

Huber, C., Federolf, P., Nüesch, C., Cattin, P. C., Friederich, N. F., Tschanner, Vinzenz von. (2013). Heel-strike in walking: Assessment of potential sources of intra- and inter-subject variability in the activation patterns of muscles stabilizing the knee joint. *Journal of Biomechanic*, 46, 1262-1268.

Dette er siste tekst-versjon av artikkelen, og den kan inneholde små forskjeller fra forlagets pdf-versjon. Forlagets pdf-versjon finner du på www.sciencedirect.com: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbiomech.2013.02.017>

This is the final text version of the article, and it may contain minor differences from the journal's pdf version. The original publication is available at www.sciencedirect.com: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbiomech.2013.02.017>

Heel-strike in walking: assessment of potential sources of intra- and inter-subject variability in the activation patterns of muscles stabilizing the knee joint

4

Cora Huber^{1,2}, Peter Federolf³, Corina Nüesch⁴, Philippe C. Cattin⁵, Niklaus F. Friederich⁶,
Vinzenz von Tscharner⁷

8

¹ Laboratory for Biomechanics and Biomaterials, Hannover Medical School, Germany

² Biomechanics & Calorimetry Center Basel, University of Basel, Switzerland

12

³ Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo, Norway

⁴ Orthopaedic Department, University Hospital of Basel, Switzerland

16

⁵ Medical Image Analysis Center, University of Basel, Switzerland

⁶ Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology, Kantonsspital Bruderholz,
Switzerland

20

⁷ Human Performance Laboratory, University of Calgary, Canada

24

Submitted as
Original Article
to

28

Journal of Biomechanics

Word count (Introduction – Acknowledgement): **3290**

32

Word count abstract: **248**

Keywords: Gait; EMG; time-frequency analysis; principal component analysis; variability

36

Corresponding Author

Cora Huber^{1,2}

40

Department of Orthopaedics
Laboratory for Biomechanics and Biomaterials
Hannover Medical School
Anna-von-Borries-Strasse 1-7

44

30625 Hannover, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)511 5354 626
Fax: +49 (0)511 5354 875
E-Mail: cora.huber@dhh-gruppe.de

48 **1 Introduction**

Electromyography (EMG) is frequently used in studies of neuro-muscular motor control. The number of degrees of freedom in the musculoskeletal system allows for a wide variety of possible movements, and thus requires a complex control system. The flexibility of the musculoskeletal system is illustrated by high step-to-step and inter-subject variability in muscle activation patterns (Araujo et al., 2000; Nair et al., 2010; Winter and Yack, 1987), which can be attributed to anatomical, neuro-muscular, and physiological reasons, among others (De Luca, 1997). However, it remains unknown how different sources of variability contribute to the overall variability in the EMG signals. This study employed a principal component analysis (PCA) to assess the characteristics of EMG variability, and tested hypotheses derived from conceptual considerations of potential mechanical sources of EMG variability associated with the heel-strike event in walking.

60 Even though EMG signals are highly individual, temporal features of processed EMG signals, such as rhythmicity and timing of muscle activation, are common between individuals (Bizzi et al., 2008; Guidetti et al., 1996; Huber et al., 2011; Hug et al., 2010; Stirling et al., 2011). The application of PCA to EMG signals has enabled extraction of information concerning neuro-muscular processes (Astéphen Wilson et al., 2011; Ivanenko et al., 2004), the nature of the movement's coordination (Cappellini et al., 2006; Klarner et al., 2010; Sadeghi et al., 2000, von Tscharner, 2002; von Tscharner and Goepfert, 2003a), and mechanical efficiency (Blake and Wakeling, 2012; Blake et al., 2012). In the present study, PCA was applied to EMG waveforms of the period from 200 ms before heel-strike to 200 ms after heel-strike, in level walking.

Within the analyzed movement, the heel-strike event is likely to be an important source of variability. Both foot placement angle (Murray et al., 1970) and the lateral component of the ground reaction force (Giaskas and Baltzopoulos, 1997) show high step-to-

step variability at heel-strike. It appears that the neuro-muscular control system reacts and adjusts to the specific conditions at each heel-strike (Basmajian and De Luca, 1985) (i.e., mechanical sources of variability), and that these reactions are an important source of EMG variability. The fastest mechanisms that could facilitate adjustments to the conditions at heel-strike are reflex circles, with a reaction time of 30-50 ms (Brooks, 1986; Schmidt and Lee, 1999; Williams et al., 2001). Therefore, a characteristic EMG feature indicating such reflex mechanisms would be maximum variability at approximately 30-50 ms after heel-strike (Fig. 1a). Since reactions to the heel-strike event depend on the specific conditions of each walking step, they may be a source of inter-subject and intra-subject EMG variability. Muscle reactions require a low level of neuronal processing (Williams et al., 2001), and therefore, we hypothesize that these reactions are similar between subjects and that the shape of deviations from the mean EMG waveform may be correlated between subjects.

Another source of inter-subject variability could be the pre-activation of muscles before heel-strike (von Tscherner and Goepfert, 2003b). This pre-activation may be modulated by the so-called muscle tuning mechanism described by Nigg and Wakeling (Nigg, 2001; Nigg and Wakeling, 2001). They suggested that the impact at heel-strike could cause potentially harmful shockwaves and vibrations within the body's soft tissues if these shockwaves could not be dampened at impact. However, they suggest that the neuro-muscular system "tunes" itself before impact such that the shockwaves are optimally dampened. Therefore, a characteristic EMG feature associated with this mechanism would be a pre-activation present at heel-strike that persists until reaction cycles can attune the muscles to the specific heel-strike event. As soon as the reaction cycles attenuate the system to the specific heel-strike conditions, one would expect a sharp decline in the activation (Fig. 1b). It has been suggested that muscle tuning is highly subject-specific because vibration and dampening properties of the soft tissue packages depend on the mass and geometry (wobbling mass) of

each individual's soft tissue compartments (Boyer and Nigg, 2006; Nigg and Liu, 1999; Pain and Challis, 2004, 2006). Therefore, the specific waveform shape associated with muscle tuning was not expected to correlate between subjects.

