

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. The bracket 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 application requires the Structural Mechanics 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 7.1·10⁻⁴ kg·m², and the moment of inertia around the two transverse axes is $9.3 \cdot 10^{-4} \text{ kg} \cdot \text{m}^2$.

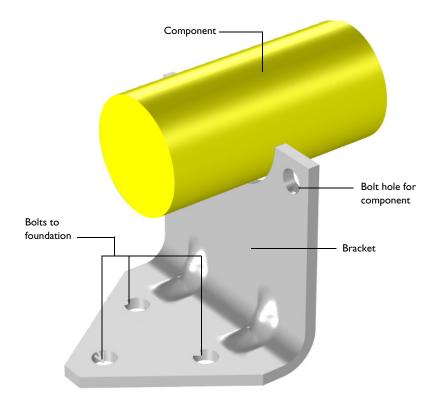


Figure 1: Bracket supporting a heavy component.

The idea is to reduce the weight by drilling holes in the vertical surface of the bracket, and at the same time change 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 (mm)	Upper limit (mm)
rC	Radius of the central hole	3	15
zCo	Vertical distance from the bend to the edge of the central hole	I	23

TABLE I: GEOMETRICAL PARAMETERS.

Parameter	Description	Lower limit (mm)	Upper limit (mm)
r0	Radius of the outer hole	3	15
z0o	Vertical distance from the bend to the edge of the outer hole	8	30
y0o	Horizontal distance from the edge of the bracket to outer hole	3	29
wInd	Width of the indentation	8	20

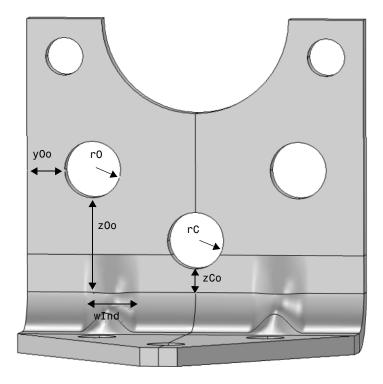


Figure 2: Optimization parameters.

CONSTRAINTS

- The lowest natural frequency must be at least 60 Hz.
- When exposed to a peak acceleration of 4g in all three global directions simultaneously, the equivalent stress is not allowed to exceed 80 MPa anywhere. This criterion is

- nondifferentiable, because the location of the peak stress can jump from one place to 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.

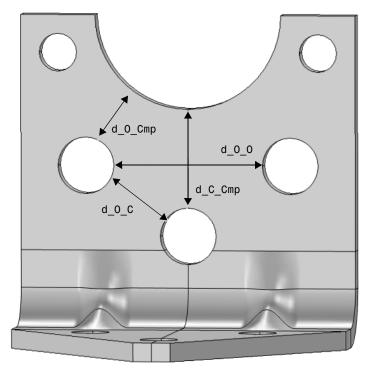


Figure 3: Geometrical constraints.

The COBYLA solver uses sampling in the control variable space to approximate both the objective function, the constraints, and the control variable bounds. Individual samples may be computed outside the bounds and in violation of the constraints. Therefore, it is important to parameterize the geometry in such a way that it is robust with respect to (small) constraint and bound violations.

Bounds and linear constraints are generally satisfied to high precision at the optimum point returned by the solver, but nonlinear constrains are often slightly violated. The reason is that the solver tends to converge from the outside of the feasible domain and terminates before the constraints are completely satisfied. Tightening the solver tolerances

will decrease the constraint violation but is often not worth the computational effort; it is better to specify constraints with a safety margin.

Results and Discussion

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

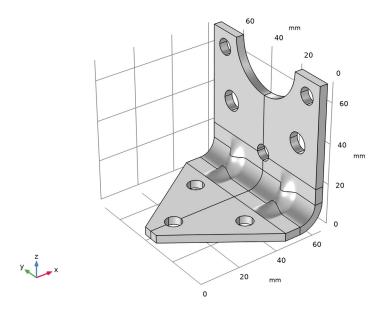


Figure 4: Initial geometry.

