# Multistudy Optimization of a Bracket 

## Introduction

In some application fields, there is a strong focus on weight reduction. For example, this is the case in the automotive industry, where every gram has a distinct price tag.

In this model, the weight of a mounting bracket is reduced, given an upper bound on the stresses and a lower bound on the first natural frequency.

The bracket is used for mounting a heavy component on a vibrating foundation. It is thus important to keep the natural frequency well above the excitation frequency in order to avoid resonances. It is also subjected to shock loads, which can be treated as a static acceleration load. This gives an optimization problem, where results from two different study types must be considered simultaneously.

Note: This model requires the Structural Mechanics Module, the CAD Module, and the Design Module.

## Model Definition

The original bracket together with a sketched mounted component are shown in Figure 1. The bracket is made of steel.

The component, which can be considered as rigid when compared with the bracket, has its center of gravity at the center of the circular cutout in the bracket. The mass is 4.4 kg , the moment of inertia around its longitudinal axis is $7.1 \cdot 10^{-4} \mathrm{kgm}^{2}$, and the moment of inertia around the two transverse axes is $9.3 \cdot 10^{-4} \mathrm{kgm}^{2}$.


Figure 1: Bracket supporting a beavy component
The idea is to reduce the weigh by drilling holes in the vertical surface of the bracket, and at the same time changing the dimensions of the indentations, in order to offset the loss in stiffness.

## OPTIMIZATION PARAMETERS

Six geometrical parameters are used in the optimization. They are summarized in Table 1 and shown in Figure 2.

TABLE I: GEOMETRICAL PARAMETERS

| PARAMETER | DESCRIPTION | LOWER LIMIT <br> MM | UPPER LIMIT <br> MM |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $r C$ | Radius of the central hole | 3 | 15 |
| $z C o$ | Vertical distance from the bend to the edge <br> of the central hole | I | 23 |

TABLE I: GEOMETRICAL PARAMETERS

| PARAMETER | DESCRIPTION | LOWER LIMIT <br> MM | UPPER LIMIT <br> MM |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $r O$ | Radius of the outer hole | 3 | 15 |
| $z O o$ | Vertical distance from the bend to the edge <br> of the outer hole | 3 | 29 |
| $y O o$ | horizontal distance from the edge of the <br> bracket to outer hole | 8 | 30 |
| $w$ Ind | Width of the indentation | 8 | 20 |



Figure 2: Optimization parameters

## CONSTRAINTS

- The lowest natural frequency must be at least 60 Hz .
- When exposed to a peak acceleration of 4 g in all three global directions simultaneously, the effective stress is not allowed to exceed 80 MPa anywhere. This
criterion is non-differentiable, since the location of the peak stress can jump from one place o another. A gradient-free optimization algorithm must thus be used.
- There must be at least 3 mm of material between two holes, or between a hole and an edge. This criterion is enforced both through the limits on the control parameters, and as constraints. The geometrical constraints are shown in Figure 3.


Figure 3: Geometrical constraints

## Results and Discussion

The initial geometry used in the optimization is shown in Figure 4. Three rather small holes have been introduced.


Figure 4: Initial geometry
The optimal values of the geometrical parameters are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: OPTIMAL VALUES

| PARAMETER | OPTIMAL VALUE <br> MM | LOWER LIMIT <br> MM | UPPER LIMIT <br> MM |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $r C$ | 9.3 | 3 | 15 |
| $z C o$ | 4 | 1 | 23 |
| $r O$ | 10 | 3 | 15 |
| $z O o$ | 9.8 | 3 | 29 |
| $y O o$ | 18.7 | 8 | 30 |
| $w$ Ind | 20 | 8 | 20 |

The weight of the optimized bracket is about 180 g , a reduction of 25 g from the original 205 g . The stresses from the shock load on the optimized geometry are shown
in Figure 5


Figure 5: Stresses at peak load in the optimized design.
The optimal solution gives three fairly large holes, and the widest possible indentation.
There are several possible arrangements of the holes that will give the same weight reduction within a small tolerance. It is thus possible that the design variables are not always the same at convergence.

