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Abstract	In this paper, we deal particular, we review or a secant-like equati the proposed precondi structure of the precor The low-rank updates to embed <i>damped tecl</i> methods have proved where the Wolfe lines damped methods also results, which summar reported, showing that per style, this chapter	with matrix-free preconditioners for nonlinear conjugate gradient (NCG) methods. In proposals based on quasi-Newton updates, and either satisfying the secant equation on at some of the previous iterates. Conditions are given proving that, in some sense, itioners also approximate the inverse of the Hessian matrix. In particular, the additioners depends both on low-rank updates along with some specific parameters. are obtained as by-product of NCG iterations. Moreover, we consider the possibility <i>uniques</i> within a class of preconditioners based on quasi-Newton updates. Damped to be effective to enhance the performance of quasi-Newton updates, in those cases earch conditions are hardly fulfilled. The purpose is to extend the idea behind to improve NCG schemes, following a novel line of research in the literature. The rize an extended numerical experience using large-scale CUTEst problems, is t these approaches can considerably improve the performance of NCG methods.As requires Keywords. Please provide keywords.	

### **Quasi-Newton-Based Preconditioning and Damped Quasi-Newton Schemes for Nonlinear Conjugate Gradient Methods**



Mehiddin Al-Baali, Andrea Caliciotti, Giovanni Fasano and Massimo Roma

Abstract In this paper, we deal with matrix-free preconditioners for nonlinear 1 conjugate gradient (NCG) methods. In particular, we review proposals based on 2 quasi-Newton updates, and either satisfying the secant equation or a secant-like 3 equation at some of the previous iterates. Conditions are given proving that, in some Δ sense, the proposed preconditioners also approximate the inverse of the Hessian 5 matrix. In particular, the structure of the preconditioners depends both on low-rank 6 updates along with some specific parameters. The low-rank updates are obtained 7 as by-product of NCG iterations. Moreover, we consider the possibility to embed 8 damped techniques within a class of preconditioners based on quasi-Newton updates. 9 Damped methods have proved to be effective to enhance the performance of quasi-10 Newton updates, in those cases where the Wolfe linesearch conditions are hardly 11 fulfilled. The purpose is to extend the idea behind damped methods also to improve 12 NCG schemes, following a novel line of research in the literature. The results, which 13 summarize an extended numerical experience using large-scale CUTEst problems, is 14 reported, showing that these approaches can considerably improve the performance 15 of NCG methods. As per style, this chapter requires Keywords. Please provide key-16 words. 17

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#### 1 Introduction

<sup>19</sup> Several iterative methods were proposed in the literature, for the solution of the

<sup>20</sup> large-scale unconstrained optimization problem  $\min_{x \in \mathbb{R}^n} f(x)$ , where  $f : \mathbb{R}^n \to \mathbb{R}$ <sup>21</sup> (see, e.g., [1–6]). Among them, the nonlinear conjugate gradient (NCG) along with <sup>22</sup> quasi-Newton methods is undoubtedly the most commonly used. Indeed, they both <sup>23</sup> prove to be actually effective in practice and are endowed with a mature theory, <sup>24</sup> including strong convergence properties.

On this purpose, let us first consider a general iterative preconditioned nonlinear conjugate gradient (PNCG) method, which generates a sequence of iterates  $\{x_k\}$ . Essentially, three choices at current step *k* strongly affect both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the overall method. The first choice refers to the adopted *linesearch procedure*, along with the selected steplength  $\alpha_k > 0$  used to give the next iterate  $x_{k+1}$ , being

$$x_{k+1} = x_k + \alpha_k p_k,$$

where  $p_k$  is the search direction. The second choice refers to the selection of the parameter  $\beta_k$ , which is responsible for the computation of the next search direction, being

$$p_{k+1} = -g_{k+1} + \beta_k p_k,$$

where  $p_1 = -g_1$  and  $g_k$  denotes  $\nabla f(x_k)$ . In the case where the function f(x) is non-

quadratic, different expressions for the parameter  $\beta_k$  in the latter formula may yield 26 significantly different (preconditioned) NCG schemes. In particular, among the first 27 classic choices in the literature for the parameter  $\beta$ , we have the proposals by Fletcher 28 and Reeves (FR) [7], Polak and Ribière (PR) [8], Hestenes and Stiefel (HS) [9]. More 29 modern and efficient schemes have also been studied. In particular, we urge to men-30 tion the proposals in the seminal papers [10] and [3, 4], since they raised novel ideas 31 which have inspired several advances in the last decade. Recently, Neculai (see [11] and 32 therein references) reported an efficient version of the NCG method, which promises 33 to outperform the proposal in [4]. This gives room to further improvements in the lat-34 est literature (see also [5]), where some appealing properties of L-BFGS update are 35 exploited in the context of NCG, with the purpose of improving efficiency. The latter 36 research area has also partially inspired the results reported in the current paper. 37

The third proper choice for the symmetric positive definite preconditioner  $M_{k+1} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$  often plays a keynote role for the computation of  $p_{k+1}$ , being

$$p_{k+1} = -M_{k+1}g_{k+1} + \beta_k p_k,$$

where  $\beta_k$  may depend on  $M_k$  and  $M_{k+1}$  and  $p_1 = -M_1g_1$ . Of course, the latter three choices are not independent. Indeed, an inaccurate linesearch procedure turns to be harmful and may require a large number of function and gradient evaluations. Similarly, a careless choice of the preconditioner risks to possibly destroy both convergence properties and numerical performance of the PNCG. These observations impose a specific attention before selecting a preconditioner.