The optimal values of the geometrical parameters are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: OPTIMAL VALUES.

Parameter	Optimal value (mm)	Lower limit (mm)	Upper limit (mm)
rC	11.8	3	15
zCo	2.7	1	23
r0	9.0	3	15
z00	9.5	8	30
y0o	22.3	3	29
wInd	20	8	20

The weight of the optimized bracket is about 188 g, a reduction of 17 g from the original 205 g. The stresses from the shock load on the optimized geometry are shown in Figure 5

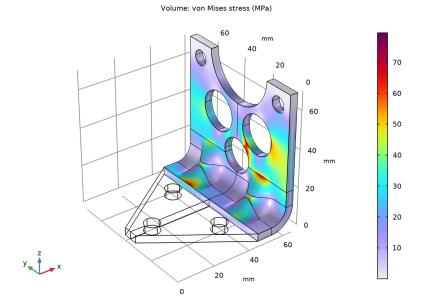


Figure 5: Stresses at peak load in the optimized design.

The optimal solution gives three fairly large holes, and the widest possible indentation.

There are several possible arrangements of the holes that give the same weight reduction within a small tolerance. It is therefore 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.

Application Library path: Optimization Module/Design Optimization/ multistudy_bracket_optimization

From the File menu, choose New.

NEW

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 General Studies>Eigenfrequency.
- 6 Click **Done**.

GLOBAL DEFINITIONS

Parameters 1

- I In the Model Builder window, under Global Definitions click Parameters I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Parameters, locate the Parameters section.
- 3 Click Load from File.
- **4** Browse to the model's Application Libraries folder and double-click the file multistudy bracket optimization parameters.txt.

GEOMETRY I

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) click Geometry I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Geometry, locate the Units section.
- 3 From the Length unit list, choose mm.
- 4 Locate the Advanced section. From the Geometry representation list, choose CAD kernel.
- 5 Select the Design Module Boolean operations check box.
 - The geometry sequence for the model (see Figure 1) is available in a file. If you want to create it from scratch yourself, you can follow the instructions in the Geometry Modeling Instructions section. Otherwise, insert the geometry sequence as follows:
- 6 In the Geometry toolbar, click Insert Sequence and choose Insert Sequence.
- **7** Browse to the model's Application Libraries folder and double-click the file multistudy_bracket_optimization_geom_sequence.mph.

8 In the Geometry toolbar, click **Build All**.

ADD MATERIAL

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

SOLID MECHANICS (SOLID)

Fixed (Bolts)

I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) right-click Solid Mechanics (solid) 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.

- 2 In the Settings window for Fixed Constraint, type Fixed (Bolts) in the Label text field.
- 3 Select Boundaries 10–13 and 15–22 only.

Rigid Connector (Mounted component)

- In 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.
- 2 In the Settings window for Rigid Connector, type Rigid Connector (Mounted component) in the Label text field.
- **3** Select Boundaries 48, 49, 52, 53, and 75–78 only.
- 4 Locate the Center of Rotation section. From the list, choose User defined.
- **5** Specify the \mathbf{X}_{c} vector as

1X-thk/2	x
1Y/2	у
1Z	z

Mass and Moment of Inertia I

- I In 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 1

- I In the Mesh toolbar, click A Boundary and choose Free Triangular.
- **2** Select Boundaries 4, 8, 26, 30, 35, 39, 41, 44, 60, and 64 only.

Size 1

- I Right-click Free Triangular I and choose Size.
- 2 In the Settings window for Size, locate the Element Size section.
- 3 From the Predefined list, choose Finer.
- **4** Select Boundaries 4, 8, 26, 30, 44, and 64 only.

Size 2

- I Right-click Size I and choose Duplicate.
- 2 In the Settings window for Size, locate the Element Size section.
- 3 From the Predefined list, choose Extra fine.
- 4 Locate the Geometric Entity Selection section. Click Clear Selection.
- 5 Select Boundaries 35, 39, 41, and 60 only.
- 6 Click Build Selected.

Swebt I

In the Mesh toolbar, click A Swept.

