

Math 501 - Differential Geometry  
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## 1. CURVES

**Definition.** A map

$$F(x_1, \dots, x_m) = (f_1(x_1, \dots, x_m), \dots, f_n(x_1, \dots, x_m))$$

from an open set in one Euclidean space into another Euclidean space is said to be *smooth* (or of class  $C^\infty$ ) if it has continuous partial derivatives of all orders.

In this chapter, we will be dealing with *smooth curves*

$$\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3,$$

where  $I = (a, b)$  is an open interval in the real line  $\mathbb{R}$ , allowing  $a = -\infty$  or  $b = +\infty$ .

Do Carmo calls these "*parametrized differentiable curves*", to emphasize that the specific function  $\alpha$  is part of the definition. Thus

$$\alpha(t) = (\cos t, \sin t) \quad \text{and} \quad \beta(t) = (\cos 2t, \sin 2t)$$

are considered to be different curves in the plane, even though their *images* are the same circle.

## Examples.

(1) The helix  $\alpha(t) = (a \cos t, a \sin t, bt)$ ,  $t \in \mathbb{R}$

(2)  $\alpha(t) = (t^3, t^2)$ .

**Problem 1.** Let  $\alpha(t)$  be a smooth curve which does not pass through the origin. If  $\alpha(t_0)$  is the point of its image which is closest to the origin (assuming such a point exists), and if  $\alpha'(t_0) \neq 0$ , show that the position vector  $\alpha(t_0)$  is orthogonal to the velocity vector  $\alpha'(t_0)$ .

**Problem 2.** Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be a smooth curve and let  $V \in \mathbb{R}^3$  be a fixed vector. Assume that  $\alpha'(t)$  is orthogonal to  $V$  for all  $t \in I$  and also that  $\alpha(t_0)$  is orthogonal to  $V$  for some  $t_0 \in I$ . Prove that  $\alpha(t)$  is orthogonal to  $V$  for all  $t \in I$ .

**Problem 3.** Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be a smooth curve. Show that  $|\alpha(t)|$  is constant if and only if  $\alpha(t)$  is orthogonal to  $\alpha'(t)$  for all  $t \in I$ .

**Definition.** A smooth curve  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  is said to be *regular* if  $\alpha'(t) \neq 0$  for all  $t \in I$ . Equivalently, we say that  $\alpha$  is an *immersion* of  $I$  into  $\mathbb{R}^3$ .

The curve  $\alpha(t) = (t^3, t^2)$  in the plane fails to be regular when  $t = 0$ .

A regular smooth curve has a well-defined tangent line at each point, and the map  $\alpha$  is one-to-one on a small neighborhood of each point  $t \in I$ .

**Convention.** For simplicity, we'll begin omitting the word "*smooth*". So for example, we'll just say "*regular curve*", but mean "*regular smooth curve*".

**Problem 4.** If  $\alpha: [a, b] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  is just continuous, and we attempt to define the *arc length* of the image  $\alpha[a, b]$  to be the LUB of the lengths of all inscribed polygonal paths, show that this LUB may be infinite.

By contrast, show that if  $\alpha$  is of class  $C^1$  (meaning that it has a first derivative  $\alpha'(t)$  which is continuous), then this LUB is finite and equals  $\int_a^b |\alpha'(t)| dt$ .

Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be a regular (smooth) curve.  
Then the arc length along  $\alpha$ , starting from some point  $\alpha(t_0)$ , is given by

$$s(t) = \int_{t_0}^t |\alpha'(t)| dt .$$

Note that  $s'(t) = |\alpha'(t)| \neq 0$ , so we can invert this function to obtain  $t = t(s)$ .

Then  $\beta(s) = \alpha(t(s))$  is a reparametrization of our curve, and  $|\beta'(s)| = 1$ .

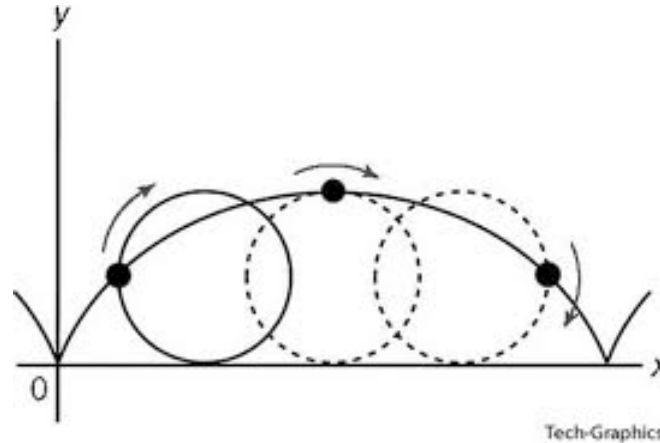
We will say that  $\beta$  is *parametrized by arc length*.