**Author Proof** 

In the first part of this paper, we review some preconditioners for NCG, which are based on the satisfaction of a *secant-based* equation (see [12-14] for details). Our 45 main purpose here is to show that imposing the satisfaction of the secant condition 46 surely represents an important guideline to gain second-order information about the 47 objective function. However, on highly nonlinear functions, when the distance among 48 the last iterates increases, the satisfaction of the secant equation at any iterate might <u>1</u>0 represent a tight request, which does not necessarily enhance the information on 50 second-order information. On the contrary, in [12] the approximation of an average 51 Hessian matrix is built by using an initial guess suggested by the quadratic case. 52 Then, the initial guess is refined imposing some *secant-like* conditions, which are 53 used to set accordingly some parameters. 54

We remark that the preconditioners are iteratively constructed and based on satis-55 fying either the secant or a modified secant equation and partially recover the structure 56 of quasi-Newton updates. On the overall, our proposals for preconditioners comply 57 with the next specifications: 58

 do not rely on the structure of the minimization problem in hand; 59

• are matrix-free, and hence, they are naturally conceived for large-scale problems; 60

• are built drawing inspiration from quasi-Newton schemes; 61

• convey information from previous iterations of the PNCG method. 62

We urge to recall that the idea of using a quasi-Newton update as a possible precon-63 ditioner, within the NCG algorithms, is not new; examples of such an approach can 64 be found for instance in [15, 16] or in the more recent proposal [17]. In particular, 65 the efficient framework in [17] explicitly exploits the relation between the conjugate 66 gradient method and BFGS quasi-Newton approach, in the quadratic case. 67

In the second part of the paper, we show how to combine damped techniques 68 with preconditioning strategies, as introduced in [18]. Taking inspiration from [19– 69 21], two different damping strategies are proposed. In particular, we focus on the 70 Polak-Ribière (PR) (recently, Polak-Ribière-Polyak (PRP)) method, showing that, 71 under reasonable assumptions, the damped and preconditioned version of this method 72 (denoted by D-PR-PNCG), can be able to efficiently tackle also difficult problems. 73 This is confirmed by the results of an extensive numerical testing reported (see [18] 74 for details). 75

Under mild assumptions, the proposals in this paper preserve convergence prop-76 erties for the PNCG method. 77

As regards the notations, we denote for an *n*-real vector x, the Euclidean norm by 78 ||x||. Moreover, for a symmetric matrix A, A > 0 indicates that A is positive definite. 79

#### **Preconditioned Nonlinear Conjugate Gradient (PNCG)** 1.1 80 Method 81

Here, we first recall a general scheme of PNCG algorithm. In the following scheme, 82  $M_k \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$  denotes a possible positive definite preconditioner at the iteration k. 83

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**Author Proof** 

Preconditioned Nonlinear Conjugate Gradient (PNCG) Scheme

Step 1: Data  $x_1 \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and  $M_1 \succ 0$ . Set  $p_1 = -M_1g_1$  and k = 1. Step 2: Use a linesearch procedure to compute the steplength  $\alpha_k$ , which satisfies the *Wolfe conditions*, and set the next iterate as

$$x_{k+1} = x_k + \alpha_k p_k.$$

Step 3: If a stopping criterion is satisfied then stop, else compute the coefficient  $\beta_k$  along with the preconditioner  $M_{k+1} > 0$ . Compute a search direction by

$$p_{k+1} = -M_{k+1}g_{k+1} + \beta_k p_k. \tag{1}$$

Set k = k + 1 and go to Step 2.

Of course, in case  $M_k = I$  for all k, the PNCG scheme reduces to the NCG method. Also, observe that as an alternative, in order to possibly improve the efficiency of NCG by introducing preconditioning strategies, the *Step 3* of PNCG might be replaced by the next one.

Step 3: If a stopping criterion is satisfied then stop, else compute the coefficient  $\beta_k$  along with the preconditioner  $M_{k+1}$ . If  $M_{k+1} \not\succeq 0$  or  $M_{k+1}g_{k+1} = 0$  then set  $M_{k+1} = I$ . Compute the search direction

 $p_{k+1} = -M_{k+1}g_{k+1} + \beta_k p_k.$ 

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Set k = k + 1 and go to *Step 2*.

The steplength  $\alpha_k$  and the parameter  $\beta_k$  can be chosen in a variety of ways. In particular, in order to prove global convergence properties, a Wolfe-type linesearch procedure seems mandatory, while to improve the overall efficiency, several values for  $\beta_k$  have appeared in the literature (see also Sect. 1). Here, we neither intend to propose a novel choice of  $\beta_k$ , nor we want to consider any specific linesearch procedure to compute  $\alpha_k$  for the PNCG algorithm. In this regard, the Wolfe conditions are well-suited for our purposes, inasmuch as under mild assumptions they guarantee the fulfillment of the usual curvature condition

$$s_k^T y_k > 0,$$

<sup>104</sup> being  $s_k = x_{k+1} - x_k$  and  $y_k = g_{k+1} - g_k$ . On the other hand, we strongly remark the <sup>105</sup> importance of the positive definiteness for preconditioners, in order to prove global <sup>106</sup> convergence results.