Distribution 1

- 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 3.
- 4 Click III Build All.

EIGENFREQUENCY STUDY

Run an eigenfrequency study on the initial geometry.

- 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 In the Home toolbar, click **Compute**.

SOLID MECHANICS (SOLID)

Add the peak loads, and perform a stationary study.

Body load 4g on bracket

- I In the Physics toolbar, click Domains and choose Body Load.
- 2 In the Settings window for Body Load, type Body load 4g 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}_{V} vector as

4*g_const*solid.rho	x
4*g_const*solid.rho	у
4*g_const*solid.rho	z

Rigid Connector (Mounted component)

In the Model Builder window, click Rigid Connector (Mounted component).

Force 4g on mounted component

- I In the Physics toolbar, click 💂 Attributes and choose Applied Force.
- 2 In the Settings window for Applied Force, type Force 4g on mounted component in the Label text field.
- **3** Locate the **Applied Force** section. Specify the \mathbf{F} vector as

4*g_const*mCmp	x
4*g_const*mCmp	у
4*g_const*mCmp	z

ADD STUDY

- I In the Home toolbar, click Add Study to open the Add Study window.
- 2 Go to the Add Study window.
- 3 Find the Studies subsection. In the Select Study tree, select General Studies>Stationary.

- 4 Click Add Study in the window toolbar.
- 5 In the Home toolbar, click Add Study to close the Add Study window.

STATIONARY STUDY

- 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 In the Home toolbar, click **Compute**.

DEFINITIONS

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

Stress Optimization Domain

- I In the **Definitions** toolbar, click **\(\bigcap_{\bigcap} \) Explicit**.
- 2 In the Settings window for Explicit, type Stress Optimization Domain in the Label text field.
- **3** Select Domains 3–10 only.

Domain Probe I (dom I)

- I In the Definitions toolbar, click Probes and choose Domain Probe.
- 2 In the Settings window for Domain Probe, type mass in the Variable name text field.
- **3** Locate the **Probe Type** section. From the **Type** list, choose **Integral**.
- 4 Click Replace Expression in the upper-right corner of the Expression section. From the menu, choose Component I (compl)>Solid Mechanics>Material properties>solid.rho -Density - kg/m³.

Domain Probe 2 (dom2)

- I In the **Definitions** toolbar, click **Probes** and choose **Domain Probe**.
- 2 In the Settings window for Domain Probe, type maxStress in the Variable name text field.
- 3 Locate the Probe Type section. From the Type list, choose Maximum.
- 4 Locate the Source Selection section. From the Selection list, choose Stress Optimization Domain.
- 5 Click Replace Expression in the upper-right corner of the Expression section. From the menu, choose Component I (compl)>Solid Mechanics>Stress>solid.mises von Mises stress - N/m2.

RESULTS

Modify the default stress plot to monitor the geometry and stresses in the optimized region.

Stress in Optimized Region

- I In the Model Builder window, under Results click Stress (solid).
- 2 In the Settings window for 3D Plot Group, type Stress in Optimized Region in the Label text field.

Volume 1

- I In the Model Builder window, expand the Stress in Optimized Region node, then click Volume I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Volume, locate the Expression section.
- 3 From the Unit list, choose MPa.

Deformation

- I In the Model Builder window, expand the Volume I node.
- 2 Right-click Results>Stress in Optimized Region>Volume I>Deformation and choose Delete.

Selection 1

- I In the Model Builder window, right-click Volume I and choose Selection.
- 2 In the Settings window for Selection, locate the Selection section.
- 3 From the Selection list, choose Stress Optimization Domain.
- 4 Click the **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

ROOT

Set up the optimization study.

ADD STUDY

- I In the Home toolbar, click Add Study to open the Add Study window.
- 2 Go to the Add Study window.
- 3 Find the Studies subsection. In the Select Study tree, select Empty Study.
- 4 Click Add Study in the window toolbar.
- 5 In the Home toolbar, click Add Study to close the Add Study window.

OPTIMIZATION STUDY

In the Settings window for Study, type Optimization Study in the Label text field.

