

# CIRCULAR MOTION

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Formula / Topic  
Name

Formula

Conditions / Usage

## 1. Kinematics of Circular Motion

Angular Velocity ( $\omega$ )

$$\omega_{avg} = \frac{\Delta\theta}{\Delta t}$$

Rate of change of angular displacement.

$$\omega_{inst} = \frac{d\theta}{dt}$$

Linear Velocity ( $v$ )

$$v = r\omega$$

Relation between linear speed ( $v$ ) and angular speed ( $\omega$ ) for a particle at radius  $r$ .

Angular Acceleration  
( $\alpha$ )

$$\alpha = \frac{d\omega}{dt} = \frac{d^2\theta}{dt^2}$$

Rate of change of angular velocity.

Tangential Acceleration ( $a_t$ )

$$a_t = r\alpha = \frac{dv}{dt}$$

Responsible for changing the **magnitude** of velocity (speed). Zero in U.C.M.

Centripetal (Radial) Acceleration ( $a_c$  or  $a_r$ )

$$a_c = \frac{v^2}{r} = r\omega^2 = v\omega$$

Responsible for changing the **direction** of velocity. Always directs towards center.

Net Acceleration ( $a_{net}$ )

$$a_{net} = \sqrt{a_c^2 + a_t^2}$$

Vector sum of radial and tangential acceleration.

Angle of Net Acceleration ( $\phi$ )

$$\tan \phi = \frac{a_c}{a_t}$$

$\phi$  is the angle made by net acceleration with the tangential direction.

Equations of Circular Motion

$$\omega = \omega_0 + \alpha t$$

**Condition:** Only valid when Angular Acceleration ( $\alpha$ ) is **constant**.

$$\theta = \omega_0 t + \frac{1}{2} \alpha t^2$$

$$\omega^2 = \omega_0^2 + 2\alpha\theta$$

## 2. Dynamics of Circular Motion

Centripetal Force ( $F_c$ )

$$F_c = \frac{mv^2}{r} = mr\omega^2$$

Real force required to keep a body in circular motion (provided by Tension, Friction, Normal, etc.).

Centrifugal Force (Pseudo Force)

$$F_{cf} = \frac{mv^2}{r}$$

Acts radially outward. **Condition:** Only applicable in a **rotating (non-inertial) reference frame**.

## 3. Banking of Roads & Turning

Bending of Cyclist

$$\tan \theta = \frac{v^2}{rg}$$

$\theta$  with vertical. Condition for no skidding while turning.

Car on Level Circular Road (No Banking)

$$v_{max} = \sqrt{\mu_s rg}$$

Maximum safe speed to avoid skidding.  $\mu_s$  = coefficient of static friction.

Banked Road (Frictionless)

$$\tan \theta = \frac{v^2}{rg}$$

Optimum speed  $v_{opt} = \sqrt{rg \tan \theta}$ . No wear and tear on tires.

Banked Road (With Friction) - Max Speed

$$v_{max} = \sqrt{rg \left( \frac{\mu_s + \tan \theta}{1 - \mu_s \tan \theta} \right)}$$

Speed limit to avoid slipping **outwards** (up the incline).

Banked Road (With Friction) - Min Speed

$$v_{min} = \sqrt{rg \left( \frac{\tan \theta - \mu_s}{1 + \mu_s \tan \theta} \right)}$$

Speed limit to avoid slipping **inwards** (down the incline).

## 4. Conical Pendulum

Angular Velocity

$$\omega = \sqrt{\frac{g}{L \cos \theta}} = \sqrt{\frac{g}{h}}$$

$L$  = length of string,  $h$  = vertical height of point of suspension from circle center.

Time Period ( $T$ )

$$T = 2\pi \sqrt{\frac{L \cos \theta}{g}} = 2\pi \sqrt{\frac{h}{g}}$$

Time for one complete revolution.

Tension in String

$$T_{tension} = \frac{mg}{\cos \theta} = mL\omega^2$$

## 5. Vertical Circular Motion (String)

Velocity at any point

$$v = \sqrt{u^2 - 2gh}$$

$u$  = speed at bottom,  $h$  = height from bottom.

Tension at any point

$$T = \frac{mv^2}{r} + mg \cos \theta$$

$\theta$  is angle with vertical downward direction.

Critical Velocity (Top)

$$v_{top} = \sqrt{gR}$$

Minimum speed at top to keep string taut ( $T_{top} \geq 0$ ).

Critical Velocity (Bottom)

$$v_{bottom} = \sqrt{5gR}$$

Minimum speed at bottom to complete the full circle.

Critical Velocity (Horizontal Point)

$$v_{mid} = \sqrt{3gR}$$

Speed at the point where string is horizontal.

Tension Difference

$$T_{bottom} - T_{top} = 6mg$$

Valid for any vertical circular motion under gravity.

Condition for Oscillation

$$0 < v_{bottom} \leq \sqrt{2gR}$$

Particle oscillates like a pendulum (doesn't reach horizontal level).

Condition for Leaving Circle

$$\sqrt{2gR} < v_{bottom} < \sqrt{5gR}$$

Particle leaves the circular path in the upper half ( $T$  becomes 0 before  $v$ ).

## 6. Specific Formulae for Questions

"Death Well" (Rotor)

$$v_{min} = \sqrt{\frac{gR}{\mu}}$$

Min speed to prevent falling. Friction acts upwards balancing weight.

Vehicle on Convex Bridge

$$v_{max} = \sqrt{gR}$$

Max speed to maintain contact with the bridge (Normal reaction  $N = 0$ ).

Radius of Curvature (Projectile)

$$R_{curv} = \frac{v^2}{a_{\perp}}$$

At top of trajectory:

$$R = \frac{u^2 \cos^2 \theta}{g}$$

Toppling of Car on Turn

$$v_{max} = \sqrt{\frac{gra}{h}}$$

$2a$  = distance between wheels (track width),  
 $h$  = height of Center of Mass. Condition:  
Topples if  $v > v_{max}$ .