## Notes About the COMSOL Implementation

The component mounted on the bracket is not modeled in detail. It is replaced by a Rigid Connector having the equivalent inertial properties.

Model Library path: Optimization_Module/Shape_Optimization/ multistudy_bracket_optimization

## Modeling Instructions

From the File menu, choose New.

## NE W

I In the New window, click Model Wizard.

## MODEL WIZARD

I In the Model Wizard window, click 3D.
2 In the Select physics tree, select Structural Mechanics>Solid Mechanics (solid).
3 Click Add.
4 Click Study.
5 In the Select study tree, select Preset Studies>Eigenfrequency.
6 Click Done.

## DEFINITIONS

## Parameters

I On the Model toolbar, click Parameters.
2 In the Settings window for Parameters, locate the Parameters section.
3 Click Load from File.
4 Browse to the model's Model Library folder and double-click the file multistudy_bracket_optimization_params.txt.

## ROOT

I In the Model Builder window, click Untitled.mph (root).
2 In the Settings window for Root, locate the Unit System section.
3 From the Unit system list, choose MPa.
Start building the geometry.

## GEOMETRY I

I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) click Geometry I.
2 In the Settings window for Geometry, locate the Advanced section.
3 From the Geometry representation list, choose CAD Import Module kernel.
4 Locate the Units section. From the Length unit list, choose mm.
Work Plane I (wpl)
I On the Geometry toolbar, click Work Plane.
2 In the Settings window for Work Plane, locate the Plane Definition section.
3 From the Plane list, choose zy-plane.

4 In the x-coordinate text field, type lX-rOut.

## Parametric Curve I (pcl)

I On the Geometry toolbar, click More Primitives and choose Parametric Curve.
2 In the Settings window for Parametric Curve, locate the Expressions section.
3 In the $\mathbf{x w}$ text field, type dInd/2*(1+cos(pi*lY/wInd*(s-0.5)))*(abs(s-0.5)<wInd/lY).

4 In the $y w$ text field, type $s^{*} l \mathrm{Y} / 2$.

## Plane Geometry

Right-click Component I (compI)>Geometry I>Work Plane I (wpI)>
Plane Geometry>Parametric Curve I (pcl) and choose Build Selected.

## Copy I (copyl)

I On the Work plane toolbar, click Transforms and choose Copy.
2 Select the object pcI only.
3 In the Settings window for Copy, locate the Displacement section.
4 In the $\mathbf{x w}$ text field, type thk.

## Bézier Polygon I (bl)

I On the Work plane toolbar, click Primitives and choose Bézier Polygon.
2 In the Settings window for Bézier Polygon, locate the General section.
3 From the Type list, choose Open curve.
4 Locate the Polygon Segments section. Find the Added segments subsection. Click Add Linear.

5 Find the Control points subsection. In row 2, set xw to thk.
Copy 2 (copy2)
I On the Work plane toolbar, click Transforms and choose Copy.
2 Select the object bl only.
3 In the Settings window for Copy, locate the Displacement section.
4 In the yw text field, type $1 \mathrm{Y} / 2$.
Convert to Solid I (csoll)
On the Work plane toolbar, click Conversions and choose Convert to Solid.

## Work Plane I (wpl)

In the Model Builder window, under
Component I (compI)>Geometry I>Work Plane I (wpI)>Plane Geometry right-click Convert to Solid I (csoll) and choose Build Selected.

Revolve I (revl)
I On the Geometry toolbar, click Revolve.
2 In the Settings window for Revolve, locate the Revolution Angles section.
3 In the End angle text field, type 90.
4 Locate the Revolution Axis section. From the Axis type list, choose 3D.
5 Find the Point on the revolution axis subsection. In the $\mathbf{x}$ text field, type 1 X -rOut.
6 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type rout.
7 Find the Direction of revolution axis subsection. In the $y$ text field, type -1 .
8 Click the Build All Objects button.

