always comes to rest while the other is swinging at its maximum amplitude. The time between two such occurrences of rest for one pendulum or, more generally, the time between any two instances of minimum amplitude is referred to as the beat period. T_{Δ} .

The oscillation of two identical coupled ideal pendulums can be regarded as a superimposition of two natural oscillations. These natural oscillations can be observed when both pendulums are fully in phase or fully out of phase. In the first case, both pendulums vibrate at the

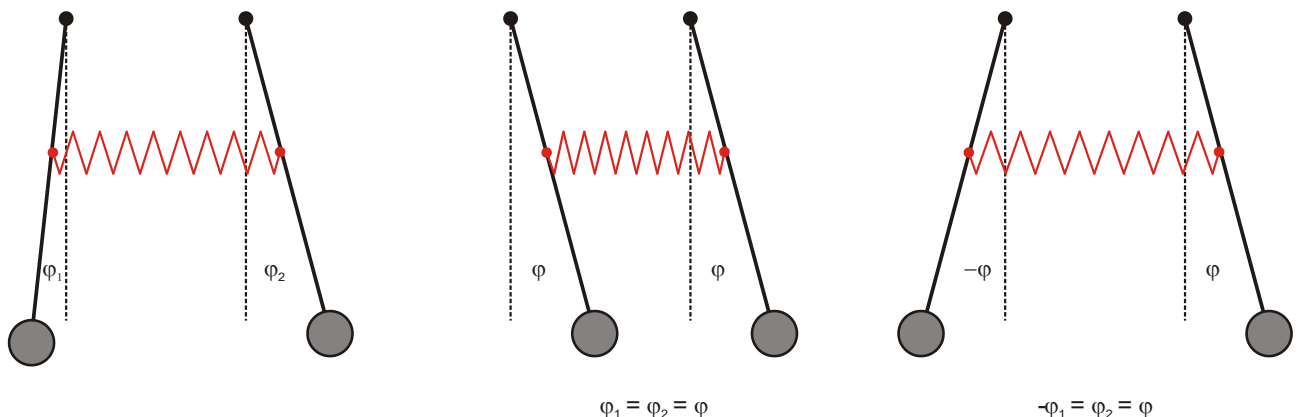
frequency that they would if the coupling to the other pendulum were not present at all. In the second case, the effect of the coupling is at a maximum and the inherent frequency is greater. All other oscillations can be described by superimposing these two natural oscillations.

The equation of motion for the pendulums (for small angles of deflection φ_1 and φ_2) takes the form:

$$\begin{aligned} L \cdot \ddot{\varphi}_1 + g \cdot \varphi_1 + k \cdot (\varphi_1 - \varphi_2) &= 0 \\ L \cdot \ddot{\varphi}_2 + g \cdot \varphi_2 + k \cdot (\varphi_2 - \varphi_1) &= 0 \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

g : Acceleration due to gravity, L : length of pendulum, k : Coupling constant

Fig. 1: Left: general coupled oscillation, Middle: coupled oscillation in phase. Right: coupled oscillation out of phase



The spring constant D of the spring coupling the pendulums is related to the coupling constant k as follows:

$$D = k \cdot \frac{L}{d^2} \cdot m \tag{2}$$

d : Distance between the point at which the spring is connected to the pendulum and the fulcrum of the pendulum,
 m : Pendulum mass

For the motions $\varphi_+ = \varphi_1 + \varphi_2$ and $\varphi_- = \varphi_1 - \varphi_2$ (initially chosen arbitrarily) the equation of motion is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} L \cdot \ddot{\varphi}_+ + g \cdot \varphi_+ &= 0 \\ L \cdot \ddot{\varphi}_- + (g + 2k) \cdot \varphi_- &= 0 \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

The solutions

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi_+ &= a_+ \cos(\omega_+ t) + b_+ \sin(\omega_+ t) \\ \varphi_- &= a_- \cos(\omega_- t) + b_- \sin(\omega_- t) \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

give rise to angular frequencies

$$\omega_+ = \sqrt{\frac{g}{L}}, \quad \omega_- = \sqrt{\frac{g + 2k}{L}} \tag{5}$$

and oscillation periods

$$T_+ = \frac{2\pi}{\omega_+} = 2\pi \cdot \sqrt{\frac{L}{g}}, \quad T_- = \frac{2\pi}{\omega_-} = 2\pi \cdot \sqrt{\frac{L}{g + 2k}} \tag{6}$$

corresponding to the natural frequencies for in phase or out of phase motion ($\varphi_+ = 0$ for out of phase motion and $\varphi_- = 0$ for in-phase motion).