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#### 2 Quasi-Newton Updates for Preconditioning

In this section, we suitably exploit some quasi-Newton updates in order to build preconditioners. As well known (see, e.g., [1]), when using quasi-Newton methods in place of (1), at iteration k, we generate a search direction of the form

$$p_k = -H_k g_k,$$

where  $H_k$  represents an approximation of the inverse Hessian matrix  $[\nabla^2 f(x_k)]^{-1}$ . 108 Then, as in *Step 2* of PNCG, the new iterate  $x_{k+1}$  can be obtained according to  $x_{k+1} =$ 109  $x_k + \alpha_k p_k$ , where  $\alpha_k$  as above is a steplength computed by a Wolfe-type procedure. 110 In particular, instead of computing  $H_k$  from scratch at each iteration k, quasi-Newton 111 methods update  $H_k$  in a simple manner by means of adding a small number of rank 112 one matrices, in order to obtain the new approximation  $H_{k+1}$  to be used in the next 113 iteration. Moreover, instead of storing full dense  $n \times n$  approximations, they only 114 save a few vectors of length n, which allow to represent the approximations  $\{H_k\}$ 115 implicitly. 116

Among the quasi-Newton schemes, the L-BFGS method is definitely considered one of the most efficient methods, and the amount of storage it requires can be controlled by the user throughout setting the *limited memory* parameter. This method is based on the construction of the approximation of the inverse Hessian matrix, by exploiting curvature information gained only from the most recent iterations. Specifically,  $H_{k-1}$  is updated by BFGS at the *k*th iteration as

$$H_k = V_{k-1}^T H_{k-1} V_{k-1} + \rho_{k-1} s_{k-1} s_{k-1}^T,$$
(2)

where

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$$\rho_{k-1} = \frac{1}{s_{k-1}^T y_{k-1}}, \quad V_{k-1} = I - \rho_{k-1} y_{k-1} s_{k-1}^T.$$

In case f(x) is quadratic, i.e.,  $f(x) = \frac{1}{2}x^T A x + b^T x$ ,  $A \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ ,  $b \in \mathbb{R}^n$ , then we have explicitly  $V_{k-1} = I - As_{k-1}s_{k-1}^T/s_{k-1}^T As_{k-1}$  and the following lemma holds.

**Lemma 1** Let us consider the quadratic function  $f(x) = \frac{1}{2}x^T Ax + b^T x$  with A > 0. Suppose the steplength  $\alpha_k$  in **Step 2** of PNCG is computed using an exact linesearch procedure. Given the expression of  $H_k$  in (2), along with  $H_k > 0$  and the positions

$$\rho_i = \frac{1}{s_i^T y_i}, \quad s_i^T y_i \neq 0, \quad i = 1, \dots, k,$$
$$V_i = I - \rho_i y_i s_i^T, \qquad i = 1, \dots, k,$$

126 then we have

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$$H_{k} = V_{k-1}^{T} V_{k-2}^{T} \cdots V_{1}^{T} H_{k}^{1} V_{1} \cdots V_{k-2} V_{k-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{k-1} \frac{s_{i} s_{i}^{T}}{s_{i}^{T} A s_{i}},$$
(3)

where  $H_k^1 \succ 0$  is given (usually, a multiple of the unit matrix).

*Proof* First observe that since f(x) is quadratic, then  $y_i = As_i$ , i = 1, ..., k, and the vectors  $s_1, ..., s_k$  are mutually conjugate, i.e.,  $s_i^T As_j = 0$ , for any  $1 \le i \ne j \le k$ . We prove (3) by complete induction.

When k = 2, by (2), we explicitly obtain

$$H_2 = V_1^T H_k^1 V_1 + \rho_1 s_1 s_1^T = V_1^T H_k^1 V_1 + \frac{s_1 s_1^T}{s_1^T A s_1}.$$

Now, assume (3) holds for some k - 1, and we prove (3) for the index k as follows. Recalling the conjugacy among vectors  $\{s_i\}$  yields

$$V_{k-1}^T s_i = \left(I - \frac{s_{k-1} y_{k-1}^T}{s_{k-1}^T A s_{k-1}}\right) s_i = s_i, \quad i = 1, \dots, k-2,$$

by (2), we immediately have after some computations

$$H_{k} = V_{k-1}^{T} H_{k-1} V_{k-1} + \frac{s_{k-1} s_{k-1}^{T}}{s_{k-1}^{T} A s_{k-1}}$$
$$= V_{k-1}^{T} V_{k-2}^{T} \cdots V_{1}^{T} H_{k}^{1} V_{1} \cdots V_{k-2} V_{k-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{k-1} \frac{s_{i} s_{i}^{T}}{s_{i}^{T} A s_{i}}.$$

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Note that Formula (3) for the quadratic case can suggest iterative updates to generate preconditioners for PNCG. Indeed, drawing inspiration from (3) and [22], in case f(x) is quadratic (i.e., NCG coincides with the conjugate gradient method), we have

$$A^{-1} = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \frac{s_j s_j^T}{s_j^T A s_j}.$$
 (4)

In view of (4), the rightmost contribution in (3) may represent an approximate inverse of the Hessian matrix A up to the kth iteration. As an extension, we can borrow the last idea also in case f(x) is a general nonlinear function, in order to generate possible preconditioners which approximate the rightmost matrix in (3). In particular, in this regard, we will have to assess a couple of issues:

(a) We have to set a finite number of NCG iterations  $m \le n$ , which are necessary to build the approximation of the rightmost matrix in (3).

449842\_1\_En\_1\_Chapter 🗸 TYPESET 🔄 DISK 🔤 LE 🗸 CP Disp.:12/4/2018 Pages: 22 Layout: T1-Standard

127

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**Author Proof** 

(b) We have to explicitly indicate how to approximately compute the quantities  $s_i^T A s_i$ , for  $i \ge 1$ , in (3); indeed, unlike in the quadratic case, when f(x) is a general nonlinear function, the quantity  $s_i^T A s_i$  is unavailable at iteration *i*.