In what follows, we will generally parametrize our regular curves by arc length.

If  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  is parametrized by arc length, then the unit vector  $T(s) = \alpha'(s)$  is called the *unit tangent vector* to the curve.



**Problem 5.** A circular disk of radius 1 in the  $xy$ -plane rolls without slipping along the  $x$ -axis. The figure described by a point of the circumference of the disk is called a *cycloid*.



(a) Find a parametrized curve  $\alpha: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$  whose image is the cycloid.

(b) Find the arc length of the cycloid corresponding to a complete rotation of the disk.

**Problem 6.** Let  $\alpha: [a, b] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be a parametrized curve, and set  $\alpha(a) = p$  and  $\alpha(b) = q$ .

(1) Show that for any constant vector  $V$  with  $|V| = 1$ ,

$$(q - p) \cdot V = \int_a^b \alpha'(t) \cdot V \, dt \leq \int_a^b |\alpha'(t)| \, dt.$$

(2) Set  $V = (q - p) / |q - p|$  and conclude that

$$|\alpha(b) - \alpha(a)| \leq \int_a^b |\alpha'(t)| \, dt.$$

This shows that the curve of shortest length from  $\alpha(a)$  to  $\alpha(b)$  is the straight line segment joining these points.

**Problem 7.** Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be parametrized by arc length. Thus the tangent vector  $\alpha'(s)$  has unit length. Show that the norm  $|\alpha''(s)|$  of the second derivative measures the rate of change of the angle which neighboring tangents make with the tangent at  $s$ .

**Definition.** If  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  is parametrized by arc length, then the number  $\kappa(s) = |\alpha''(s)|$  is called the *curvature* of  $\alpha$  at  $s$ .

**Problem 8.** Show that the curvature of a circle is the reciprocal of its radius.

Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be parametrized by arc length. When the curvature  $\kappa(s) \neq 0$ , the unit vector

$$\mathbf{N}(s) = \alpha''(s) / |\alpha''(s)|$$

is well-defined.

**Problem 9.** Show that the unit vector  $\mathbf{N}(s)$  is normal to the curve, in the sense that  $\mathbf{N}(s) \cdot \mathbf{T}(s) = 0$ , where  $\mathbf{T}(s)$  is the unit tangent vector to the curve.

**Definition.** When  $\kappa(s) \neq 0$ , we call  $\mathbf{N}(s)$  the *principal normal vector* to the curve.

Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be parametrized by arc length, and let  $T(s)$  be the unit tangent vector along  $\alpha$ .

If the curvature  $\kappa(s) \neq 0$ , then we also have the principal normal vector  $N(s)$  at  $\alpha(s)$ .

In that case, define the *binormal vector*  $B(s)$  to  $\alpha$  at  $s$  by the vector cross product,

$$B(s) = T(s) \times N(s).$$

**Problem 10.** Show that  $B'(s)$  is parallel to  $N(s)$ .

**Definition.** If  $\kappa(s) \neq 0$ , the *torsion*  $\tau(s)$  of the curve  $\alpha$  at  $s$  is defined by the formula

$$B'(s) = -\tau(s) N(s) .$$

This is the opposite sign convention from do Carmo.

**Problem 11.** Find the curvature and torsion of the helix

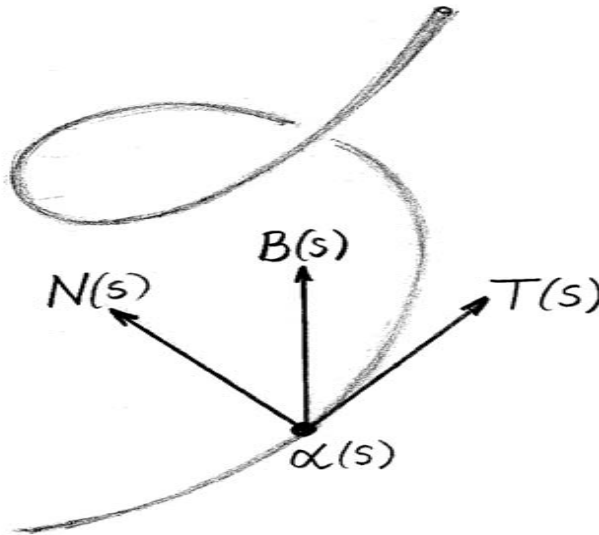
$$\alpha(t) = (a \cos t, a \sin t, b t) .$$

**Problem 12.** Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be parametrized by arc-length and have nowhere vanishing curvature  $\kappa(s) \neq 0$ . Show that

$$T'(s) = \kappa(s) N(s)$$

$$N'(s) = -\kappa(s) T(s) + \tau(s) B(s)$$

$$B'(s) = -\tau(s) N(s) .$$



**Definition.** The above equations are called the *Frenet equations*, and the orthonormal frame

$$T(s), N(s), B(s)$$

is called the *Frenet frame* along the curve  $\alpha$ .



