3.Trigonometric substitution

Trigonometric substitutions occur when we replace the variable of integration by a trigonometric function. The most common substitutions are $x = a\tan\theta$, $x = a\sin\theta$, and $x = a\sec\theta$. These substitutions are effective in transforming integrals involving $\sqrt{a^2 + x^2}$, $\sqrt{a^2 - x^2}$, and $\sqrt{x^2 - a^2}$ into integrals we can evaluate directly since they come from the reference right triangles in Figure 8.2.

With $x = a\tan\theta$,

$$a^2 + x^2 = a^2 + a^2\tan^2\theta = a^2(1 + \tan^2\theta) = a^2\sec^2\theta.$$

With $x = a\sin\theta$,

$$a^2 - x^2 = a^2 - a^2\sin^2\theta = a^2(1 - \sin^2\theta) = a^2\cos^2\theta.$$

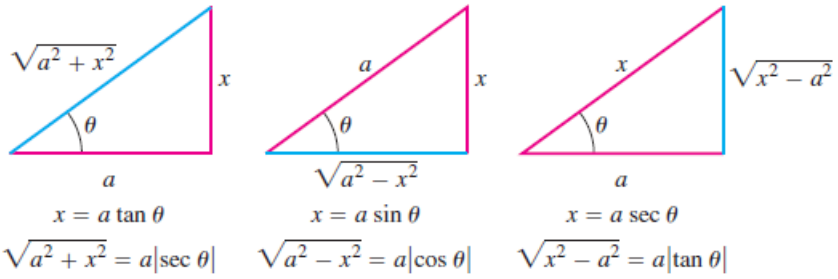


FIGURE Reference triangles for the three basic substitutions identifying the sides labeled x and a for each substitution.

EXAMPLE Evaluate

$$\int \frac{dx}{\sqrt{4 + x^2}}.$$

Solution We set

$$x = 2\tan\theta, \qquad dx = 2\sec^2\theta\, d\theta, \qquad -\frac{\pi}{2} < \theta < \frac{\pi}{2},$$

$$4 + x^2 = 4 + 4\tan^2\theta = 4(1 + \tan^2\theta) = 4\sec^2\theta.$$

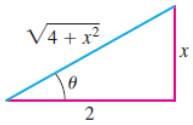


FIGURE Reference triangle for $x = 2\tan\theta$ (Example 1):

$$\tan\theta = \frac{x}{2}$$

and

$$\sec\theta = \frac{\sqrt{4+x^2}}{2}.$$

Then

$$\int \frac{dx}{\sqrt{4+x^2}} = \int \frac{2\sec^2\theta\,d\theta}{\sqrt{4\sec^2\theta}} = \int \frac{\sec^2\theta\,d\theta}{|\sec\theta|} \qquad \sqrt{\sec^2\theta} = |\sec\theta|$$

$$= \int \sec\theta\,d\theta \qquad \sec\theta > 0 \text{ for } -\frac{\pi}{2} < \theta < \frac{\pi}{2}$$

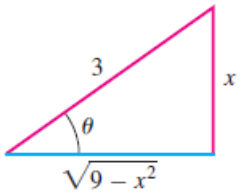
$$= \ln|\sec\theta + \tan\theta| + C$$

$$= \ln\left|\frac{\sqrt{4+x^2}}{2} + \frac{x}{2}\right| + C. \qquad \text{From Fig.}$$

EXAMPLE Evaluate

$$\int \frac{x^2\,dx}{\sqrt{9-x^2}}.$$

Sol



Solution We set

$$x = 3\sin\theta, \qquad dx = 3\cos\theta\,d\theta, \qquad -\frac{\pi}{2} < \theta < \frac{\pi}{2}$$

$$9 - x^2 = 9 - 9\sin^2\theta = 9(1 - \sin^2\theta) = 9\cos^2\theta.$$

Then

$$\int \frac{x^2\,dx}{\sqrt{9-x^2}} = \int \frac{9\sin^2\theta \cdot 3\cos\theta\,d\theta}{|3\cos\theta|}$$

$$= 9\int \sin^2\theta\,d\theta \qquad \cos\theta > 0 \text{ for } -\frac{\pi}{2} < \theta < \frac{\pi}{2}$$

$$= 9\int \frac{1-\cos 2\theta}{2}\,d\theta$$

$$= \frac{9}{2}\left(\theta - \frac{\sin 2\theta}{2}\right) + C$$

$$= \frac{9}{2}(\theta - \sin\theta\cos\theta) + C \qquad \sin 2\theta = 2\sin\theta\cos\theta$$

$$= \frac{9}{2}\left(\sin^{-1}\frac{x}{3} - \frac{x}{3}\cdot\frac{\sqrt{9-x^2}}{3}\right) + C$$

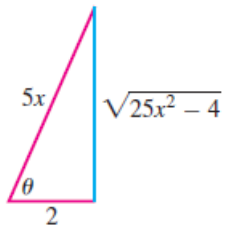
$$= \frac{9}{2}\sin^{-1}\frac{x}{3} - \frac{x}{2}\sqrt{9-x^2} + C. \qquad \blacksquare$$

EXAMPLE Evaluate

$$\int \frac{dx}{\sqrt{25x^2 - 4}}, \qquad x > \frac{2}{5}.$$

Solution We first rewrite the radical as

$$\sqrt{25x^2 - 4} = \sqrt{25\left(x^2 - \frac{4}{25}\right)}$$
$$= 5\sqrt{x^2 - \left(\frac{2}{5}\right)^2}$$



to put the radicand in the form $x^2 - a^2$. We then substitute

$$x = \frac{2}{5}\sec\theta, \qquad dx = \frac{2}{5}\sec\theta\tan\theta\, d\theta, \qquad 0 < \theta < \frac{\pi}{2}$$

$$x^2 - \left(\frac{2}{5}\right)^2 = \frac{4}{25}\sec^2\theta - \frac{4}{25}$$
$$= \frac{4}{25}(\sec^2\theta - 1) = \frac{4}{25}\tan^2\theta$$

$$\sqrt{x^2 - \left(\frac{2}{5}\right)^2} = \frac{2}{5}|\tan\theta| = \frac{2}{5}\tan\theta. \qquad \tan\theta > 0 \text{ for } 0 < \theta < \pi/2$$

With these substitutions, we have

$$\int \frac{dx}{\sqrt{25x^2 - 4}} = \int \frac{dx}{5\sqrt{x^2 - (4/25)}} = \int \frac{(2/5)\sec\theta\tan\theta\, d\theta}{5\cdot(2/5)\tan\theta}$$
$$= \frac{1}{5}\int \sec\theta\, d\theta = \frac{1}{5}\ln|\sec\theta + \tan\theta| + C$$
$$= \frac{1}{5}\ln\left|\frac{5x}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{25x^2 - 4}}{2}\right| + C.$$

Fig.

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2,5,7,15,18,21,29,36,40.