Obtimization

In the **Study** toolbar, click optimization and choose **Optimization**.

Eigenfrequency

- I In the Study toolbar, click study Reference.
- 2 In the Settings window for Study Reference, type Eigenfrequency in the Label text field.
- 3 Locate the Study Reference section. From the Study reference list, choose Eigenfrequency Study.

Stationary

- I In the Study toolbar, click study Reference.
- 2 In the Settings window for Study Reference, type Stationary in the Label text field.
- 3 Locate the Study Reference section. From the Study reference list, choose Stationary Study.

Obtimization

- 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 COBYLA.
- **4** Find the **Solver settings** subsection. Clear the **Stop if error** check box.
- 5 Locate the Constraints section. Select the Enforce design constraints strictly check box.
- **6** Click **Replace Expression** in the upper-right corner of the **Objective Function** section. From the menu, choose Component I (compl)>Definitions>compl.mass -Domain Probe I - kg.
- 7 Locate the **Objective Function** section. In the table, enter the following settings:

Expression	Description	Evaluate for
comp1.mass	Bracket mass	Stationary

The first eigenfrequency is to be used in the optimization.

- 8 From the Solution list, choose Use first.
- 9 Locate the Control Variables and Parameters section. Click **Load from File**.
- 10 Browse to the model's Application Libraries folder and double-click the file multistudy bracket optimization ctrlvars.txt.

II Locate the **Constraints** section. In the table, enter the following settings:

Expression	Lower bound	Upper bound	Evaluate for
real(freq)	minFreq		Eigenfrequency
comp1.maxStress/ maxStressLimit		1	Stationary
d_O_Cmp	3[mm]		Eigenfrequency
d_C_Cmp	3[mm]		Eigenfrequency
d_0_C	3[mm]		Eigenfrequency
d_0_0	3[mm]		Eigenfrequency

12 Locate the Output While Solving section. Select the Plot check box.

13 From the Plot group list, choose Stress in Optimized Region.

If some configurations are not valid, the optimization procedure should still continue. The default is to stop if an error occurs.

Solution 3 (sol3)

- I In the Study toolbar, click Show Default Solver. Run the optimization.
- 2 Click **= Compute**.

RESULTS

On the last line of **Objective Table 3** you will find the optimal set of parameters, and the minimum weight. Note that the value in the **Objective** column can be colored orange if the solution violates a constraint slightly, but is still accepted within the tolerances.

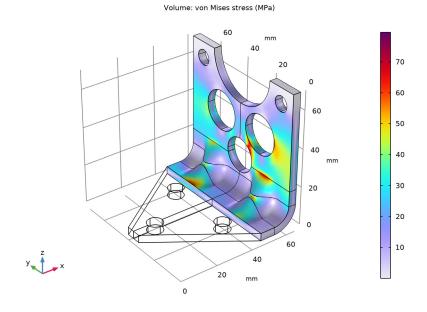
On the last line of Global Constraints Table 7 you will find the values of the natural frequency and maximum stress in the optimized configuration, as well as the values of the other constraints.

Examine the stress distribution in the optimized configuration.

Stress in Optimized Region

I In the Model Builder window, expand the Results>Tables node, then click Results> Stress in Optimized Region.

2 In the Stress in Optimized Region toolbar, click Plot.



Geometry Modeling Instructions

If you want to create the geometry yourself, follow these steps.

GLOBAL DEFINITIONS

Parameters 1

- I In the Model Builder window, under Global Definitions click Parameters I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Parameters, locate the Parameters section.
- 3 Click Load from File.
- **4** Browse to the model's Application Libraries folder and double-click the file multistudy_bracket_optimization_geom_sequence_parameters.txt.

GEOMETRY I

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) click Geometry I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Geometry, locate the Units section.
- 3 From the Length unit list, choose mm.
- 4 Locate the Advanced section. From the Geometry representation list, choose CAD kernel.

5 Select the Design Module Boolean operations check box.

Work Plane I (wbl)

- I In 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 1X-rOut.
- 5 Click Show Work Plane.