## Block I (blk I)

I On the Geometry toolbar, click Block.
2 In the Settings window for Block, locate the Size section.
3 In the Width text field, type 1X-rOut-2*thk.
4 In the Depth text field, type 1Y/2.
5 In the Height text field, type thk.
6 Click the Build All Objects button.
Loft I (loft I)
I On the Geometry toolbar, click Loft.
2 In the Settings window for Loft, locate the General section.
3 Clear the Unite with input objects check box.
4 Click to expand the Start profile section. Locate the Start Profile section. Find the Start profile subsection. Select the Active toggle button.

5 On the object revI, select Boundary I only.
6 Click to expand the End profile section. Locate the End Profile section. Find the End profile subsection. Select the Active toggle button.

7 On the object blkI, select Boundary 5 only.
8 Click the Build All Objects button.

## Mirror I (mirl)

I On the Geometry toolbar, click Transforms and choose Mirror.
2 Select the object loft I only.
3 In the Settings window for Mirror, locate the Input section.
4 Select the Keep input objects check box.
5 Locate the Point on Plane of Reflection section. In the $\mathbf{x}$ text field, type 1 X -rOut.
6 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type rOut.
7 Locate the Normal Vector to Plane of Reflection section. In the $\mathbf{x}$ text field, type 1.
8 Click the Build All Objects button.

## Block 2 (blk2)

I On the Geometry toolbar, click Block.
2 In the Settings window for Block, locate the Size section.
3 In the Width text field, type thk.
4 In the Depth text field, type 1Y/2.
5 In the Height text field, type lZ-rOut-2*thk.
6 Locate the Position section. In the $\mathbf{x}$ text field, type lX-thk.
7 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type rOut+2*thk.
8 Click the Build All Objects button.
9 Click the Zoom Extents button on the Graphics toolbar.
Cylinder I (cyll)
I On the Geometry toolbar, click Cylinder.
2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Size and Shape section.
3 In the Radius text field, type dCmp/2.
4 In the Height text field, type $3^{*}$ thk.
5 Locate the Position section. In the $\mathbf{x}$ text field, type $1 \mathrm{X}-2^{*}$ thk.
6 In the $y$ text field, type $1 Y / 2$.
7 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type $1 Z$.
8 Locate the Axis section. From the Axis type list, choose $\mathbf{x}$-axis.
9 Click the Build All Objects button.

## Cylinder 2 (cyl2)

I Right-click Component I (compI)>Geometry I>Cylinder I (cyII) and choose Duplicate.

2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Size and Shape section.
3 In the Radius text field, type bDia/2.
4 Locate the Position section. In the $y$ text field, type bDia.
5 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type lZ-bDia.
6 Click the Build All Objects button.

## Cylinder 3 (cyl3)

I Right-click Component I (compl)>Geometry I>Cylinder 2 (cyl2) and choose Duplicate.

2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Position section.
3 In the $\mathbf{x}$ text field, type 1X-rOut-2*thk-bDia.
4 In the $y$ text field, type $1 Y / 4$.
5 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type - thk.
6 Locate the Axis section. From the Axis type list, choose z-axis.
7 Click the Build All Objects button.
Cylinder 4 (cyl4)
I Right-click Component I (compl)>Geometry I>Cylinder 3 (cyl3) and choose Duplicate.

2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Position section.
3 In the $\mathbf{x}$ text field, type 1.5*bDia.
4 In the $y$ text field, type $1 Y / 2$.
5 Click the Build All Objects button.
Cylinder 5 (cyl5)
I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Geometry I right-click Cylinder I (cyII) and choose Duplicate.

2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Size and Shape section.
3 In the Radius text field, type ro.
4 Locate the Position section. In the $y$ text field, type y0.
5 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type $z 0$.
6 Click the Build All Objects button.

## Cylinder 6 (cyl6)

I Right-click Component I (compI)>Geometry I>Cylinder 5 (cyI5) and choose Duplicate.

2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Size and Shape section.
3 In the Radius text field, type rC.
4 Locate the Position section. In the $y$ text field, type lY/2.
5 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type $z C$.
6 Click the Build All Objects button.
Work Plane 2 (wp2)
I On the Geometry toolbar, click Work Plane.
2 In the Settings window for Work Plane, locate the Plane Definition section.
3 From the Plane list, choose yx-plane.
4 In the z-coordinate text field, type 2*thk.