### <sup>149</sup> 3 Preconditioners Based on the BFGS Update: First <sup>150</sup> Proposal

<sup>151</sup> In this section, we review the preconditioners for PNCG proposed in [12], which <sup>152</sup> exploits the contents of Sect. 2. We now report the general expression of this class <sup>153</sup> of preconditioners.

$$M_{k+1} = \tau_k C_k + \gamma_k v_k v_k^T + \omega_k \sum_{j=k-m}^k \frac{s_j s_j^T}{y_j^T s_j},$$
 (5)

where  $C_k \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ ,  $v_k \in \mathbb{R}^n$ ,  $\tau_k$ ,  $\gamma_k$ ,  $\omega_k \in \mathbb{R}$  and *m* is positive integer. Here, we consider

$$C_{k} = \frac{s_{k}^{T} y_{k}}{\|y_{k}\|^{2}} I, \quad \tau_{k} = \omega_{k}, \quad \gamma_{k} = \frac{2}{s_{k}^{T} y_{k}},$$
$$v_{k} = s_{k} - \tau_{k} C_{k} y_{k} - \omega_{k} \sum_{j=k-m}^{k} \frac{s_{j}^{T} y_{k}}{y_{j}^{T} s_{j}} s_{j},$$
$$\omega_{k} = \frac{\frac{1}{2} s_{k}^{T} y_{k}}{y_{k}^{T} C_{k} y_{k} + \sum_{j=k-m}^{k} \frac{(s_{j}^{T} y_{k})^{2}}{s_{j}^{T} y_{j}}}, \quad \gamma_{k} = \frac{2}{s_{k}^{T} y_{k}}$$

and  $m \ll n, 0 \le m \le k - 1$ . For further motivations along with the rationale behind this proposal, we refer to [12]. In the sequel, we report the main theoretical results and a summary of the numerical experience.

Observe that the right-hand side of (5) includes three contributions. More specifically, the rightmost matrix represents an approximate inverse Hessian, as in the guidelines of the conclusions of Sect. 2. In particular, exploiting the mean value theorem, we can write

$$y_j = g_{j+1} - g_j = \int_0^1 \nabla^2 f(x_j + ts_j)^T s_j dt, \quad j \ge 1,$$

so that assuming  $\nabla^2 f(z) = A_j$  constant for  $z \in [x_j, x_{j+1}]$ , we have

$$y_j^T s_j = \int_0^1 s_j^T \nabla^2 f(x_j + ts_j)^T s_j dt \approx s_j^T A_j s_j, \qquad j \ge 1,$$

showing that the issue (b), at the end of Sect. 2, can be easily treated. Moreover, the integer m in (5) represents a *memory* and guarantees that complying with (a), information from only the lattermost m iterations is collected.

A few comments need also be added, with respect to the role played by the matrix  $C_k$  and the parameter  $\tau_k$  in (5).  $C_k$  is chosen similar to the matrix  $H_k^1 = \lambda_k I$ , where  $\lambda_k$  is the solution of the subproblem

$$\min_{\lambda} \|(\lambda I)y_k - s_k\|^2.$$

In other words,  $\lambda_k = y_k^T s_k / ||y_k||^2$  is a value of the parameter  $\lambda$  which aims at approximately solving the initial secant equation  $(\lambda I)y_k = s_k$ . As usual, the use of the Wolfe conditions ensures that  $\lambda_k > 0$ .

<sup>164</sup> On the other hand, the exact role played by the parameter  $\tau_k$  in (5) is a bit more <sup>165</sup> technical and is in particular related to eigenvalue clustering for the preconditioner <sup>166</sup>  $M_{k+1}$ , as highlighted in the next Theorem (see also Proposition 3 in [12]).

**Theorem 1** Let  $f(x) = 1/2x^T A x + b^T x$ , with A > 0, and assume that

- $k \ge 2$  iterations of the NCG algorithm are performed.
- an exact linesearch procedure is adopted.
- $M_{k+1}$  is defined as in (5) with *m* ≤ *n* − 2.

Then, at least n - (m + 2) eigenvalues of  $M_{k+1}$  coincide with  $\tau_k$ .

As detailed in [12], the next proposition can be proved for the update (5), showing its well-posedness and the satisfaction of some secant-like conditions.

**Proposition 1** Let f be twice continuously differentiable. Suppose that k iterations of NCG are performed, using the strong Wolfe linesearch procedure. Let  $M_{k+1}$  be defined as in (5), with  $0 \le m \le k - 1$ ,  $\tau_k > 0$  and  $\gamma_k, \omega_k \ge 0$ .

(*i*) Let  $C_k \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$  be symmetric positive definite, then there exist values of  $\tau_k$ ,  $\gamma_k$ ,  $\omega_k$ such that  $M_{k+1} > 0$  and the secant equation  $M_{k+1} y_k = s_k$  is satisfied.

(ii) Let  $f(x) = 1/2x^T A x + b^T x$ , with A > 0. Suppose  $k \ge 2$  iterations of the NCG algorithm are performed, using an exact linesearch. Then, there exist values of  $\tau_k$ ,  $\gamma_k$ ,  $\omega_k$ , and a positive semidefinite matrix  $C_k$ , such that  $M_{k+1} > 0$ . Moreover,  $M_{k+1}y_k = s_k$  and the modified secant conditions

$$M_{k+1}y_i = \omega_k s_i, \qquad i = k - m, \dots, k - 1,$$

179 are satisfied.

Before reporting other proposals for possible preconditioners in PNCG, we highlight the role played by the vector  $v_k$  in (5). In particular, the value of  $v_k$  is set in such a way that  $M_{k+1}$  satisfies the secant equation  $M_{k+1}y_k = s_k$  (at iteration k). In this regard, the computation of vector  $v_k$  follows a similar guideline with respect to the idea adopted by SR1 quasi-Newton update (see also [1] for details).

