## **EXPERIMENT MANUAL**

# MECHANICAL ENGINEERING ROBOTIC ARMS

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# **Safety Information**

**Warning!** Not suitable for children under 3 years. Choking hazard — small parts may be swallowed or inhaled. Strangulation hazard — long tubes may become wrapped around the neck.

Store the experiment material and assembled models out of the reach of small children.

Keep packaging and instructions as they contain important information.

## Dear Parents and Supervising Adults,

Before starting the experiments, read through the instruction manual together with your child and discuss the safety information. Check to make sure the models have been assembled correctly, and assist your child with the experiments. We hope you and your child have a lot of fun with the experiments!



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## Checklist: Find – Inspect – Check off

**You will also need:** scissors, ruler or measuring tape

~	No.	Description	Qty.	ltem No.		
Ο	1	120-degree 5-hole connector	3	7411-W10-A1S		
Ο	2	3-way circular adapter	2	7411-W10-B1S		
Ο	3	Crankshaft gear A	2	7411-W10-C1D		
Ο	4	Crankshaft gear B	2	7411-W10-C2D		
Ο	5	Pneumatic piston cylinder	1	7411-W85-A		
Ο	6	Pneumatic piston handle	1	7411-W10-D3D		
Ο	7	Gripper	4	7411-W10-G1D		
Ο	8	Suction cup	3	R12-25		
0	9	Rounded square frame, red	2	7411-W10-F1R		
0	10	Rounded short frame, red	12	7411-W10-E1R		
Ο	11	Pump	1	7389-W85-A1D		
Ο	12	Air tank bracket	1	7389-W10-B2D		
0	13	Airtank	1	7389-W11-A1B		
0	14	O-ring	1	R12-05		
<u> </u>	15	Switch	1	1155-W85-I4DN		
0	16	Tube, 1200 mm	1	1155-W85-120		
0	17	Small (S) security nut	1	1156-W10-J1D		
0	18	Tube, 20 mm	4	7400-W10-G2D		
<u> </u>	19	Short anchor pin, gray	25	7344-W10-C2S		
<u> </u>	20	Anchor pin, black	26	7061-W10-C1D		
0	21	Joint pin	13	1156-W10-A1D		
0	22	Shaft pin	2	7026-W10-J3S		
Ο	23	Small gear, red	2	7026-W10-D2R		
Ο	24	Medium gear, gray	2	7346-W10-C1S		
Ο	25	Extra large gear, red	1	7328-W10-G2R		
Ο	26	Worm gear	3	7344-W10-A1D		
Ο	27	Axlelock	7	3620-W10-A1D		
Ο	28	Small sprocket	1	3569-W10-D2D		
Ο	29	Motor axle	3	7026-W10-L1D		

~	No.	Description	Qty.	Item No.		
Ο	30	35-mm axle	1	7413-W10-O1D		
Ο	31	70-mm axle	2	7061-W10-Q1D		
Ο	32	100-mm axle	4	7413-W10-L2D		
Ο	33	150-mm axle	2	7026-W10-P1D		
Ο	34	1-hole connector	5	7430-W10-B1D		
Ο	35	Curved rod	2	7061-W10-V1D		
Ο	36	3-hole rod	1	7026-W10-Q2D		
Ο	37	3-hole cross rod, black	4	7026-W10-X1D		
Ο	38	3-hole dual rod, black	2	7061-W10-R1D		
Ο	39	3-hole bolt rod, black	1	7406-W10-B1D		
Ο	40	5-hole L rod	1	7406-W10-B2D		
Ο	41	5-hole rod	4	7413-W10-K2D		
Ο	42	5-hole cross rod	1	7413-W10-K3D		
Ο	43	5-hole dual rod C, black	2	7026-W10-S3D		
Ο	44	5-hole dual rod B, black	2	7026-W10-S2D		
Ο	45	3-hole wide rounded rod	2	7404-W10-C1D		
Ο	46	7-hole wide rounded rod	2	7404-W10-C2D		
Ο	47	7-hole flat rounded rod	2	7404-W10-C3D		
Ο	48	9-hole rod	2	7407-W10-C1D		
Ο	49	9-hole cross rod	2	7407-W10-C2D		
Ο	50	11-hole rod	3	7413-W10-P1D		
Ο	51	15-hole dual rod	5	7413-W10-H1D		
Ο	52	Square frame	1	7026-W10-T2D		
Ο	53	Crank	2	7063-W10-B1S1		
O	54	Anchor pin lever	1	7061-W10-B1Y		
Ο	55	Long button pin	16	7061-W10-W2TR		
Ο	56	Die-cut plastic sheet	1	K41#7411		
Ο	57	Tube bolt cap	3	7409-W10-F2D		