The deflection of the pendulums can be calculated from the sum or the difference of the two motions, leading to the solutions

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi_1 &= \frac{1}{2}(a_+ \cos(\omega_+ t) + b_+ \sin(\omega_+ t) + a_- \cos(\omega_- t) + b_- \sin(\omega_- t)) \\ \varphi_2 &= \frac{1}{2}(a_+ \cos(\omega_+ t) + b_+ \sin(\omega_+ t) - a_- \cos(\omega_- t) - b_- \sin(\omega_- t)) \end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

Parameters a_+ , a_- , b_+ and b_- are arbitrary coefficients that can be calculated from the initial conditions for the two pendulums at time $t = 0$.

The easiest case to interpret is where pendulum 1 is deflected by an angle φ_0 from its rest position and released at time 0 while pendulum 2 remains in its rest position.

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi_1 &= \frac{1}{2} \cdot (\varphi_0 \cdot \cos(\omega_+ t) + \varphi_0 \cdot \cos(\omega_- t)) \\ \varphi_2 &= \frac{1}{2} \cdot (\varphi_0 \cdot \cos(\omega_+ t) - \varphi_0 \cdot \cos(\omega_- t)) \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

After rearranging the equations, they take the form

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi_1 &= \varphi_0 \cdot \cos(\omega_\Delta t) \cdot \cos(\omega t) \\ \varphi_2 &= \varphi_0 \cdot \sin(\omega_\Delta t) \cdot \cos(\omega t) \end{aligned} \tag{9}$$

with

$$\omega = \frac{\omega_+ + \omega_-}{2}, \quad \omega_\Delta = \frac{\omega_- - \omega_+}{2} \tag{10}$$

and

$$T = 2 \cdot \frac{T_+ \cdot T_-}{T_+ + T_-}, \quad T_\Delta = 2 \cdot \frac{T_+ \cdot T_-}{T_+ - T_-} \tag{11}$$

This corresponds to an oscillation of both pendulums at identical angular frequency ω , where the amplitudes are modulated at an angular frequency ω_Δ . This kind of modulation results in beats. In the situation described, the amplitude of the beats arrives at a maximum since the overall amplitude falls to a minimum at zero.

As the beat period T_Δ is usually understood to be the time between successive points where one pendulum stands still, it is defined as follows:

$$\omega_\Delta = \frac{2\pi}{2T_\Delta} \Leftrightarrow T_\Delta = \frac{T_+ \cdot T_-}{T_+ - T_-} \tag{12}$$

LIST OF APPARATUS

- 2 Pendulum Rods with Angle Sensor, 12 V AC @230 V 1000763 (U8404275-230)
- or
- 2 Pendulum Rods with Angle Sensor, 12 V AC @115 V 1000762 (U8404275-115)
- 1 Helical Spring 3.9 N/m 1002945 (U15027)
- 2 Table Clamps 1002832 (U1326)
- 2 Stainless Steel Rods 1000 mm 1002936 (U15004)
- 1 Stainless Steel Rod 470 mm 1002934 (U15002)
- 4 Universal Clamps 1002830 (U13255)
- 2 Adapters, BNC Plug/4 mm Jacks 1002750 (U11259)
- 2 Voltage Sensors 10 V 1021682 (UCMA-BT02)
- 1 Data Logger
- 1 Software

More information about digital measurement can be found on the experiment's webpage in the 3B Webshop.

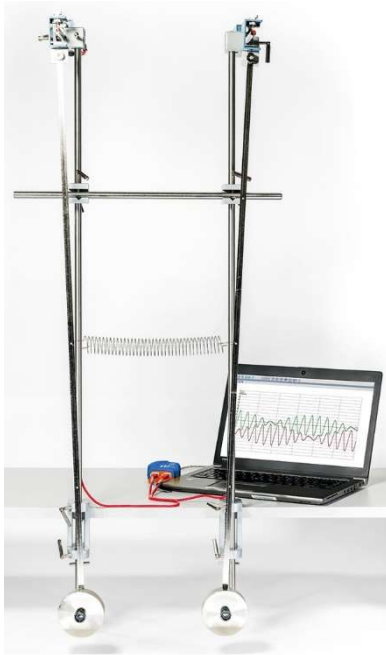


Fig. 2: Set-up for recording and evaluating the oscillation of two identical pendulums coupled together by a spring

EXPERIMENT PROCEDURE

- Start the software and record the time curves of the voltage signals from both sensors.
- 1. Record an in-phase oscillation**
 - Deflect both pendulums to the same (small) angle and release them simultaneously.
 - 2. Record an out-of-phase oscillation**
 - Deflect both pendulums to the same (small) angle but in opposite directions and release them simultaneously
 - 3. Record the oscillation of coupled pendulums with maximum beat amplitude**
 - If necessary, increase the number of measured values.
 - Deflect one pendulum rod keeping the other in its rest position then release both together.