**THEOREM.** *Given smooth functions  $\kappa(s) > 0$  and  $\tau(s)$ , for  $s \in I$ , there exists a regular curve  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  parametrized by arc length, with curvature  $\kappa(s)$  and torsion  $\tau(s)$ .*

*Moreover, another other such curve  $\beta: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  differs from  $\alpha$  by a rigid motion of  $\mathbb{R}^3$ .*

This result is sometimes called the

*fundamental theorem of the local theory of curves.*

**Problem 13.** The curvature of a smooth curve in the plane can be given a well-defined sign, just like the torsion of a curve in 3-space. Explain why this is so.

**Problem 14.** Given a smooth function  $\kappa(s)$  defined for  $s$  in the interval  $I$ , show that the arc-length parametrized plane curve having  $\kappa(s)$  as curvature is given by

$$\alpha(s) = \left( \int \cos \theta(s) \, ds + a, \int \sin \theta(s) \, ds + b \right),$$

where

$$\theta(s) = \int \kappa(s) \, ds + \theta_0.$$

Show that this solution is unique up to translation by  $(a, b)$  and rotation by  $\theta_0$ .

## Proof of the fundamental theorem of the local theory of curves in $\mathbb{R}^3$ .

We are given smooth functions  $\kappa(s) > 0$  and  $\tau(s)$ , for  $s \in I$ , and must find a regular curve  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  parametrized by arc length, with curvature  $\kappa(s)$  and torsion  $\tau(s)$ .

Let's begin by writing the Frenet equations for the Frenet frame.

$$T'(s) = \kappa(s) N(s)$$

$$N'(s) = -\kappa(s) T(s) + \tau(s) B(s)$$

$$B'(s) = -\tau(s) N(s).$$

We'll view this as a system of three first order linear ODEs, with given coefficients  $\kappa(s)$  and  $\tau(s)$ , for the unknown Frenet frame  $T(s)$ ,  $N(s)$ ,  $B(s)$ .

We can also view it as a system of nine first order linear ODEs for the components of the Frenet frame.

Now the fundamental existence and uniqueness theorem for systems of first order ODEs promises a unique "local solution", that is, a solution defined in some unspecified neighborhood of any given point  $s_0 \in I$ , with preassigned "initial conditions"  $T(s_0)$ ,  $N(s_0)$ ,  $B(s_0)$ .

Although for general systems we can only guarantee a local solution, for linear systems another theorem promises a unique "global solution", that is, one defined on the entire interval  $I$ .

So we'll use that theorem, pick an arbitrary point  $s_0 \in I$ , and pick an arbitrary "right handed" orthonormal frame  $T(s_0)$ ,  $N(s_0)$ ,  $B(s_0)$  to get us started.

Then we'll apply the global existence and uniqueness theorem for linear systems of ODEs to get a unique family of vectors  $T(s)$ ,  $N(s)$ ,  $B(s)$  which are defined for all  $s \in I$ , which satisfy the Frenet equations, and which have arbitrary preassigned initial values  $T(s_0)$ ,  $N(s_0)$ ,  $B(s_0)$ .

Let's pause to check that the nature of the Frenet equations

$$T'(s) = \kappa(s) N(s)$$

$$N'(s) = -\kappa(s) T(s) + \tau(s) B(s)$$

$$B'(s) = -\tau(s) N(s)$$

guarantees that if we start off with an orthonormal frame  $T(s_0)$ ,  $N(s_0)$ ,  $B(s_0)$ , then the solution will be an orthonormal frame for all  $s \in I$ .