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 $\bigcirc$   $\bigcirc$   $\bigcirc$ 

easy

At the top of each model assembly page, you will find a red bar: >>> It shows how difficult the model's assembly will be:  $\bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc$  $\bigcirc$   $\bigcirc$   $\bigcirc$ 

medium

hard

#### >>> TIPS AND PREPARATIONS

# Making the test objects

You can make these objects and use them to test your robotic arms. Trying picking these objects up with each robotic arm.



#### Cutting the tube to length

You must cut the 1200-mm tube into these lengths. The specific lengths needed for each model are indicated in the assembly instructions for each model. You can also write the lengths on the tubes with a pen so they are easier to tell apart.



#### Tips for operating the pump

To operate all the models, you must pump up the air tank. Always set the switch lever to the center position before pumping, so the air pressure builds up in the tank. Pump the air pump 30-40 times. To operate the models, move the switch lever to one side or the other. For some models, it is easier if you remove the pump and air tank first and then reattach them to operate the model. Pumping 30 times can operate model 10–15 times. The carbon rod inside the pump can withstand the maximum bending force of 4 kg. (8.8 lb.).



#### >>> USING THE ROBOTIC ARMS

#### General instructions for using the pneumatic system

After following the step-by-step instructions to build one of the models (starting on page 6), follow these general instructions to operate the pneumatic system in the model. Each model works a little differently. There are specific instructions for using each model at the end of each set of assembly instructions. See page 25 for an explanation of how the pneumatic system works.



Put the switch lever in the center position.



Pump about 30 times to fill the air tank.



Depending on the model, you will need to push or pull the switch lever to operate the device in one direction.



For example, here the gripper closes when you pull the lever.



Again, depending on the model, you will need to push or pull the switch lever to operate the device in the other direction.



In this example, the gripper opens when you push the lever.

# What Is a Robotic Arm?

A robotic arm is a machine that may look and function somewhat like a human arm, but is able to perform tasks with greater strength, accuracy, and speed, or perform tasks that are too dangerous for a human. Robotic arms are one of the most common types of robots used in manufacturing.

A robotic arm is a combination of mechanical, electrical, and computer systems. This kit focuses on the mechanical portion of designing robotic arms, which is the expertise of mechanical engineers. Engineers apply physical laws and empirical knowledge to build complex systems. Empirical knowledge is simply information you learn by observing the results of experiments and observing occurrences in the world around you. Mechanical engineers focus on the design, construction, and operation of machines.





## WHAT IS DESIGN

Engineers often use the word "design" to describe what they do. Design is a sequence of steps that are used to take an idea from concept to functioning product or process. The engineering design process is iterative, meaning steps can be repeated multiple times and then improvements can be made each time, until the correct or optimal outcome is achieved.





**Pivoting Robotic Arm** 





**Pivoting Robotic Arm** 



## **PIVOTING ROBOTIC ARM**



#### **HOW TO USE**



Put the switch lever in the center position.



Pump about 30 times to fill the air tank.



The gripper will close when you pull the switch lever.





Rotate the handle to move the gripper.



The gripper will open when you push the switch lever.



two different paths. What positions can the

pivoting robotic arm not reach?