SET-UP

The set-up is illustrated in Fig. 2.

- Clamp the two long stand rods to a bench so that they are about 15 cm apart.
- Attach the short stand rod between them as a horizontal cross member to lend the set-up more stability.
- Attach the angle sensors to the top of the vertical rods using universal clamps.
- Attach bobs to the end of the pendulum rods.
- Suspend the pendulum rods from the angle sensors (there are grooves in the angle sensors to accommodate the hinge pins of the pendulum rods).
- Attach the spring via the holes in the middle of the pendulum rods (50 cm from their ends).
- Plug the adapters BNC Plug/4 mm Jacks into the angle sensors and connect the voltage sensors.
- Connect the voltage sensors to the data logger.
- Connect the two angle sensors to the mains using the plug-in power supplies.

SAMPLE MEASUREMENTS

1. In-phase coupled oscillation

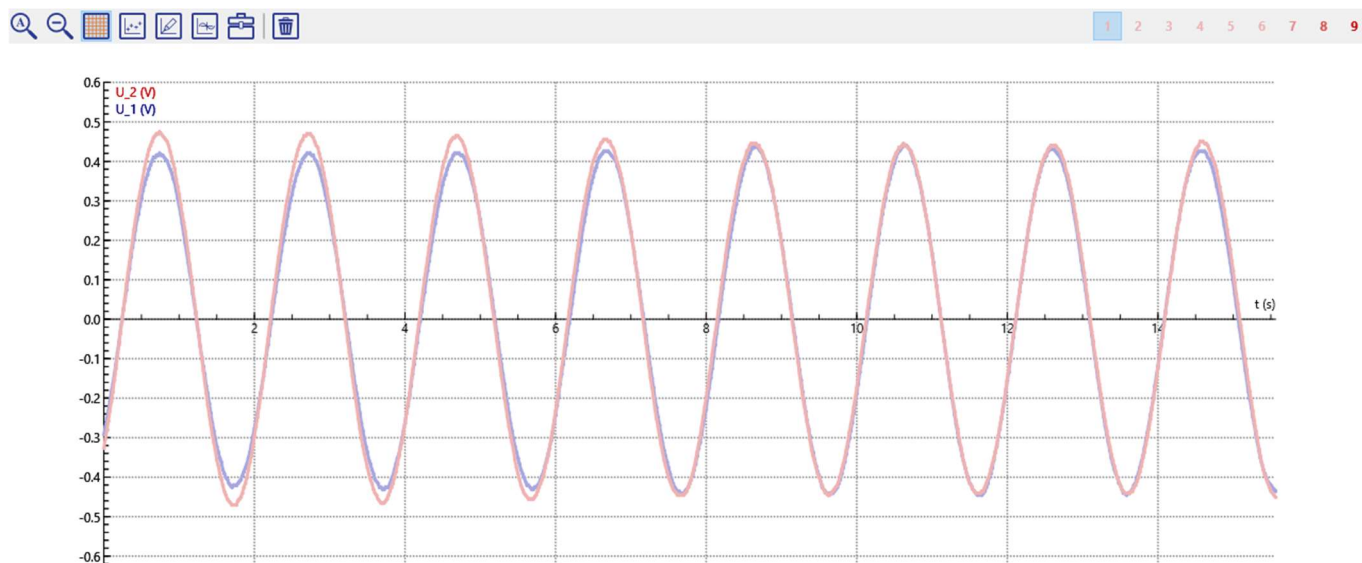


Fig. 3: Angle-time diagram for an in-phase oscillation of coupled pendulums

2. Out-of-phase coupled oscillation

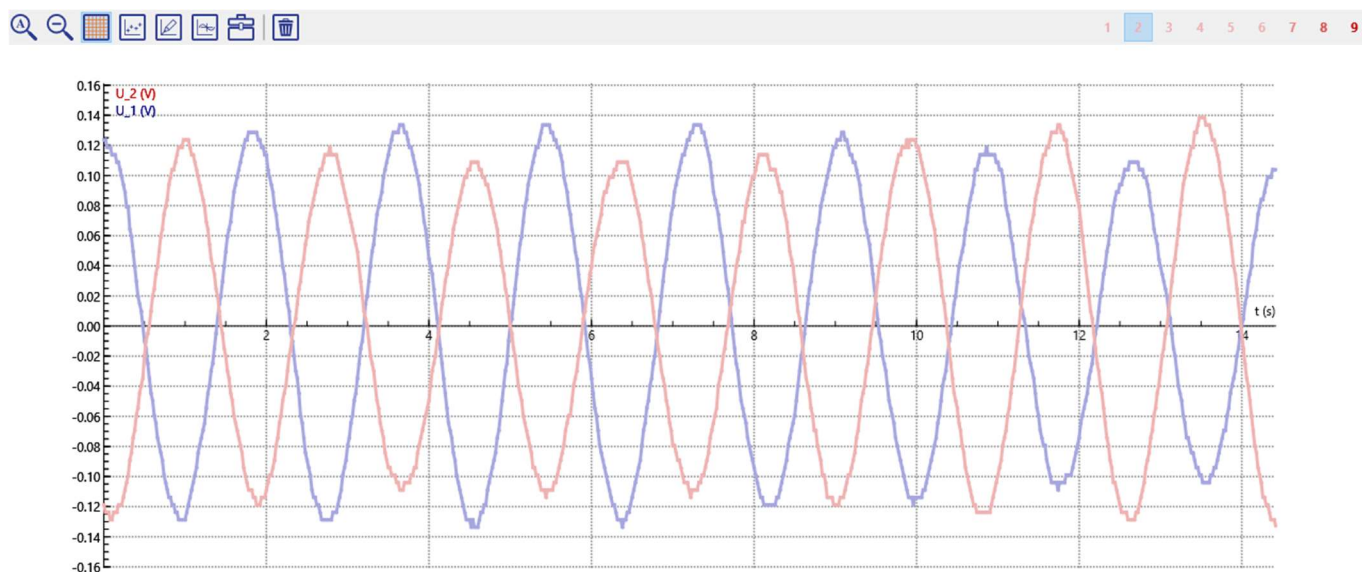


Fig. 4: Angle-time diagram for an out-of-phase oscillation of coupled pendulums

3. Oscillation of coupled pendulums with maximum beat amplitude

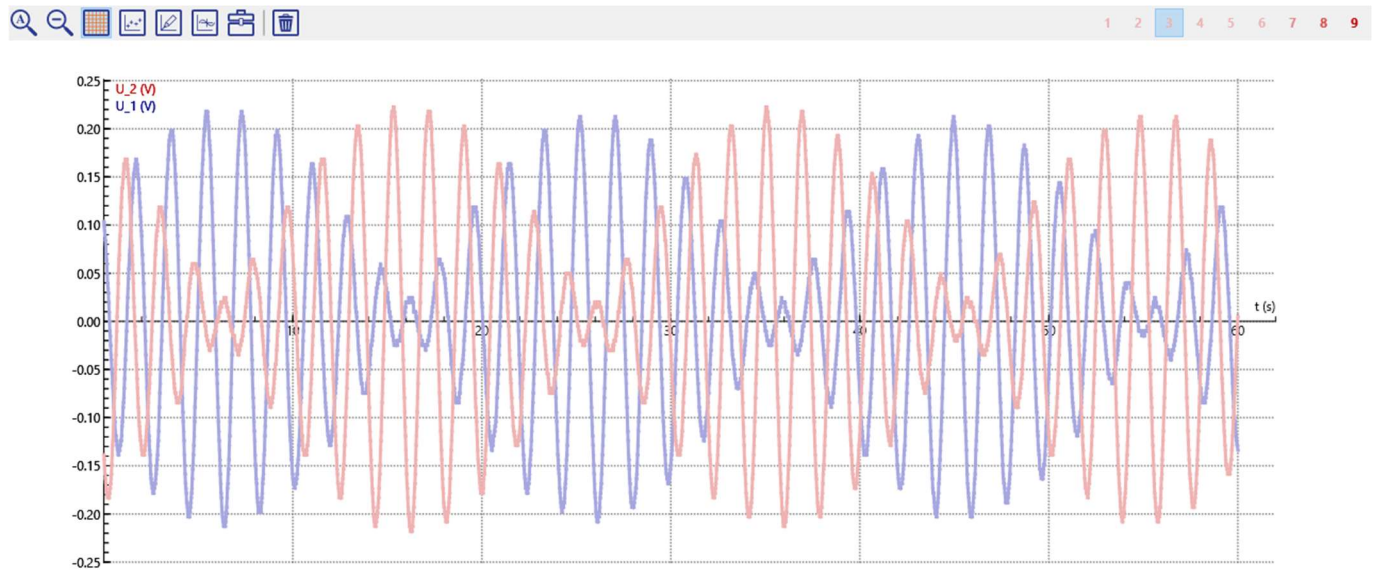


Fig. 5: Angle-time diagram for an oscillation of coupled pendulums with maximum beat amplitude