Consider the six real-valued functions defined for  $s \in I$ , and obtained by taking the various inner products of the vectors  $T(s)$ ,  $N(s)$ ,  $B(s)$  :

$$\begin{array}{lll} \langle T(s), T(s) \rangle & \langle N(s), N(s) \rangle & \langle B(s), B(s) \rangle \\ \langle T(s), N(s) \rangle & \langle T(s), B(s) \rangle & \langle N(s), B(s) \rangle . \end{array}$$

When  $s = s_0$ , these six quantities start off with the values

$$\begin{array}{lll} 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}$$



These six quantities satisfy a system of first order linear ODEs, obtained from the Frenet equations. For example,

$$\langle T(s), T(s) \rangle' = 2 \langle T(s), T'(s) \rangle = 2 \kappa(s) \langle T(s), N(s) \rangle$$

$$\langle T(s), N(s) \rangle' = \langle T'(s), N(s) \rangle + \langle T(s), N'(s) \rangle$$

$$= \langle \kappa(s) N(s), N(s) \rangle + \langle T(s), -\kappa(s)T(s) + \tau(s) B(s) \rangle$$

$$= \kappa(s) \langle N(s), N(s) \rangle - \kappa(s) \langle T(s), T(s) \rangle + \tau(s) \langle T(s), B(s) \rangle ,$$

and so forth.

The constant solution

$$\langle \mathbf{T}(s), \mathbf{T}(s) \rangle = 1 \quad \langle \mathbf{N}(s), \mathbf{N}(s) \rangle = 1 \quad \langle \mathbf{B}(s), \mathbf{B}(s) \rangle = 1$$

$$\langle \mathbf{T}(s), \mathbf{N}(s) \rangle = 0 \quad \langle \mathbf{T}(s), \mathbf{B}(s) \rangle = 0 \quad \langle \mathbf{N}(s), \mathbf{B}(s) \rangle = 0$$

satisfies this system of ODEs, with the given initial conditions, so by uniqueness this is the only solution.

***Conclusion:*** If the vectors  $\mathbf{T}(s)$ ,  $\mathbf{N}(s)$ ,  $\mathbf{B}(s)$  start out orthonormal at  $s_0 \in I$ , then they remain orthonormal for all  $s \in I$ .

Where are we so far?

We have proved that, given smooth functions  $\kappa(s) > 0$  and  $\tau(s)$  defined for all  $s \in I$ , and an orthonormal frame  $T(s_0), N(s_0), B(s_0)$  defined for some  $s_0 \in I$ , then there is a unique orthonormal frame  $T(s), N(s), B(s)$  defined for all  $s \in I$  with these preassigned initial values, and satisfying the Frenet equations throughout  $I$ .

Now, to get the curve  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  defined for  $s \in I$  and having the preassigned curvature  $\kappa(s) > 0$  and torsion  $\tau(s)$ , just pick the point  $\alpha(s_0)$  at random in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  and then define

$$\alpha(s) = \alpha(s_0) + \int_{s_0}^s T(s) \, ds .$$

We get  $\alpha'(s) = T(s)$ , which is a unit vector, so  $\alpha$  is parametrized by arc-length.

## The Frenet equations

$$T'(s) = \kappa(s) N(s)$$

$$N'(s) = -\kappa(s) T(s) + \tau(s) B(s)$$

$$B'(s) = -\tau(s) N(s)$$

then tell us that the curve  $\alpha$  has curvature  $\kappa(s)$  and torsion  $\tau(s)$ , as desired.

Once the point  $\alpha(s_0)$  and the initial orthonormal frame  $T(s_0)$ ,  $N(s_0)$ ,  $B(s_0)$  is picked, the curve is unique.

Thus any other such curve  $\beta: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  differs from  $\alpha$  by a rigid motion of  $\mathbb{R}^3$ .

This completes the proof of the fundamental theorem of the local theory of curves in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ .

**Problem 15.** Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be a regular curve with nowhere vanishing curvature. Assume that all the principal normal lines of  $\alpha$  pass through a fixed point in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . Prove that the image of  $\alpha$  lies on a circle.

**Problem 16.** Let  $r = r(\theta)$ ,  $a \leq \theta \leq b$ , describe a plane curve in polar coordinates.

(a) Show that the arc length of this curve is given by

$$\int_a^b [r^2 + (r')^2]^{1/2} d\theta .$$

(b) Show that the curvature is given by

$$\kappa(\theta) = [2(r')^2 - r r'' + r^2] / [(r')^2 + r^2]^{3/2} .$$

**Problem 17.** Let  $\alpha: I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be a regular curve, not necessarily parametrized by arc length.

