

A Critical Review of Friction Mechanisms and Applications

Prof. Sathe Pooja R. ¹, Bankar Diya S. ², Bankar Aditya N. ³, Balme Shubham D. ⁴,
Bangariya Omkar S. ⁵, Bangar Jaydatta R. ⁶

¹(Civil Engineering Department , SPPU/
Adsul's Technical Campus, Maharashtra, India.

Email: poojasathe55@gmail.com)

² (FE Engineering Department , SPPU/
Adsul's Technical Campus, Maharashtra, India.

Email: diyabankar43@gmail.com)

Abstract:

Friction is a common physical phenomenon that occurs when two surfaces move against each other. It plays an important role in machines, vehicles, manufacturing systems, and daily life. Friction can be useful for walking, braking, and gripping, but excessive friction causes wear, heat generation, and energy loss. This paper presents a simple review of friction, its types, influencing factors, lubrication methods, and engineering applications. It also explains the importance of controlling friction for improved machine efficiency and longer service life.

Keywords: Friction, Wear, Lubrication, Tribology, Surface Contact, Engineering

1. Introduction

Friction is the resistance force that opposes motion between two contacting surfaces. It is present in almost every mechanical system such as engines, bearings, brakes, gears, and conveyors. Without friction, people cannot walk and vehicles cannot stop. However, too much friction can reduce efficiency and damage machine parts.

Engineers study friction under the subject of **Tribology**, which includes friction, wear, and lubrication. Understanding friction helps in designing efficient and reliable machines.

1) Image: Basic Friction between Surfaces



2. Types of Friction

Friction can be classified into four main types:

2) 2.1 Static Friction

It acts when an object is at rest and prevents motion.

3) 2.2 Sliding Friction

It occurs when one surface slides over another.

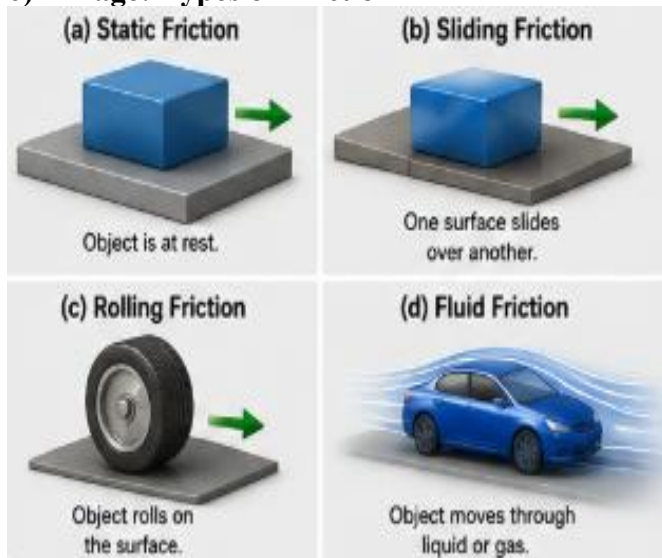
4) 2.3 Rolling Friction

It acts when an object rolls on a surface, such as wheels.

5) 2.4 Fluid Friction

It occurs when an object moves through liquids or gases.

6) Image: Types of Friction



3. Laws of Friction

The classical laws of friction state:

1. Friction force is proportional to normal load.
2. Friction depends on the material of surfaces.
3. Friction is nearly independent of contact area.

Formula:

$$F = \mu N$$

Where:

- **F** = Friction force
- **μ** = Coefficient of friction
- **N** = Normal reaction force

4. Factors Affecting Friction

Many factors influence friction:

4.1 Surface Roughness

Rough surfaces create more resistance.

4.2 Load

Higher load increases contact pressure and friction.

4.3 Material Type

Metal, rubber, plastic, and ceramic surfaces behave differently.

4.4 Temperature

High temperature may soften materials and change friction.

4.5 Lubrication

Oil or grease reduces direct surface contact.

Image: Rough vs Smooth Surface

Rough Surface: $\wedge\wedge\wedge\wedge$

Smooth Surface: -----



Surface Roughness
Rough surfaces create more friction.

5. Friction and

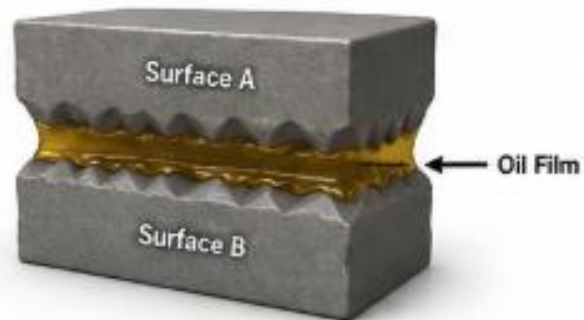
Lubrication

Lubrication is used to reduce friction and wear. Lubricants form a thin layer between moving parts.

Types of Lubrication:

1. **Hydrodynamic Lubrication** – Full oil film separates surfaces.
2. **Boundary Lubrication** – Thin protective layer on surfaces.
3. **Mixed Lubrication** – Combination of both.

Image: Lubricated Contact



Benefits of Lubrication:

- Reduces friction
- Prevents wear
- Reduces heat
- Increases machine life
- Saves energy

6. Engineering Applications of Friction

Friction is important in many industries:

6.1 Automobile Industry

Used in brakes, clutch plates, tires, engines.

6.2 Manufacturing

Important in metal cutting, grinding, forming.

6.3 Power Plants

Bearings and turbines need friction control.

6.4 Biomedical Engineering

Artificial joints require low friction surfaces.

6.5 Electronics and MEMS

Miniature moving parts require precision friction control.

7. Advantages and Disadvantages of Friction

Advantages:

- Helps walking
- Allows gripping
- Enables braking
- Power transmission through belts

Disadvantages:

- Causes wear
- Produces heat
- Reduces efficiency
- Increases maintenance cost

8. Future Scope

Modern research focuses on:

- Nano-lubricants
- Self-lubricating materials
- Smart coatings
- Low friction surfaces
- AI-based condition monitoring

9. Conclusion

Friction is an essential engineering phenomenon. It can be both useful and harmful depending on application. Proper understanding of friction, wear, and lubrication helps in improving efficiency, reducing maintenance cost, and increasing machine life. Future developments in tribology will support energy-saving and sustainable technologies.

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