

A reduction formula for $\int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n} x \, dx$

For notation, set $A_n = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n} x \, dx$. Then:

$$\begin{aligned} A_n &= \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n} x \, dx = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x \sin^2 x \, dx = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x (1 - \cos^2 x) \, dx \\ &= \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x \, dx - \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x \cos^2 x \, dx = A_{n-1} - \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x \cos^2 x \, dx \\ &= A_{n-1} - \int_0^{2\pi} (\sin^{2n-3} x \cos x)(\sin x \cos x) \, dx \end{aligned}$$

Now, make a u -substitution:

$$u = \sin^{2n-3} x \cos x \quad , \quad \text{so} \quad du = (2n-3) \sin^{2n-4} x \cos^2 x - \sin^{2n-2} x \, dx ;$$

$$dv = \sin x \cos x \quad , \quad \text{so} \quad v = \frac{1}{2} \sin^2 x$$

Then:

$$\begin{aligned} A_n &= A_{n-1} - \int_0^{2\pi} u \, dv = A_{n-1} - [uv \Big|_0^{2\pi} - \int_0^{2\pi} v \, du] \\ &= A_{n-1} - \left[\left(\frac{1}{2} \sin^2 x \right) \left\{ \sin^{2n-3} x \cos^2 x \right\} \Big|_0^{2\pi} \right. \\ &\quad \left. - \int_0^{2\pi} \left(\frac{1}{2} \sin^2 x \right) \left\{ (2n-3) \sin^{2n-4} x \cos^2 x - \sin^{2n-2} x \right\} \, dx \right] \\ &= A_{n-1} - \left((0-0) - \left(\int_0^{2\pi} \frac{2n-3}{2} \sin^{2n-2} x \cos^2 x \, dx - \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n} x \, dx \right) \right) \\ &= A_{n-1} + \frac{2n-3}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x \cos^2 x \, dx - \frac{1}{2} A_n \\ &= A_{n-1} - \frac{1}{2} A_n + \frac{2n-3}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x \cos^2 x \, dx \\ &= A_{n-1} - \frac{1}{2} A_n + \frac{2n-3}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x (1 - \sin^2 x) \, dx \\ &= A_{n-1} - \frac{1}{2} A_n + \frac{2n-3}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x \, dx - \frac{2n-3}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n} x \, dx \\ A_n &= A_{n-1} - \frac{1}{2} A_n + \frac{2n-3}{2} A_{n-1} - \frac{2n-3}{2} A_n = \frac{2n-1}{2} A_{n-1} - (n-1) A_n \end{aligned}$$

So: $nA_n = \frac{2n-1}{2} A_{n-1}$, so

$$A_n = \frac{2n-1}{2n} A_{n-1} \quad , \quad \text{i.e.,}$$

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n} x \, dx = \frac{2n-1}{2n} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-2} x \, dx$$

So, since $A_0 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^0 x \, dx = \int_0^{2\pi} 1 \, dx = 2\pi$,

$$A_1 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^2 x \, dx = \frac{1}{2}A_0 = \pi$$

$$A_2 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^4 x \, dx = \frac{3}{4}A_1 = \frac{3}{4}\pi$$

$$A_3 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^6 x \, dx = \frac{5}{6}A_2 = \frac{5}{8}\pi$$

$$A_4 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^8 x \, dx = \frac{7}{8}A_3 = \frac{35}{64}\pi$$

$$A_5 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{10} x \, dx = \frac{9}{10}A_4 = \frac{63}{128}\pi$$

$$A_6 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{12} x \, dx = \frac{11}{12}A_5 = \frac{231}{512}\pi$$

$$A_7 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{14} x \, dx = \frac{13}{14}A_6 = \frac{429}{1024}\pi$$

$$A_8 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{16} x \, dx = \frac{15}{16}A_7 = \frac{6435}{16384}\pi$$

$$A_9 = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{18} x \, dx = \frac{17}{18}A_8 = \frac{12155}{32768}\pi$$

$$A_{10} = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{20} x \, dx = \frac{19}{20}A_9 = \frac{46189}{131072}\pi$$

And we could of course keep going, but you get the idea.....

The integrals from 0 to π are half of these values, and of course

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \sin^{2n-1} x \, dx = \int_0^{\pi} \sin^{2n-1} x \, dx = 0$$

And, finally, since $\cos x$ is really just $\sin x$ shifted by $\frac{\pi}{2}$ (to the left), and we are integrating over an entire period of $\sin x$, the integrals for the powers of $\cos x$ are exactly the same!