(a) Show that the curvature of  $\alpha$  is given by

$$\kappa(t) = |\alpha' \times \alpha''| / |\alpha'|^3 .$$

(b) If the curvature is nonzero, so that the torsion is well-defined, show that the torsion is given by

$$\tau(t) = (\alpha' \times \alpha'') \cdot \alpha''' / |\alpha' \times \alpha''|^2 .$$



**Definitions.** A *closed plane curve* is a regular curve  $\alpha: [a, b] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$  such that  $\alpha$  and all its derivatives agree at  $a$  and at  $b$ , that is,

$$\alpha(a) = \alpha(b), \alpha'(a) = \alpha'(b), \alpha''(a) = \alpha''(b), \dots$$

Alternatively, one can use the entire real line as domain,  $\alpha: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ , and require that  $\alpha$  be periodic of some period  $L > 0$ , that is,  $\alpha(t + L) = \alpha(t)$  for all  $t \in \mathbb{R}$ .

Another alternative: one can use a circle (of any radius) as the domain for a closed curve.

A curve is *simple* if it has no further intersections, other than the coincidence of the beginning and end points.

If we use a circle for the domain,  $\alpha: S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ , then the curve is simple if  $\alpha$  is one-to-one. Since  $S^1$  is compact, this is the same thing as saying that  $\alpha$  is a homeomorphism onto its image.

If  $\alpha: [a, b] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$  is a regular closed curve in the plane, parametrized by arc length, then its *total curvature* is defined by the integral

$$\text{Total curvature} = \int_a^b \kappa(s) \, ds .$$

**Problem 18.** (a) Show that the total curvature of a regular closed curve in the plane is  $2n\pi$  for some integer  $n$ .

(b) Show that if the regular closed curve is simple, then  $n = +1$  or  $-1$ .

(c) Suppose that a regular closed curve in the plane has curvature which is strictly positive or strictly negative, and that the above integer  $n$  equals  $+1$  or  $-1$ .

Show that the curve is simple.

Let  $\alpha: S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$  be a regular closed curve in the plane. For each point  $\theta \in S^1$ , the unit tangent vector  $T(\theta)$  to the curve at the point  $\alpha(\theta)$  is given by

$$T(\theta) = \alpha'(\theta) / |\alpha'(\theta)| .$$

Thus  $T: S^1 \rightarrow S^1$ , and then the induced map

$$T_* : \pi_1(S^1) \rightarrow \pi_1(S^1)$$

is a group homomorphism from the integers to the integers, and hence is multiplication by some integer  $n$ , which we call the *degree* of the map  $T$ , or the *winding number* or *rotation index* of the curve  $\alpha$ .

**Problem 19.** Show that this integer  $n$  is the same as the integer  $n$  in the previous problem, that is, show that the total curvature of the curve  $\alpha$  is  $2\pi n$ .

**Definition.** Let  $\alpha_0$  and  $\alpha_1 : S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$  be regular closed curves in the plane. A homotopy

$$A : S^1 \times [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$$

between  $\alpha_0$  and  $\alpha_1$  is said to be a *regular homotopy* if each intermediate curve,  $\alpha_t : S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ , defined by  $\alpha_t(\theta) = A(\theta, t)$ , is a *regular* curve.

**Remark.** If  $\alpha_0$  and  $\alpha_1 : S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$  are regularly homotopic, then they have the same winding number.

**WHITNEY-GRAUSTEIN THEOREM.** Two regular curves  $\alpha_0$  and  $\alpha_1 : S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$  are regularly homotopic if and only if they have the same winding number.

## Volumes of tubes...two problems.

(1) Show that the area of a tube of radius  $\varepsilon$  about a simple closed curve of length  $L$  in the plane is  $2\varepsilon L$ .

(2) Show that the volume of a tube of radius  $\varepsilon$  about a simple closed curve of length  $L$  in 3-space is  $\pi\varepsilon^2 L$ .

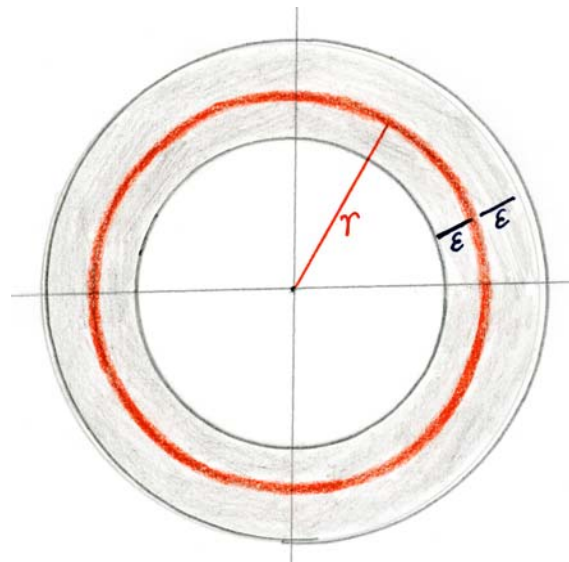
*We will solve both of these problems, and the Frenet equations for curves will be our main tool.*



