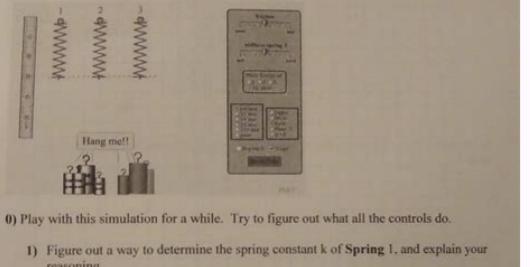


**Continue**



**Masses and Springs**  
 This is a "virtual lab". We will do an experiment using software which can be found at <http://phet.colorado.edu>.  
 Find the "Mass and Springs" and run it. You should see this:



6) Play with this simulation for a while. Try to figure out what all the controls do.  
 7) Figure out a way to determine the spring constant k of Spring 1, and explain your reasoning.

Note: Recall that the spring constant k is defined by Hooke's Law  $F = -kx$ .  
 where F is the force and x is the displacement of the spring from equilibrium. By right-clicking with the mouse, The rate can be measured by left-clicking and drag.

2) Make a graph of stretch x vs. mass m. Use the graph paper on next page! How could the spring constant k be determined from this graph?

### PhET Online Teachers    [More lessons](#)

#### Time for students

- 1) To start the lab, students will need to move the masses using the buttons in the right control panel.
- 2) Try to figure out the effect of the different masses. The rates are designated by the teacher in a previous lesson or video, students will approximate the spring rate constants.
- 3) This part of the lab can then be done by clicking the analysis tab.

#### Important modeling notes, simplifications

- 1) This simulation does not take into account forces between masses, like friction and charge repulsion. motion is based on individual masses. In phase motion is approximated. For instance, if one mass is above the other, the other mass will move up and down. If the two masses are the same, they will move together.
- 2) This simulation gives the different rates.
- 3) The spring constant has no utility to be realistic, the first constants are used for repulsion. Force is held constant. Potential energy changes.
- 4) The simulation makes the assumption that the more complex system appears to be more difficult to analyze, but changing the size of the more complex system appears to be more difficult to analyze.
- 5) The **One-Dimensional** simulation only the rotational inertia effects of oscillations in a very over-simplified setting, no translational motion is shown.
- 6) The **Simple** case of individual oscillators such as molecules or a single ion does not simplify setting to fully simulate forces on the motion changes, but the motion does fit correctly.
- 7) This **Three-dimensional** is meant to show a more realistic view of liquid water, but the motion does not fit correctly. It is not yet fully implemented.
- 8) The **Collective** is the most realistic, but the simulation that vibration within the molecule is not shown.

#### Important notes about use / thinking

- 1) Students are likely to be surprised that the masses have a variety of frequencies and amplitudes. The simulation does not consider off-center changes in mass differently.
- 2) Encourage the second tab (squares) in the current design principles for an effective and meaningful learning environment.

#### Preparations for the lab

- 1) For more information, work with your students on [Guidelines for Inquiry Collaborative and Open-Ended Learning](#).
- 2) The simulations have been used successfully with elementary, secondary, college students, or for advanced first year for introductory mechanics, including kinematics, mechanics of systems, or could also be informative demonstrations, or with advanced higher questions. To read more, see [Guidelines for Inquiry Collaborative and Open-Ended Learning](#).
- 3) For activities and lesson plans written by the PhET team and other teachers, see [Teacher Ideas](#).
- 4) Activities and [Lessons](#) introduce materials designed as a guide to preparation and practice. [Guidelines](#) provide many suggestions and conceptual approaches for ideal goals.

Author: C. Anderson and P. Dierckx last modified July 2011

Physics Online Lab- masses and springs   Name: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_  
<http://www.colorado.edu/physics/phet/simulations/massspringlab/MassSpringLab2.swf>

Background information:

- 1) list all the things you can manipulate and measure in this lab;
- 2) Carefully hang a 50 gram mass on the first spring and wait for it to stop bouncing. Measure the distance it is from equilibrium and record on your data table.
- 3) Lift the mass to the equilibrium height and release. Use the stopwatch to determine the time for 5 oscillations. Divide this number by 5 and record on your data table.
- 4) Repeat the previous steps with all the different masses and record on your data table.
- 5) Do all three springs have the same spring constant? How do you know?

Mass	Force (N)	X (m)	"T"	P.E.
50 grams				
100 grams				
250 grams				
Red=				
Green=				
Gold=				

- 6) Make a graph showing force vs. stretch (use entire graph paper and label correctly).
- 7) Find the slope of the graph and record here with units: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) This slope represents what variable of a spring? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Go back to your table and calculate the mass of the unknowns (Red, Green, Gold)
- 10) Go back to your table and calculate the potential energy of each trial.
- 11) Right now, the stiffness (k) of the spring is on level 5 of 10. Using the GREEN mass on spring 3, determine the value of the spring constant for as many settings as you can by adjusting the spring level. Please show all work below.

Project Name	Description
Project A	Project A Description
Project B	Project B Description
Project C	Project C Description
Project D	Project D Description
Project E	Project E Description
Project F	Project F Description
Project G	Project G Description
Project H	Project H Description
Project I	Project I Description
Project J	Project J Description
Project K	Project K Description
Project L	Project L Description
Project M	Project M Description
Project N	Project N Description
Project O	Project O Description
Project P	Project P Description
Project Q	Project Q Description
Project R	Project R Description
Project S	Project S Description
Project T	Project T Description
Project U	Project U Description
Project V	Project V Description
Project W	Project W Description
Project X	Project X Description
Project Y	Project Y Description
Project Z	Project Z Description

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