As a preliminary numerical experience which reveals the performance of the proposal  $M_{k+1}$  in (5), the preconditioner  $M_{k+1}$  has been embedded in PNCG, with  $m = \min\{4, k-1\}$  and  $\beta_k$  computed as in the Polak–Ribière (PR) (recently, Polak–Ribière–Polyak (PRP)) formula

$$eta_k = rac{\left[g_{k+1} - g_k
ight]^T M_{k+1} g_{k+1}}{g_k^T M_k g_k}.$$

In [12], the resulting PR-PNCG has been experienced over a set of 112 large-scale problems of CUTEst collection [23]. This proposal (5) (namely OUR PREC\_PR) is compared with the L-BFGS update (setting the memory parameter m = 4) (namely PREC-LBFGS\_PR), used as a preconditioner, and with the unpreconditioned NCG scheme (namely UNPREC\_PR). Results are reported in Figs. 1 and 2, in terms of # iterations and # of function evaluations. Note that the steplength  $\alpha_k$  is computed such that the strong Wolfe conditions

$$f_{k+1} \leq f_k + c_1 \alpha_k g_k^T p_k$$

and

$$|g_{k+1}^T p_k| \le c_2 |g_k^T p_k|,$$

where  $0 < c_1 < 0.5$  and  $c_1 < c_2 < 1$ , hold (we used as for the code CG+,  $c_1 = 0.0001$  and  $c_2 = 0.9$ ). We also remark that in Fig. 1, the original stopping criterion of the code CG+ (see [24]), i.e.,  $||g_k||_{\infty} \le 10^{-5}(1 + |f_k|)$ , is adopted, while in Fig. 2, the more common criterion from the literature

$$\|g_k\| \le 10^{-5} \max\{1, \|x_k\|\}$$
(6)

is used, showing the effectiveness and efficiency of our first proposal (5).

### 4 Preconditioners Based on the BFGS Update: Second Proposal

As second proposal for a possible preconditioning strategy, which again exploits the contents in Sect. 2, we have the following update for  $M_{k+1}$  in PNCG scheme as proposed in [14].

$$M_{k+1} = \delta_k M_k + \gamma_k v_k v_k^T + \omega_k \frac{p_k p_k^T}{y_k^T p_k}, \qquad \delta_k > 0, \tag{7}$$

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**Fig. 1** Performance profiles using the *original* stopping criterion  $||g_k||_{\infty} \le 10^{-5}(1 + |f_k|)$  in the code CG+ [24], adopting PR and with respect to # *iterations* (up) and # *function evaluations* (down)

with  $\gamma_k, \omega_k \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ , and where, given  $M_k$  and the vector  $p_k$  generated by NCG, we have for  $v_k$  the expression

$$v_k = \sigma_k \left( s_k - \delta_k M_k y_k - \omega_k p_k \right), \qquad \sigma_k \in \{-1, +1\}.$$

The proposal in (7) follows a different strategy with respect to (5), inasmuch as it more closely attempts to emulate quasi-Newton updates. Indeed, similar to (5) also in (7)  $M_{k+1}$  includes three contributions, being the rightmost term  $\omega_k p_k p_k^T / y_k^T p_k$  built using information collected at iteration *k* of the NCG method, and the leftmost term  $\delta_k M_k$  being representative of the preconditioner at the previous iteration. Finally, the



**Fig. 2** Profiles using the *novel* stopping criterion (6), adopting PR and with respect to # *iterations* (up) and # *function evaluations* (down)

term  $\gamma_k v_k v_k^T$  in (7) is introduced so that  $M_{k+1}$  can explicitly satisfy the secant equation  $M_{k+1}y_k = s_k$ . The latter considerations confirm that, similar to BFGS update, the dyad  $\omega_k p_k p_k^T / y_k^T p_k$  aims at adding the most recent information from NCG to our current preconditioner.

The next couple of theoretical results can also be proved for the proposal (7), confirming to what extent (7) closely resembles quasi-Newton approaches (see [14] for details).

**Proposition 2** Let  $f(x) = \frac{1}{2}x^T Ax - b^T x$ , where A is a symmetric matrix. Suppose k steps of the NCG method are performed, adopting an exact linesearch procedure (which imposes  $\nabla f(x_{j+1})^T p_j = 0, j = 1, ..., k$ ), in order to detect the stationary point (if any) of the function f. Then, the matrix  $M_{k+1}$  in (7) satisfies the modified 220 secant equations

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**Author Proof** 

$$\begin{cases}
M_{k+1}y_j = \delta_j s_j, & \delta_j > 0, & j = 1, \dots, k-1, \\
M_{k+1}y_k = s_k,
\end{cases}$$
(8)

provided that the nonzero coefficients  $\gamma_j$ ,  $\omega_j$ , j = 1, ..., k are chosen such that

$$\begin{cases} \gamma_{j} = \frac{1}{s_{j}^{T} y_{j} - \delta_{j} y_{j}^{T} M_{j} y_{j} - \omega_{j} p_{j}^{T} y_{j}}, \ j = 1, \dots, k, \\ \omega_{j} \neq \frac{s_{j}^{T} y_{j} - \delta_{j} y_{j}^{T} M_{j} y_{j}}{p_{i}^{T} y_{j}}, \qquad j = 1, \dots, k. \end{cases}$$
(9)

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Proposition 2 reveals to what extent the matrix  $M_{k+1}$  substantially summarizes some 224 second-order information on the objective function f(x). In particular, by (8), the 225 secant equation at the current iterate  $x_k$  is fulfilled, while a weaker condition holds 226 at the previous iterates, being possibly  $\delta_i \neq 1$ , for  $j = 1, \dots, k - 1$ . Also, note that 227 the choice of the parameters  $\{\delta_i\}$ ,  $\{\gamma_i\}$  and  $\{\omega_i\}$  in Proposition 2 does not ensure 228 in general the positive definiteness of  $M_{k+1}$ . Indeed, pre-multiplying the second 229 relation in (8) by  $y_k$ , we obtain  $y_k^T M_{k+1} y_k = y_k^T s_k$ , where the right-hand side might 230 be possibly negative, inasmuch as no Wolfe conditions were adopted in Proposition 2 when applying the NCG. On this guideline, the next result helps recover the positive 232 definiteness of the preconditioner  $M_{k+1}$  (see [14]). 233

**Proposition 3** Let f be a continuously differentiable function. Suppose that the NCG method is used to minimize the function f. Suppose that  $s_k^T y_k > 0$ ,  $M_k > 0$ ,  $\varepsilon_k \in (0, 1)$  and

$$0 < \delta_k = (1 - \varepsilon_k) \frac{s_k^T y_k}{y_k^T M_k y_k},$$

$$0 < \omega_k < \varepsilon_k \alpha_k$$

$$0 < \gamma_k = \frac{1}{(\varepsilon_k \alpha_k - \omega_k) p_k^T y_k}$$

Then conditions (8)–(9) hold and  $M_{k+1} > 0$  in (7).