## Bézier Polygon I (bl)

I On the Geometry toolbar, click More Primitives and choose Bézier Polygon.
2 Click the Zoom Extents button on the Graphics toolbar.
3 In the Settings window for Bézier Polygon, locate the Polygon Segments section.
4 Find the Added segments subsection. Click Add Linear.
5 Find the Control points subsection. In row 2, set xw to 1Y/2-bDia/2.
6 Find the Added segments subsection. Click Add Linear.
7 Find the Control points subsection. In row 2, set yw to $1 X-$ rOut $-2 *$ thk.
8 In row $\mathbf{2}$, set $\mathbf{x w}$ to 0 .
9 Find the Added segments subsection. Click Add Linear.
10 Find the Control points subsection. Click Close Curve.
Work Plane 2 (wp2)
Right-click Component I (compl)>Geometry I>Work Plane 2 (wp2)>Plane
Geometry>Bézier Polygon I (bI) and choose Build Selected.

## Extrude I (extl)

I On the Geometry toolbar, click Extrude.
2 In the Settings window for Extrude, locate the Distances from Plane section.

3 In the table, enter the following settings:

Distances (mm)
3*thk

## 4 Right-click Component I (compI)>Geometry I>Extrude I (extI) and choose Build Selected.

## Difference I (difl)

I On the Geometry toolbar, click Booleans and Partitions and choose Difference.
2 Select the objects revI, blkI, mirI, blk2, and loftl only.
3 In the Settings window for Difference, locate the Difference section.
4 Find the Objects to subtract subsection. Select the Active toggle button.
5 Select the objects cyI5, cyl6, cyI3, cyI2, extI, cyII, and cyI4 only.
6 Click the Build All Objects button.

## Mirror 2 (mir2)

I On the Geometry toolbar, click Transforms and choose Mirror.
2 In the Settings window for Mirror, locate the Input section.
3 Select the Keep input objects check box.
4 Locate the Point on Plane of Reflection section. In the $\boldsymbol{y}$ text field, type 1Y/2.
5 Locate the Normal Vector to Plane of Reflection section. In the $\boldsymbol{y}$ text field, type 1.
6 In the $\mathbf{z}$ text field, type 0.
7 Click the Build All Objects button.
8 Click the Zoom Extents button on the Graphics toolbar.

## MATERIALS

On the Model toolbar, click More Windows and choose Add Material.

## ADD MATERIAL

I Go to the Add Material window.
2 In the tree, select Built-In>Structural steel.
3 Click Add to Component in the window toolbar.
4 On the Model toolbar, click Add Material to close the Add Material window.

SOLID MECHANICS (SOLID)
On the Physics toolbar, click Boundaries and choose Fixed Constraint.

The exact way the bolts clamp the bracket to the foundation is not important for the results in the part being optimized.

## Fixed Constraint I

I In the Settings window for Fixed Constraint, type Fixed (Bolts) in the Label text field.

2 Select Boundaries 10-13 and 15-22 only.
3 On the Physics toolbar, click Boundaries and choose Rigid Connector.
The attached component has a high stiffness, and is bolted to the two upper bolt holes. It is modeled as being rigid, with only mass properties.

## Rigid Connector I

I In the Settings window for Rigid Connector, type Rigid Connector (Mounted component) in the Label text field.

2 Select Boundaries 48, 49, 52, 53, and 75-78 only.
3 Locate the Center of Rotation section. From the list, choose User defined.
4 Specify the $\mathbf{X}_{c}$ vector as

| $1 X-$ thk/2 | $X$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| $1 Y / 2$ | $Y$ |
| $1 Z$ | $Z$ |

## Mass and Moment of Inertia I

I On the Physics toolbar, click Attributes and choose Mass and Moment of Inertia.
2 In the Settings window for Mass and Moment of Inertia, locate the Mass and Moment of Inertia section.