Work Plane I (wbl)>Parametric Curve I (bcl)

- I In the Work Plane toolbar, click * More Primitives and choose Parametric Curve.
- 2 In the Settings window for Parametric Curve, locate the Expressions section.
- 3 In the xw text field, type if ((abs(s-0.5) < wInd/lY), dInd/2*(1+cos(pi*lY/ if(wInd>4[mm],wInd,4[mm])*(s-0.5))),0).
- 4 In the yw text field, type s*1Y/2.
- 5 Click | Build Selected.

Work Plane I (wpl)>Copy I (copyl)

- I In the Work Plane toolbar, click 7 Transforms and choose Copy.
- 2 Select the object pcl only.
- 3 In the Settings window for Copy, locate the Displacement section.
- 4 In the xw text field, type thk.

Work Plane I (wpl)>Line Segment I (lsl)

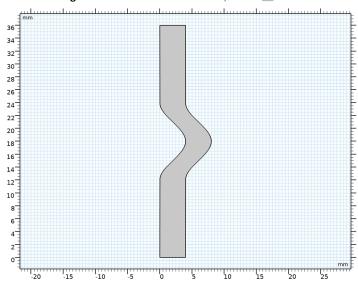
- I In the Work Plane toolbar, click * More Primitives and choose Line Segment.
- 2 In the Settings window for Line Segment, locate the Starting Point section.
- **3** From the **Specify** list, choose **Coordinates**.
- 4 Locate the Endpoint section. From the Specify list, choose Coordinates.
- 5 In the xw text field, type thk.

Work Plane I (wpI)>Copy 2 (copy2)

- I In the Work Plane toolbar, click \(\sum_{\text{transforms}} \) Transforms and choose Copy.
- 2 Select the object Is I only.
- 3 In the Settings window for Copy, locate the Displacement section.
- 4 In the yw text field, type 1Y/2.

Work Plane I (wp I)>Convert to Solid I (csoll)

- I In the Work Plane toolbar, click Conversions and choose Convert to Solid.
- 2 Click in the **Graphics** window and then press Ctrl+A to select all objects.
- 3 In the Settings window for Convert to Solid, click **Build Selected.**



Revolve I (rev1)

- I In the Model Builder window, right-click Geometry I and choose Revolve.
- 2 In the Settings window for Revolve, locate the Revolution Angles section.
- 3 Click the Angles button.
- 4 In the End angle text field, type 90.
- 5 Locate the Revolution Axis section. From the Axis type list, choose 3D.
- 6 Find the Point on the revolution axis subsection. In the x text field, type 1X-rout.
- 7 In the z text field, type rOut.
- 8 Find the Direction of revolution axis subsection. In the y text field, type -1.
- 9 Click **Build All Objects**.

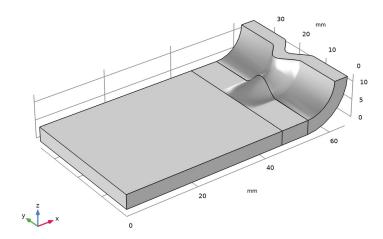
Block I (blk I)

- I In the Geometry toolbar, click **Block**.
- 2 In the Settings window for Block, locate the Size and Shape 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 **Build All Objects**.

Loft I (loft I)

- I In the Geometry toolbar, click **\(\sum_{\text{to}} \) 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. Find the Start profile subsection. Click to select the Activate Selection toggle button.
- 5 On the object rev1, select Boundary 1 only.
- 6 Click to expand the End Profile section. Find the End profile subsection. Click to select the Activate Selection toggle button.
- 7 On the object blk1, select Boundary 5 only.
- 8 Click Build All Objects.



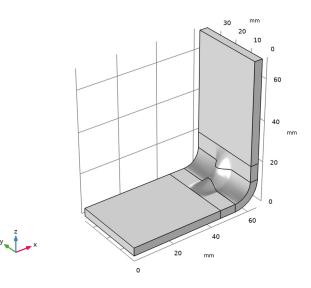
Mirror I (mir I)

- I In 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 x text field, type 1X-rOut.
- **6** In the **z** text field, type r0ut.
- 7 Locate the Normal Vector to Plane of Reflection section. In the x text field, type 1.
- 8 Click **Build All Objects**.