#### **CHECK IT OUT**

#### **LINKS AND JOINTS**

In engineering, it is often necessary to create simplified models of structures or systems in order to better understand their physical characteristics or behaviors. When simplifying a robotic arm to better understand it, the mechanical parts can be thought of as either links or joints. Links are the rigid structural elements of the robotic arm. In this kit, this includes the frames and rods. The joints are the pieces that allow for movement, such as the joint pins, axles, gears, and pistons in this kit. Joints allow a link to move by either rotation or translation (moving from one point in space to another).



**MOVEMENT THROUGH SPACE** 

Unlike a human arm, a robotic arm can have a lot more freedom to move through space in different ways. The movement of a robotic arm can be described by the term "degrees of freedom." The position and orientation of an object in space can be given by three components of movement in the x, y, and z directions, and three components of rotation around those axes. For a single object in space, there are at most six degrees of freedom.

Each joint in a robotic arm has a certain number of degrees of freedom, which might be less than the maximum number of six. For example, not all of the pivoting robotic arm's joints can rotate 360 degrees.

Together, links and joints form what is called a kinematic chain. The word "kinematic" refers to how objects move. In a robotic arm, the links in the kinematic chain are constrained by their connection points to the other links — like how your elbow is constrained by the range of motion of your shoulder. To understand how a robotic arm can move as a whole, you can look about how each element in the kinematic chain can move.

Often the end of the robotic arm, called the end effector, is designed separately from the rest of the arm. It is designed to interact with objects in its environment, like a human hand, but for specialized tasks such as welding, gripping, spinning, applying materials, and so on.



The area defined by all of the positions in space that the end of the robotic arm can reach is known as the workspace. If the object that the robotic arm needs to pick up is not in the workspace, the robot cannot pick it up! The workspace depends on the degrees of freedom, limitations of the joints, lengths of the linkages, and the angles at which the object must be picked up.











**CHECK IT OUT** 



# **Forces and Moments**

Understanding how forces and moments influence a robotic arm is critical for its design, because a mistake in these calculations could cause the robotic arm to break.



#### MOMENT

A force tends to cause an object to move, but depending on where the force is applied on an object, the force can also cause an object to rotate. For example, if you push on the end of wrench, the force of your push causes it to turn. How much a force causes an object to rotate is measured by its moment. A moment depends on how far the force is from the axis of rotation and how big of a force is applied. This can be written as the formula:

#### $M = F \times d$

You can increase the moment by increasing the force or the distance from the axis on which the force is exerted. You felt this in Experiment 2 when you stretched your arm out with the grabber robotic arm.





#### ACCELERATION

To understand force, you must first understand acceleration. Acceleration is a measure of how much the velocity of an object is changing. For example, a car is accelerating when it speeds up, slows down, or changes direction.



#### FORCE

A force can simply be thought of as a push or pull. A force is equal to the mass of the object multiplied by its acceleration. This is summarized by the formula:

 $F = m \times a$ .

Each linkage and joint in a robotic arm has a weight, which is a force that points downward towards the Earth. A robotic arm must not only be able to support the weight of the arm itself, but also the weight of what the robot arm will carry. The maximum weight that a robot can lift is called the <mark>carrying capacity.</mark>

## ARM SAGGING

Arm sagging occurs when the robotic arm is too long and heavy, causing it to bend when it is stretched out. This is undesirable. You want your robotic arm to be as rigid and light as possible. This can be overcome partially by positioning the heaviest components as close to the base of the robotic arm as possible.



**Robotic Claw** 





#### **Robotic Claw**









#### **EXPERIMENT 3**

# **Pneumatic strength**

#### **HERE'S HOW**

Instead of the normal 30 pumps to fill the air tank, use only 15 pumps. Then try to pick up one of the cylinders. Repeat this

experiment using 30 pumps and then 40 pumps. Compare the speed and strength of the grabber each time.