By Proposition 3, a suitable interval of values for  $\delta_k$ ,  $\gamma_k$ , and  $\omega_k$  always exists such that (8)–(9) hold and  $M_{k+1} > 0$ , even though an inexact linesearch procedure is adopted (but not necessary the Wolfe linesearch procedure). Moreover, the hypothesis  $M_k > 0$  might be too restrictive to our purposes, and we can easily prove that what really matters is the weaker condition  $y_k^T M_k y_k > 0$  along with the inequality  $y_k^T s_k > 0$ .

<sup>247</sup> By Proposition 2, we have also a remarkable result in case the objective function <sup>248</sup> f(x) is quadratic. Indeed, after *n* steps, the matrix  $M_{n+1}$  retains information on the <sup>249</sup> inertia of the Hessian matrix, as in the next corollary (see [14]), where  $\lambda_m(\cdot)$  and <sup>250</sup>  $\lambda_M(\cdot)$  represent, respectively, the smallest and the largest eigenvalue.

**Corollary 1** Let  $f(x) = \frac{1}{2}x^T A x - b^T x$ , where *A* is symmetric and nonsingular. Suppose that *n* steps of the *CG* are performed, in order to detect the stationary point of the function *f*, and that the vectors  $p_1, \ldots, p_n$  are generated.

(i) If (8)–(9) hold, we have

$$M_{n+1}A = (s_1 \cdots s_n)D(s_1 \cdots s_n)^{-1}$$

with

$$D = diag\{\delta_1, \delta_2, \ldots, \delta_{n-1}, 1\}$$

254 (ii) It results

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$$\lambda_m(M_{n+1}A) = \lambda_m(D), \qquad \lambda_M(M_{n+1}A) = \lambda_M(D). \tag{10}$$

Several interesting conclusions arise considering the two proposals in Sects. 3 and 4 for  $M_{k+1}$ ; we urge to carry out the following observations, which are also the result of a deeper investigation not reported here:

• Both the proposals for the preconditioner  $M_{k+1}$  are based on the attempt to emulate the BFGS update, in order to possibly benefit from some of its well-known features (i.e., the satisfaction of the secant equation and BFGS attitude to approximate the inverse Hessian in the quadratic case).

• while the scheme in (5) details an update based on m + 1 pairs  $(s_j, y_j)$ , j = k - m, ..., k, provided by the NCG method, the scheme in (7) simply relies on the pair  $(p_k, y_k)$  generated at step k of the NCG method.

• the proposal in (7) seems to be endowed with stronger theoretical properties with respect to (5). As also shown in the next sections, the latter fact is also reflected in an appreciable enhancement of numerical performance, over a significant largescale test set. Indeed, comparing the proposals in Sects. 3 and 4, over the same test set specified in Sect. 3, we obtain the performance profiles in Fig. 3, using (6) for termination which is the same as that used for obtaining Fig. 2.

#### 272 5 Damped Strategies for NCG Preconditioning

Damped techniques were introduced in the framework of quasi-Newton methods,
and their rationale can be summarized as follows. As is well known (see, e.g., [1]),
when dealing with the BFGS update, a crucial issue in order to guarantee the positive
definiteness of the updated Hessian approximation is the satisfaction of the curvature
condition

$$s_k^T y_k > 0.$$
 (11)

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**Fig. 3** Comparison between the proposal of preconditioner in (5) (namely M, *dash line*) and the proposal in (7) (namely M\_mod, *solid line*), using the stopping criterion (6). Profiles with respect to *# iterations* (up) and *# function evaluations* (down)

In case f is strongly convex, then (11) holds for any pair of points  $x_k$  and  $x_{k+1}$  (see, 279 e.g. [25]). In case of nonconvex functions, imposing the satisfaction of condition (11) 280 requires a proper choice of the stepsize  $\alpha_k$ , from the linesearch procedure adopted. 281 Indeed, in principle, the satisfaction of (11) can always be obtained by a suitable 282 linesearch procedure, provided that the objective function is bounded below. To this 283 aim, as mentioned above, the Wolfe conditions (in practice, the strong Wolfe condi-284 tions) are usually adopted, which ensure the fulfillment of condition (11). However, 285 for sufficiently large value of  $c_2$ , the value of  $s_k^T y_k$  may not be sufficiently positive. In 286

Quasi-Newton-Based Preconditioning and Damped Quasi-Newton Schemes ...

addition, if only the backtracking linesearch framework is employed, the curvature
 condition (11) may not hold.