Block 2 (blk2)

- I In the Geometry toolbar, click Block.
- 2 In the Settings window for Block, locate the Size and Shape 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 1Z-rOut-2*thk.
- **6** Locate the **Position** section. In the **x** text field, type 1X-thk.
- 7 In the z text field, type r0ut+2*thk.
- 8 Click Build All Objects.



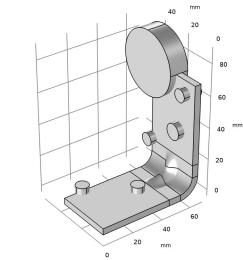
Cylinder I (cyll)

I In the **Geometry** toolbar, click **Cylinder** six times.

2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Size and Shape, Position, and Axis sections and type the following settings for the six newly created nodes.

Name	Radius	Height	x	у	Z	Axis type
Cylinder I	dCmp/2	3*thk	1X-2*thk	1Y/2	1Z	x-axis
Cylinder 2	bDia/2	3*thk	1X-2*thk	bDia	lZ-bDia	x-axis
Cylinder 3	bDia/2	3*thk	1X-rOut-2* thk-bDia	1Y/4	-thk	z-axis
Cylinder 4	bDia/2	3*thk	1.5*bDia	1Y/2	-thk	z-axis
Cylinder 5	r0	3*thk	1X-2*thk	y0	z0	x-axis
Cylinder 6	rC	3*thk	1X-2*thk	1Y/2	zC	x-axis

3 Right-click Geometry I and choose Build All Objects.

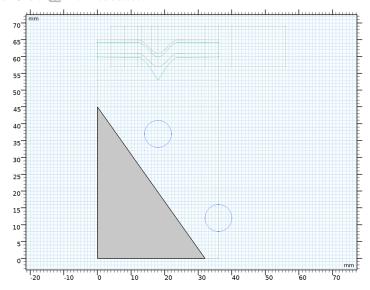


Work Plane 2 (wp2)

- I In 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.
- 5 Click Show Work Plane.

Work Plane 2 (wp2)>Polygon I (poll)

- I In the Work Plane toolbar, click / Polygon.
- 2 In the Settings window for Polygon, locate the Coordinates section.
- **3** From the **Data source** list, choose **Vectors**.
- 4 In the xw text field, type 0 1Y/2-bDia/2 1Y/2-bDia/2 0 0 0.
- 5 In the yw text field, type 0 0 0 1X-rOut-2*thk 1X-rOut-2*thk 0.
- 6 Click | Build Selected.



Extrude I (extI)

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Geometry I right-click Work Plane 2 (wp2) and choose Extrude.
- 2 In the Settings window for Extrude, locate the Distances section.
- **3** In the table, enter the following settings:

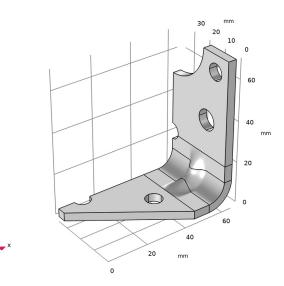
Distances (mm) 3*thk

4 Click **Parity** Build Selected.

Difference I (dif1)

- I In the Geometry toolbar, click Booleans and Partitions and choose Difference.
- 2 Select the objects blk1, blk2, loft1, mir1, and rev1 only.

- 3 In the Settings window for Difference, locate the Difference section.
- 4 Find the Objects to subtract subsection. Click to select the Activate Selection toggle button.
- 5 Select the objects cyl1, cyl2, cyl3, cyl4, cyl5, cyl6, and ext1 only.
- 6 Click **Build All Objects**.



Mirror 2 (mir2)

- I In 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 y text field, type 1Y/2.
- 5 Locate the Normal Vector to Plane of Reflection section. In the y text field, type 1.
- 6 In the z text field, type 0.
- **7** Select the object **difl** only.
- 8 Click **Build All Objects**.

9 Click the \frown **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