#### **HOW TO USE**









The upper handle controls the upper linkage.



The lower handle controls the lower linkage.

center position.







The gripper will open when the switch lever is up.





**Pneumatics** 

CHECK IT OUT



# **Pneumatics**

In a machine, the parts that are responsible for moving or controlling a mechanism are called **actuators.** The robotic arms in this kit use mechanical parts (gears and axles) to move the robotic arm and a piston to open and close the gripper. The tubes, piston, pump, and air tank together are known as a **pneumatic system**.





LOW PRESSURE

HIGH PRESSURE



Air is a gas consisting of many very small molecules that are constantly moving in all directions. When these molecules bump against an object they push against it. **Pressure** is a measure of how hard and how often these gas molecules are pushing on an area. In physics, pressure is a force over an area and has units of pounds per square inch (psi), Pascal, or Bar.

When you pump the pump handle, you are pushing air from the atmosphere into the air tank. Because there are now more air molecules bouncing around inside the air tank, the pressure inside the air tank has increased.
When the switch is opened, it releases the pressurized air from the tank. The pressurized air travets through the tube into the piston. The pressure in the piston then increases, pushing the piston rod outward.
When the switch is pushed to the third position, the air is released from the piston, pulling the piston rod inward.



Most industrial robotic arms use electric motors because they are usually cheaper than pneumatic systems and provide faster and more precise control over movement. However, pneumatic actuators are stronger and advantageous in applications where an electrical spark could start a fire.









**Robotic Hand** 





#### **Robotic Hand**





#### **EXPERIMENT 4**

# **Coming in handy**

#### **HERE'S HOW**

If you wear an oversized sweater or sweatshirt with large sleeves, you can slide the robotic hand up your sleeve so that only the hand is outside the sleeve. Operate the trigger inside the sleeve. Now try to pick up various objects. Can you pick up some items and not others?

#### **HOW TO USE**



Put the switch lever in the center position.





Pump about 30 times.



The gripper will close when you pull the switch lever.



The gripper will open when you push the switch lever.



**CHECK IT OUT** 

# **Robotic Exoskeletons**

What you have learned about robotic arms can also be applied to the design of robotic exoskeletons. An exoskeleton is a wearable mobile machine that is used to increase limb strength and endurance. Exoskeletons could be used in the medical field to improve people's quality of life or to make tasks easier and safer. They could also be used in industrial or commercial applications — wherever increased strength would come in handy. However, currently there are several challenges to creating viable exoskeletons.

#### ACTUATORS

Just as is true of the materials needed to build an exoskeleton, the actuators that are needed must be lightweight and powerful, but they must also be precise in their movements. You have seen from the robotic arm models how you are not able to easily control the degree with which the grabber closes. One possibility to overcome this is through the use of pneumatic artificial muscles. Pneumatic artificial muscles are pressurized air bladders that are able to contract and shorten, or relax and lengthen, mimicking the action of real muscles.

> A boy uses a robotic machine for walking therapy.

Robotic exoskeleton legs could help you lift heavier objects.

#### MATERIALS

The materials needed to build an exoskeleton require tradeoffs between strength, weight, and cost. The materials used must be strong enough so that they do not fail or break easily but also need to light to reduce the power needed to move the exoskeleton. However, the use of lighter and stronger materials, such as titanium or carbon-fiber, can be more expensive and require more complex construction and manufacturing methods.

This robotic

exoskeleton

helps the woman

move her

leas.

#### POWER

Another challenge is that there are currently few power sources that have enough energy to power an exoskeleton for more than a few hours. Non-rechargeable batteries have more energy but require transporting, storing, and replacement. On the other hand, rechargeable batteries require a system to recharge the battery. Most current prototype exoskeletons are tethered to a separate power source, which may be sufficient if the exoskeleton is used in a limited range, such as a home or factory. However, this would not work if the exoskeleton is required to go to locations that do not have access to a power source.









**Exoskeleton Legs** 