A possible successful strategy to cope with the last issue is to adopt the *damped technique* proposed by Powell in [19], in the context of SQP Lagrangian BFGS methods for constrained optimization and applied for the first time by Al-Baali [26] to unconstrained optimization. In [19], the author proposes to modify the difference of the gradients vector  $y_k$  in (11), before performing the BFGS update. Namely, if  $B_k$ denotes the current BFGS positive definite Hessian approximation at *k*th iteration, the following modified (damped) vector is used in place of  $y_k$ :

$$\widehat{y}_k = \varphi_k y_k + (1 - \varphi_k) B_k s_k, \tag{12}$$

where  $\varphi_k$  is chosen in (0, 1] such that  $s_k^T \hat{y}_k$  is "sufficiently positive." The latter fact guarantees that the use of the damped vector  $\hat{y}_k$  is in principle preferable with respect to  $y_k$ . In particular, given  $\sigma \in (0, 1]$ , the value of the parameter  $\varphi_k$  is often set according with the rule:

 $\varphi_k = \begin{cases} \frac{\sigma s_k^T B_k s_k}{s_k^T B_k s_k - s_k^T y_k}, & \text{if } s_k^T y_k < (1 - \sigma) s_k^T B_k s_k, \\ 1, & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases}$ (13)

which for  $\sigma = 0.8$  yields that in Sect. 18.3 in [1]. There are several reasons which motivate (13), including the fact that by this choice we have

$$s_k^T \widehat{y}_k = (1 - \sigma) s_k^T B_k s_k, \tag{14}$$

i.e., the quantity  $s_k^T \hat{y}_k$  is sufficiently positive, inasmuch as  $B_k$  is positive definite. Al-Baali suggests using the modified damped vector (12) with (13) for unconstrained optimization and extended it to

$$\varphi_{k} = \begin{cases} \frac{\sigma_{1}s_{k}^{T}B_{k}s_{k}}{s_{k}^{T}B_{k}s_{k} - s_{k}^{T}y_{k}}, & \text{if } s_{k}^{T}y_{k} < (1 - \sigma_{1})s_{k}^{T}B_{k}s_{k}, \\ \frac{\sigma_{2}s_{k}^{T}B_{k}s_{k}}{s_{k}^{T}B_{k}s_{k} - s_{k}^{T}y_{k}}, & \text{if } s_{k}^{T}y_{k} > (1 + \sigma_{2})s_{k}^{T}B_{k}s_{k}, \\ 1, & \text{otherwise}, \end{cases}$$
(15)

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where  $\sigma_1 \in (0, 1]$  and  $\sigma_2 \ge 2$ . Note that the value  $\sigma_2 = \infty$  reduces choice (15) to (13).

In [18], in order to extend the definition of the damped vector  $\hat{y}_k$  in (12), a novel vector  $\hat{y}_k$  is defined as a combination of the original vector  $y_k$  and an appropriate vector  $z_k$ , namely

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$$\widehat{y}_k = \varphi_k y_k + (1 - \varphi_k) z_k, \tag{16}$$

(see also [27]). The vector  $z_k$  plays a noteworthy role to ensure that  $s_k^T \hat{y}_k$  is sufficiently

positive, for suitable values of  $\varphi_k \in (0, 1]$ . Of course, a key point of this approach is an appropriate choice of  $z_k$ . Two choices for  $z_k$  have been proposed in [18].

The first proposal corresponds to set  $z_k = \eta_k s_k$ , where  $\eta_k > 0$ , based on approximating  $B_k$  by  $\eta_k I$ . This choice originates from the idea of using  $z_k = A_{k+1}y_k$  in (16), where  $A_{k+1}$  is a positive definitive approximation of the inverse Hessian. In particular,  $B_k \approx \eta_k I$  satisfies the *modified secant equation* 

$$A_{k+1}y_k = \eta_k s_k.$$

<sup>318</sup> Hence, by using the latter equation, we can set

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$$\widehat{y}_k^{(a)} = \varphi_k y_k + (1 - \varphi_k) \eta_k s_k.$$
(17)

Interesting properties of (17) are that it does not require the explicit knowledge of the approximate inverse Hessian matrix  $A_{k+1}$  and that

$$s_k^T \, \hat{y}_k^{(a)} = (1 - \sigma_1) \eta_k \|s_k\|^2 > 0, \tag{18}$$

for appropriate choice of the parameter in (16). This condition may be of great interest if we consider a geometric interpretation of the curvature condition (11). Indeed, since for the vector  $\hat{y}_k^{(a)}$  condition (18) is satisfied, it means that  $s_k^T \hat{y}_k^{(a)}$  is always *sufficiently positive*. Moreover, it can be easily proved that for proper choices of the parameters  $\eta_k$  and  $\sigma$ , we obtain (as long as (11) holds)

$$s_k^T \, \widehat{y}_k^{(a)} \ge s_k^T \, \widehat{y}_k. \tag{19}$$

Furthermore, also in case (11) does not hold, by relation (18), we immediately infer that again (19) holds.

The second proposal corresponds to set in (16)  $z_k = -\alpha_k g_k$ , so that the novel damped vector becomes

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$$\widehat{y}_k^{\scriptscriptstyle(b)} = \varphi_k y_k - (1 - \varphi_k) \alpha_k g_k.$$
<sup>(20)</sup>

This choice of  $z_k$  comes from the following observation: If  $B_k > 0$  is an approximation of the Hessian and we consider  $-B_k^{-1}g_k$  as search direction, it immediately follows that

$$s_k = x_{k+1} - x_k = -\alpha_k B_k^{-1} g_k,$$

which implies

$$B_k s_k = -\alpha_k g_k.$$

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This formula allows to compute the original damped vector (12) without explicitly using the matrix  $B_k$ . Indeed, it suffices to replace  $B_k s_k$  with  $-\alpha_k g_k$  in (12), according with (20).