3 In the $m$ text field, type mCmp.
4 From the list, choose Diagonal.
5 In the I table, enter the following settings:

| IXCmp | 0 | 0 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 0 | IYZCmp | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | IYZCmp |

## MESH I

## Free Triangular I

I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) right-click Mesh I and choose More Operations>Free Triangular.

2 Select Boundaries 4, 8, 26, 30, 35, 39, 41, 44, 60, and 64 only.
Size
I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compI)>Mesh I click Size.
2 In the Settings window for Size, locate the Element Size section.
3 From the Predefined list, choose Fine.
4 Click the Build All button.
Swept I
In the Model Builder window, right-click Mesh I and choose Swept.

## Distribution I

I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Mesh I right-click Swept I and choose Distribution.

2 In the Settings window for Distribution, locate the Distribution section.
3 In the Number of elements text field, type 2.
4 Click the Build All button.
Run an eigenfrequency study on the initial geometry.

## STUDY I

I In the Model Builder window, click Study I.
2 In the Settings window for Study, type Eigenfrequency study in the Label text field.

3 On the Model toolbar, click Compute.
Add the peak loads, and a perform a stationary study.

## SOLID MECHANICS (SOLID)

Body Load I
I On the Physics toolbar, click Domains and choose Body Load.
2 In the Settings window for Body Load, type Body load 4 g on bracket in the Label text field.

3 Locate the Domain Selection section. From the Selection list, choose All domains.
4 Locate the Force section. Specify the $\mathbf{F}_{\mathrm{V}}$ vector as

| $4 * g_{-} c o n s t * s o l i d . r h o$ | $x$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| $4 * g_{-} c o n s t *$ solid.rho | $y$ |
| $4{ }^{*} g_{-}$const*solid.rho | $z$ |

Rigid Connector (Mounted component)
I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Solid Mechanics (solid) right-click Rigid Connector (Mounted component) and choose Applied Force.

## Applied Force I

I In the Settings window for Applied Force, type Force 4 g on mounted component in the Label text field.

2 Locate the Applied Force section. Specify the $\mathbf{F}$ vector as

| $4 * g_{\_} c o n s t * m C m p$ | $x$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| $4 * g_{-}$const*mCmp | $y$ |
| $4 * g_{-}$const*mCmp | $z$ |

ROOT
On the Model toolbar, click More Windows and choose Add Study.

## ADD STUDY

I Go to the Add Study window.
2 Find the Studies subsection. In the Select study tree, select Preset Studies>Stationary.
3 Click Add Study in the window toolbar.
4 On the Model toolbar, click More Windows and choose Add Study to close the Add Study window.

STUDY 2

## Step I: Stationary

I In the Model Builder window, click Study 2.
2 In the Settings window for Study, type Stationary study in the Label text field.
3 On the Model toolbar, click Compute.

Prepare for the optimization by adding variables for the bracket mass and the maximum stress.

## DEFINITIONS

## Integration I (intop I)

I On the Definitions toolbar, click Component Couplings and choose Integration.
2 In the Settings window for Integration, locate the Source Selection section.
3 From the Selection list, choose All domains.

## Maximum I (maxopl)

I On the Definitions toolbar, click Component Couplings and choose Maximum.
2 In the Settings window for Maximum, locate the Source Selection section.
3 From the Geometric entity level list, choose Boundary.
4 Select Boundaries 25, 26, 29, 30, 34, 35, 38, 39, 41, 44, 60, 64, and 81-84 only.

## Variables Ia

I In the Model Builder window, right-click Definitions and choose Variables.
2 In the Settings window for Variables, locate the Variables section.
3 In the table, enter the following settings:

| Name | Expression | Unit | Description |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| mass | intop1(solid.rho) | t | Bracket mass |
| maxStress | maxop1(solid.mises) | MPa | Maximum stress |

Add a plot for monitoring the geometry and stresses in the optimized region.

## RESULTS

## 3D Plot Group 3

I On the Model toolbar, click Add Plot Group and choose 3D Plot Group.
2 In the Settings window for 3D Plot Group, type Stress in optimized region in the Label text field.