## Tubes about circles in the plane.

The simplest example is that of a tube of radius  $\varepsilon$  about a circle of radius  $r$  in the plane, so just an annulus between concentric circles of radii  $r + \varepsilon$  and  $r - \varepsilon$ , with area

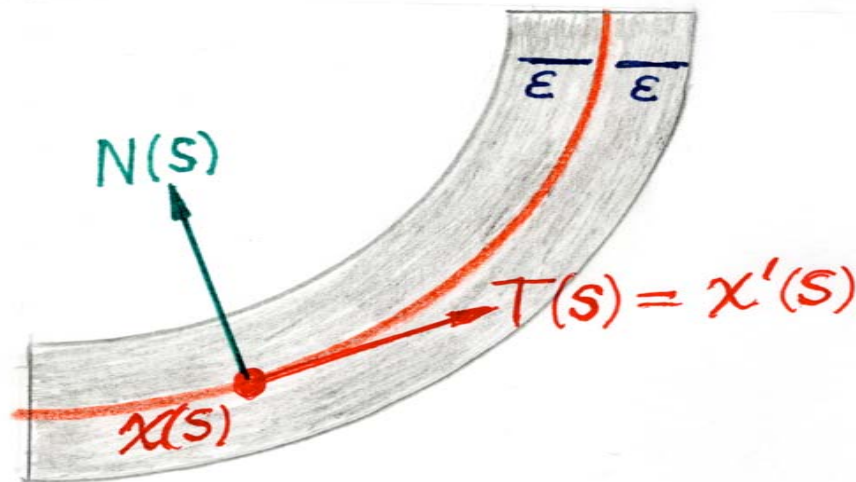
$$\begin{aligned}\pi (r + \varepsilon)^2 - \pi (r - \varepsilon)^2 &= \pi 4r\varepsilon = (2\pi r) (2\varepsilon) \\ &= (\text{circumference of circle}) (\text{width of tube})\end{aligned}$$



## Tubes about any curve in the plane.

Parametrize the curve by arc length:  $x = x(s)$  for  $0 \leq s \leq L$ .

Let  $T(s) = x'(s)$  and  $N(s)$  denote unit tangent and normal vectors along the curve.



Frenet eqns:  $T'(s) = \kappa(s) N(s)$  and  $N'(s) = -\kappa(s) T(s)$ .

To produce the  $\varepsilon$ -tube about this curve, we define

$$F: \{0 \leq s \leq L\} \times \{-\varepsilon < t < \varepsilon\} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$$

by

$$F(s, t) = \mathbf{x}(s) + t \mathbf{N}(s) .$$

Then the partial derivatives of  $F$  are given by

$$\begin{aligned} F_s &= \mathbf{x}'(s) + t \mathbf{N}'(s) = \mathbf{T}(s) + t (-\kappa(s) \mathbf{T}(s)) \\ &= (1 - t \kappa(s)) \mathbf{T}(s) \end{aligned}$$

$$F_t = \mathbf{N}(s) .$$

Hence the area of the  $\varepsilon$ -tube about our curve is given by

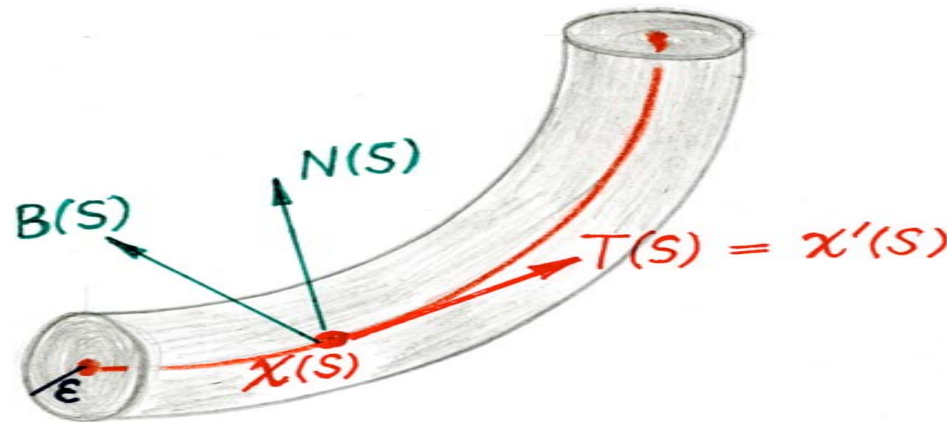
$$\begin{aligned}\int_s \int_t |\det dF| dt ds &= \int_s \int_t (1 - t \kappa(s)) dt ds \\ &= \int_s (t - 1/2 t^2 \kappa(s))|_{-\varepsilon}^{\varepsilon} ds = \int_s 2\varepsilon ds = L \cdot 2\varepsilon \\ &= (\text{length of curve}) (\text{width of strip}),\end{aligned}$$