EVALUATION

1. Determine the period of oscillation for coupled pendulums oscillating in phase

- Open the data entry for the in-phase oscillation (Fig. 3).
- Set up the display to include as many complete oscillations as possible between cursors. The cursors should be set precisely at points where the oscillation crosses the axis heading upwards so that a whole number of periods is included.
- Read off the time between the cursors.

The period of the oscillation is the time between the cursors divided by the number of complete oscillations included in that time

$$T_+ = \frac{13.80 \text{ s}}{7} = 1.97 \text{ s.}$$

2. Determine the period of oscillation for coupled pendulums oscillating out of phase

- Open the data entry for the out-of-phase oscillation (Fig. 4) and proceed exactly as before.

The period of the oscillation is the time between the cursors divided by the number of complete oscillations included in that time

$$T_- = \frac{12.50 \text{ s}}{7} = 1.79 \text{ s.}$$

3. Determine the period of oscillation for coupled pendulums oscillating with a maximum beat amplitude

- Open the data entry for the oscillation with the maximum beat amplitude (Fig. 5).
- Set up the cursors so that they include one or more complete periods of the beat oscillation (and read off the time between the cursors).

The period of the maximum beat amplitude is the time between the cursors divided by the number of periods of the beat oscillation included in that time

$$T_{\Delta} = 19.72 \text{ s.}$$

- Change the scale of the time axis so that one period of the beats is displayed in a magnified view.
- Set the cursors so that they include as many oscillations of one of the pendulums as possible within the space of one beat (time between successive points where the pendulums stop still at the rest position) and read off the time between the cursors.

The period of the oscillation is the time between the cursors divided by the number of complete oscillations included in that time

$$T = \frac{19.72 \text{ s}}{11} = 1.79 \text{ s.}$$

4. Comparison with theory

With the pendulum length $L = 0,995 \text{ m}$ (distance of the pendulum mass from the fulcrum of the pendulum), the distance of the attachment point of the coupling spring from the fulcrum of the pendulum $d = 0,535 \text{ m}$, the pendulum mass $m = 1 \text{ kg}$, the spring constant of the coupling spring $D = 3,9 \text{ N/m}$ and the gravitational acceleration $g = 9,81 \text{ m/s}^2$, the equations (2) and (6) result in:

$$k = 1.122 \text{ m/s}^2$$

$$T_+ = 2.00 \text{ s}$$

$$T_- = 1.81 \text{ s}$$

The experimentally determined values $T_+ = 1.97 \text{ s}$ and $T_- = 1.79 \text{ s}$ are to be compared with these values. Substituting the latter into the equations (11) and (12) results in:

$$T = 1.88 \text{ s}$$

$$T_{\Delta} = 19.59 \text{ s}$$

The experimentally determined values $T = 1.79 \text{ s}$ and $T_{\Delta} = 19.72 \text{ s}$ are to be compared with these values.

The experimentally determined values agree well with the theory in each case, the relative deviations are in the single-digit percentage range and amount to a maximum of 5%.

5. Determine the spring constant of the spring coupling the two pendulums

If the coupling is weak ($k \ll g$) the spring constant (2) has little influence on the period of the out-of-phase oscillation but has a major influence on the beat period. Thus, to calculate the spring constant, we relate it to the beat period by substituting equation (5) into (10) and rearranging to give k :

$$k = 2 \cdot L \cdot (\omega_{\Delta}^2 - \omega_{\Delta} \cdot \omega_+) \quad (13)$$

Now the angular frequencies are replaced by the periods and substituted into equation (2) to give:

$$D = \frac{L}{d^2} \cdot m \cdot \frac{g}{2} \cdot \left(2 \cdot \frac{T_+}{T_{\Delta}} + \frac{T_+^2}{T_{\Delta}^2} \right) = 3,6 \frac{\text{N}}{\text{m}} \quad (14)$$

The value deviates from the nominal value of 3.9 N/m by approx. 8%.