3 Locate the Data section. From the Data set list, choose Stationary study/Solution 2.
4 Right-click Results>3D Plot Group 3 and choose Volume.
5 In the Settings window for Volume, locate the Expression section.
6 In the Expression text field, type solid.mises.
7 Right-click Results>3D Plot Group 3>Volume I and choose Filter.

8 In the Settings window for Filter, locate the Element Selection section.
9 In the Logical expression for inclusion text field, type dom>2.
10 Click the Zoom Extents button on the Graphics toolbar.
Set up the optimization study.

## ROOT

On the Model toolbar, click More Windows and choose Add Study.

## ADD STUDY

I Go to the Add Study window.
2 Find the Studies subsection. In the Select study tree, select Custom Studies>Empty Study.

3 Click Add Study in the window toolbar.
4 On the Model toolbar, click More Windows and choose Add Study to close the Add Study window.

STUDY 3
I In the Model Builder window, click Study 3.
2 In the Settings window for Study, type Optimization study in the Label text field.
3 On the Study toolbar, click Optimization.

## OPTIMIZATION

I In the Model Builder window's toolbar, click the Show button and select Advanced Study Options in the menu.

2 In the Model Builder window, right-click Optimization and choose Study Reference.
3 In the Settings window for Study Reference, type Eigenfrequency in the Label text field.

4 Locate the Study Reference section. From the Study reference list, choose Eigenfrequency study.
5 Right-click Optimization and choose Study Reference.
6 In the Settings window for Study Reference, type Stationary in the Label text field.
7 Locate the Study Reference section. From the Study reference list, choose Stationary study.

## Optimization

I In the Model Builder window, click Optimization.

2 In the Settings window for Optimization, locate the Optimization Solver section.
3 From the Method list, choose BOBYQA.
4 Locate the Objective Function section. In the table, enter the following settings:

| Expression | Description | Evaluate for |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| comp1.mass | Bracket mass | Stationary $\{$ ref2 $\}$ |

5 Locate the Optimization Solver section. In the Optimality tolerance text field, type 0.1 .

The first eigenfrequency is to be used in the optimization.
6 Locate the Objective Function section. From the Solution list, choose Use first.
7 Locate the Control Variables and Parameters section. Click Load from File.
8 Browse to the model's Model Library folder and double-click the file multistudy_bracket_optimization_ctrlvars.txt.
9 Locate the Constraints section. In the table, enter the following settings:

| Expression | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| real(comp1.solid.freq) | minFreq |  |
| comp1.maxStress |  | maxStress |
| d_0_Cmp | 3 | Stationary $\{r e f 2\}$ |
| d_C_Cmp | 3 |  |
| d_0_C | 3 | Eigenfrequency $\{r e f\}$ |
| d_0_0 | 3 | Eigenfrequency $\{r e f\}$ |

10 Locate the Output While Solving section. Select the Plot check box.
II From the Plot group list, choose 3D Plot Group 3.
If some configurations are not valid, the optimization procedure should still continue. The default is to stop if an error occurs.

## Parametric I

I On the Study toolbar, click Show Default Solver.
2 In the Settings window for Parametric, locate the Error section.
3 Clear the Stop if error check box.

## Parametric 2

I In the Model Builder window, under Optimization>job Configurations click Parametric 2.

2 In the Settings window for Parametric, locate the Error section.
3 Clear the Stop if error check box.

## Parametric 3

I In the Model Builder window, under Optimization>job Configurations click Parametric 3.

2 In the Settings window for Parametric, locate the Error section.
3 Clear the Stop if error check box.
Run the optimization.
4 On the Study toolbar, click Compute.

## RESULTS

On the last line of Objective Table 2, you will find the optimal set of parameters and the minimum weight.

On the last line of Global Constraints Table 6, you will find the values of the natural frequency and maximum stress in the optimized configuration as well as the values of the other constraints.

Examine the stress distribution in the optimized configuration.
3D Plot Group 3
On the 3D plot group toolbar, click Plot.

