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This illustrates a fundamental relationship between mathematics and physics: many physical problems may have the same mathematical model.

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Then u(t) is related to the forces acting on the mass through Newton's law of motion mu''(t) = f(t), where u'' is the acceleration of the mass and f is the net force acting on the mass. We study the motion of the mass when it is acted on by an external force or is initially displaced. Let u(t), measured positive downward, denote the displacement of the mass from its equilibrium position at time t. See figure below.



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- Damping: The damping or resistive force F<sub>d</sub> always acts in the direction opposite to the direction of motion of the mass. F<sub>d</sub> = -γu'(t). This force may arise from several sources: resistance from the air or other medium in which the mass moves, internal energy dissipation due to the extension or compression of the spring, friction between the mass and the guides (if any) etc.

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- External forces: An applied external force F(t). This could be a force due to the motion of the mount to which the spring is attached, or it could be a force applied directly to the mass. Often the external force. is periodic.

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we specify two initial conditions, namely, the initial position  $u_0$  and the initial velocity  $v_0$  of the mass:

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damping coefficient:  $\gamma = \frac{F_d}{u'}$ ,

spring constant:  $k = \frac{mg}{L}$ .

A mass weighing 4 lb stretches a spring 2 in. Suppose that the mass is given an additional 6 in displacement in the positive direction and then released. The mass is in a medium that exerts a viscous resistance of 6 lb when the mass has a velocity of 3 ft/s. Under the assumptions discussed in this section, formulate the initial value problem that governs the motion of the mass.

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