Similar to the choice  $\hat{y}_k^{(a)}$ , also for  $\hat{y}_k^{(b)}$  in (20), we can guarantee that  $s_k^T \hat{y}_k^{(b)}$  is sufficiently positive. In fact, we immediately have from (14)

$$s_k^T \widehat{y}_k^{(b)} = -\alpha_k (1 - \sigma_1) s_k^T g_k = -\alpha_k^2 (1 - \sigma_1) p_k^T g_k > 0,$$

where the last inequality holds because  $p_k$  is a descent direction. Several theoretical properties can be proved for the choices (17) and (20) (see also [18]). Some of them are summarized here below, where we assume that the coefficient  $\beta_k$  in PNCG is replaced by the PR-type 'damped coefficient'

$$\hat{\beta}_k^{PR} = \frac{\left(\widehat{y}_k^{(a)}\right)^T M_{k+1} g_{k+1}}{g_k^T M_k g_k}$$

(the resulting PNCG scheme, with  $\hat{y}_k^{(a)}$  in place of  $y_k$  will be addressed as D-PR-PNCG).

- 336 Assumption 1 (see [18])
- (a) Given the initial point  $x_1$  and the function  $f \in C^1$ , the level set  $\mathscr{L}_1 = \begin{cases} x : f(x) \le f_1 \end{cases}$  is compact.
  - (b) There exists an open ball  $\mathscr{B}_r := \{x : ||x|| < r\}$  containing  $\mathscr{L}_1$  where f(x) is continuously differentiable and its gradient g(x) is Lipschitz continuous. In particular, there exists L > 0 such that

$$||g(x) - g(y)|| \le L||x - y||$$
 for all  $x, y \in \mathscr{B}_r$ .

(c) There exist  $\lambda > 0$  and  $\Lambda > 0$  such that the preconditioner M(x), for any  $x \in \mathscr{B}_r$ , is positive definite with the smallest [largest] eigenvalue  $\lambda_m (M(x)) [\lambda_M (M(x))]$  satisfying

$$0 < \lambda \leq \lambda_m \left( M(x) \right) \leq \lambda_M \left( M(x) \right) < \Lambda.$$

Proposition 4 Let  $\{x_k\}$  be an infinite sequence (with  $g_k \neq 0$ ) generated by the D-PR-PNCG method, where the steplength  $\alpha_k > 0$  is determined by a linesearch procedure such that, for all k, the following conditions hold:

- 342 (i)  $x_k \in \mathscr{L}_1 \text{ for all } k;$
- 343 (ii)  $\lim_{\substack{k \to +\infty \\ k \to +\infty}} \frac{|g_k^T p_k|}{\|p_k\|} = 0;$ 344 (iii)  $\lim_{\substack{k \to +\infty \\ k \to +\infty}} \alpha_k \|p_k\| = 0.$

If Assumption 1 holds, then

$$\liminf_{k\to+\infty}\|g_k\|=0$$

and hence there exists at least a stationary limit point of  $\{x_k\}$ .

Similar to the proposals in Sects. 3 and 4, we consider now a brief numerical experience on the use of the damped vectors in (17) and (20). A complete study can be found in [18]. Observe that in principle the use of damped techniques fully affects the preconditioning strategies (where  $y_k$  is replaced by  $\hat{y}_k^{(a)}$  or  $\hat{y}_k^{(b)}$ ), i.e., both the value of  $\beta_k$  along with the preconditioner, and not just the value of  $\beta_k$ . However, our



Fig. 4 Comparison between the adoption of the two damped strategies in (17) and in (20). Profiles with respect to *# iterations* (up) and *# function and gradient evaluations* (down)

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preliminary aim here is to report a numerical experience with PNCG (and not D-351 PR-PNCG), i.e., embedding the damped techniques within the preconditioner used 352 in a PNCG scheme, where the standard Polak–Ribière (PR) formula for  $\beta_k$  is used. 353 In particular, the same settings used in Sects. 3 and 4, along with the same test set 354 are considered. We also recall that a standard implementation of the PNCG method 355 in CG+ code was adopted (see [24]), where the preconditioner (5) is included, and 356 the linesearch technique is the same as that in [28]. Finally, the stopping criterion 357 adopted is the standard one in (6). We also recall that in the linesearch procedure 358 adopted in [28] the number of function and gradient evaluations coincide. In Fig. 4, 359 the two damped strategies in (17) (with  $\eta_k = 4$  and  $\varphi_k$  chosen as in (13)) and in (20) 360



**Fig. 5** Comparison between the use  $\hat{\beta}_k^{PR}$  (setting  $\hat{y}_k = \hat{y}_k^{(a)}$ ) and  $\beta_k^{PR}$ , in both preconditioned and unpreconditioned cases. Profiles with respect to # *iterations* (up) and # *function and gradient evaluations* (down)

(with  $\varphi_k$  chosen as in (13)) are compared, with respect to both # iterations and # function evaluations. The strategy (17) seems to be somehow preferable to (20).

To complete our analysis, we note that a full information from damped techniques 363 can be used, both affecting the computation of the coefficient  $\beta_k$  and the precondi-364 tioner  $M_{k+1}$  in PNCG (see [18]). More explicitly, the performances of PNCG vs. 365 D-PR-PNCG (where  $\hat{\beta}_k^{PR}$  is used in place of  $\beta_k^{PR}$ ) in both the preconditioned and 366 unpreconditioned case are compared. The corresponding results are summarized in 367 Fig. 5 (names of the schemes are self-explanatory). As it can be observed from the 368 profiles, the use of  $\hat{\beta}_k^{PR}$  does not yield a noteworthy improvement. Nevertheless, we 369 also observe that the D-PR-PNCG scheme, which also uses  $\hat{\beta}_{k}^{PR}$ , reveals to outper-370 form the standard NCG method. 371

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Start new paragraph	_ <b>_</b>	_ <b>_</b>
No new paragraph	لے	<u>ل</u>
Transpose	<u>с</u> л	
Close up	linking Characters	$\bigcirc$
Insert or substitute space between characters or words	/ through character or k where required	Y
Reduce space between characters or words	between characters or words affected	$\uparrow$