independent of the nature of the curve.

## Tubes about any curve in 3-space.

Parametrize the curve by arc length:  $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{x}(s)$  for  $0 \leq s \leq L$ .

Frenet frame along the curve:  $\mathbf{T}(s) = \mathbf{x}'(s)$ ,  $\mathbf{N}(s)$ ,  $\mathbf{B}(s)$ .



$$\begin{aligned} \text{Frenet eqns: } \mathbf{T}'(s) &= \kappa(s) \mathbf{N}(s) \\ \mathbf{N}'(s) &= -\kappa(s) \mathbf{T}(s) + \tau(s) \mathbf{B}(s) \\ \mathbf{B}'(s) &= -\tau(s) \mathbf{N}(s) \end{aligned}$$

To produce the  $\varepsilon$ -tube about this curve, we define

$$F: \{0 \leq s \leq L\} \times \{t^2 + u^2 < \varepsilon\} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$$

by

$$F(s, t, u) = \mathbf{x}(s) + t \mathbf{N}(s) + u \mathbf{B}(s).$$

Then the partial derivatives of  $F$  are given by

$$F_s = (1 - t \kappa(s) \mathbf{T}(s) - u \tau(s) \mathbf{N}(s) + t \tau(s) \mathbf{B}(s)$$

$$F_t = \mathbf{N}(s)$$

$$F_u = \mathbf{B}(s)$$

Hence the volume of the  $\varepsilon$ -tube about our curve is given by

$$\begin{aligned}\int_s \int_{t^2+u^2<\varepsilon^2} |\det dF| \, dt \, du \, ds &= \int_s \int_{t^2+u^2<\varepsilon^2} (1 - t \kappa(s)) \, dt \, du \, ds \\ &= \int_s \pi \varepsilon^2 \, ds = L \cdot \pi \varepsilon^2 \\ &= (\text{length of curve}) (\text{area of } \varepsilon\text{-disk}),\end{aligned}$$

independent of the nature of the curve.

We used the fact that the integral of the odd function  $t$  over the disk  $t^2 + u^2 < \varepsilon^2$  is zero.

**Problem.** To get a Frenet frame along a curve in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ , one needs to assume that the curvature  $\kappa(s)$  never vanishes.

Without this hypothesis, one can still prove that

$$\text{vol } \varepsilon\text{-tube} = (\text{length of curve}) (\text{area of } \varepsilon\text{-disk}) .$$

(a) Let  $T(s)$ ,  $A(s)$ ,  $B(s)$  be an ON frame along our curve  $x(s)$ . Show that the Frenet eqns are replaced by

$$T'(s) = \alpha(s) A(s) + \beta(s) B(s)$$

$$A'(s) = -\alpha(s) T(s) + \gamma(s) B(s)$$

$$B'(s) = -\beta(s) T(s) - \gamma(s) A(s) .$$



**(b)** Defining the  $\varepsilon$ -tube about our curve  $x(s)$  by

$$F(s, t, u) = x(s) + t A(s) + u B(s),$$

with  $T(s) = x'(s)$ , and hence  $A(s)$  and  $B(s)$  orthogonal to the curve, show that we get

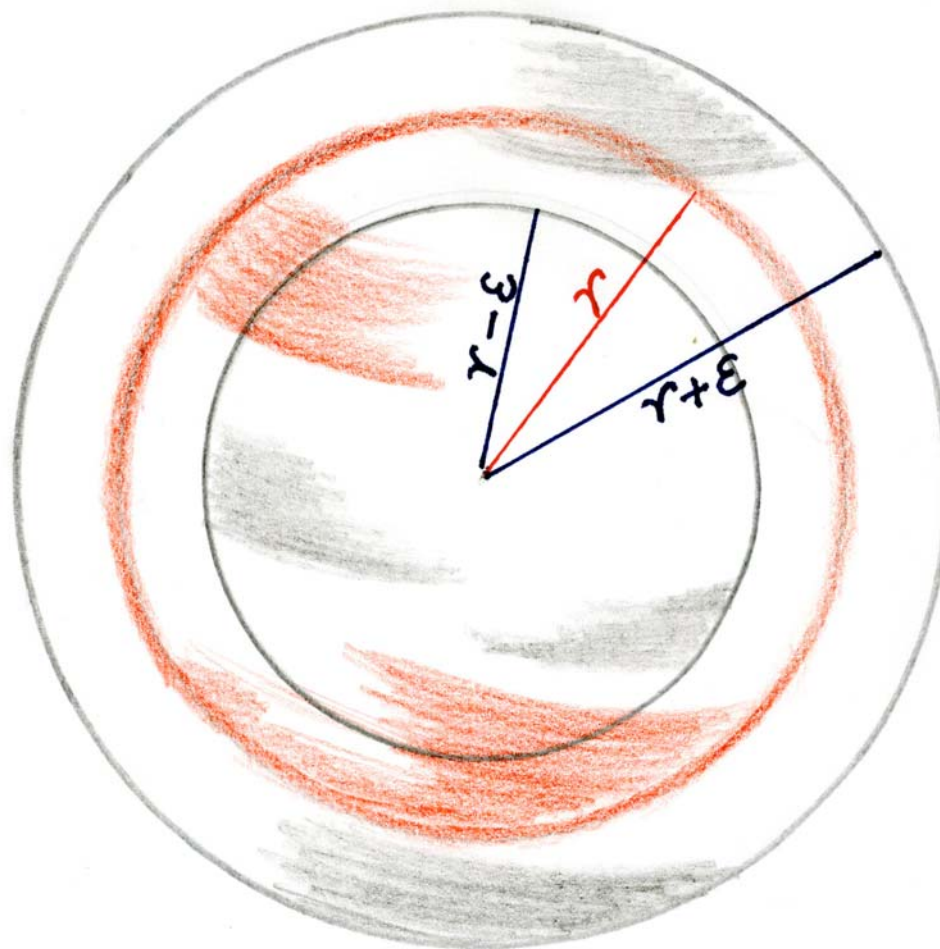
$$\begin{aligned} \text{vol } \varepsilon\text{-tube} &= \int_s \int_{t^2+u^2<\varepsilon^2} |\det dF| dt du ds \\ &= \int_s \int_{t^2+u^2<\varepsilon^2} (1 - t \alpha(s) - u \beta(s)) dt du ds \\ &= \int_s \pi \varepsilon^2 ds = L \cdot \pi \varepsilon^2 \\ &= (\text{length of curve}) (\text{area of } \varepsilon\text{-disk}). \end{aligned}$$

**Tough Problem.** Show that for a smooth curve in  $\mathbb{R}^n$ , we get

$$\text{vol } \varepsilon\text{-tube} = (\text{length of curve}) (\text{vol } B^{n-1}(\varepsilon)) ,$$

where  $B^{n-1}(\varepsilon)$  is a round ball of radius  $\varepsilon$  in  $\mathbb{R}^{n-1}$ .

## Tubes about round spheres in 3-space.



The "tube" of radius  $\varepsilon$  about a round sphere of radius  $r$  in 3-space is just the region between the concentric spheres of radii  $r + \varepsilon$  and  $r - \varepsilon$ , with volume

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \frac{4}{3} \pi (r + \varepsilon)^3 - \frac{4}{3} \pi (r - \varepsilon)^3 = \frac{4}{3} \pi (6 r^2 \varepsilon + 2 \varepsilon^3) \\
 & = (4 \pi r^2) 2\varepsilon + \frac{8}{3} \pi \varepsilon^3 = (\text{area of sphere}) 2\varepsilon + \frac{8}{3} \pi \varepsilon^3 \\
 & = 2\varepsilon (\text{area of sphere} + \frac{2\pi}{3} \chi(\text{sphere}) \varepsilon^2),
 \end{aligned}$$

which is exactly "Weyl's tube formula" for surfaces in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ .

**Problem.** Compute the volume of the  $\varepsilon$ -tube about a torus of revolution in 3-space, and show that it is

$$\begin{aligned}\text{vol } \varepsilon\text{-tube} &= 2\varepsilon (\text{area of torus}) \\ &= 2\varepsilon (\text{area of torus} + 2\pi/3 \chi(\text{torus}) \varepsilon^2),\end{aligned}$$

since  $\chi(\text{torus}) = 0$ , again in accord with Weyl's tube formula.