In summary, the primary aim of this study was to calculate and compare principal components (PCs) of intra-subject and inter-subject variability in knee muscle EMG waveforms at heel-strike. It was hypothesized that adaptation to the heel-strike event in walking is a major source of variability. Two waveform shapes with distinct characteristic features were proposed, based on conceptual considerations of how the neuro-muscular system might prepare for, or adapt to, the heel-strike event. A secondary aim was to determine if the calculated PCA waveforms showed the predicted characteristic features of the proposed waveforms.

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 Participants

The study group consisted of ten healthy female volunteers (age: 48 ± 7 years, body mass: 61.1 ± 4.9 kg, height: 1.64 ± 0.05 m [mean \pm SD]) with no history of lower extremity surgery, no osteoarthritis of the hip, knee or ankle joints, and no neurological or musculoskeletal impairments. Volunteers were informed about the measurement procedure and provided written consent prior to participation. The local ethics committee approved the study.

2.2 Experimental design

The study protocol consisted of an instrumented three-dimensional gait analysis with synchronous measurement of thigh muscle activity during level walking. A six-camera,

240 Hz motion capture system (Vicon MX13+, Oxford, UK) recorded the positions of retro-reflective markers according to the Vicon Plug-In Gait model (kinematic model V 2.0, Vicon Motion Systems, Oxford, UK; Kadaba et al., 1990). The subjects walked barefoot at a
124 comfortable, self-selected walking speed along a 10 m walkway (1.22 ± 0.06 m/s [mean \pm SD]).

2.3 EMG data recording

Surface EMG signals of three quadriceps femoris muscles: rectus femoris (RF), vastus
128 medialis (VM), and vastus lateralis (VL); and two hamstring muscles: semitendinosus (ST) and long head of biceps femoris (BF) were recorded from the left thigh with bipolar Ag/AgCl surface electrodes (diameter: 10 mm, inter-electrode distance: 22 mm, Noraxon U.S.A Inc., Scottsdale, AZ, USA), in accordance with the SENIAM guidelines (Hermens et al., 2000).
132 The ground electrode was positioned over the tibial tuberosity. The electrodes were connected to single differential amplifiers (Biovision, Wehrheim, Germany. Bandwidth 10-700 Hz, gain range 1000-5000). Elastic net bandages (Elastofix, Typ B-25 m stretched, BSN medical GmbH & Co. KG, Hamburg, Germany) were pulled over the thigh to keep cables, amplifiers,
136 and electrodes in place. The EMG data were sampled at 2400 Hz without further processing.

2.4 Data processing

A time-frequency analysis, consisting of 13 non-linearly scaled wavelets (von Tschärner, 2000), yielded time and frequency distributions of the power of the EMG signal.
140 The EMG power at each time frame was defined as the sum of the powers extracted from the wavelets with centre frequencies from 19 to 395 Hz. Wavelets with center frequencies lower than 19 Hz or higher than 395 Hz were omitted from the analysis, as they are known to be highly influenced by movement artifacts (Conforto et al., 1999) and high frequency noise
144 (e.g., 400 Hz power supplies), respectively. EMG power was analyzed from 200 ms before heel-strike to 200 ms after heel-strike, henceforth referred to as a waveform. Each waveform

was represented by 960 data points (sample frequency of 2400 Hz). Time 0 within the waveform was defined to be at heel-strike, which was determined from the vertical position of the heel marker. All waveforms were normalized by the integrated power; thus, the integrated power of the normalized waveforms was always 1. Due to this normalization, information about the degree of muscle activity is lost. Thus, the waveform shapes can be compared between subjects, but the amplitudes cannot. For each subject, 18 waveforms from the left leg were extracted, yielding a total of 180 waveforms available for further processing. Individual mean waveforms were calculated for each muscle by averaging the 18 waveforms of each subject. Group mean waveforms were computed for each muscle by averaging the 10 individual mean waveforms.

The waveforms were stored in an $N \times p$ matrix, where N and p represent the number of waveforms and the number of data points in the waveforms, respectively. This matrix was denoted the input matrix (i.e., input matrix to the PCA), and the N waveforms were treated as vectors of a p -dimensional vector space. Two PCA procedures (Jolliffe, 2002), with differing types of input matrices, were performed. In both PCA calculations, the mean waveform of the input matrix was subtracted prior to calculation of the covariance matrix. In the “intra-subject PCA”, the individual waveforms of each muscle and subject were assembled into an input matrix $M_{18 \times 960}$. A total of 50 intra-subject PCAs – one for each subject and muscle – were used to identify correlated deviations from the individual mean activation waveform of a given muscle (intra-subject variability). In addition, an “inter-subject PCA” was performed, by forming an input matrix $M_{180 \times 960}$ from all 180 waveforms of a given muscle (10 subjects x 18 waveforms).

The PCA yielded: (i) the eigenvectors of the covariance matrix of the input matrix, known as principal component vectors; (ii) the eigenvalues; and (iii) the loading factors, known as PC-scores (also known as PC-coefficients or weight factors). The PC-vectors represented correlated deviations from the mean waveform; that is, depending on which PCA

172 procedure was applied, they represented deviations from the individual mean waveform
(intra-subject PCA) or from the group mean waveform (inter-subject PCA). The eigenvalues
quantified the amount of variance explained by the corresponding PC. In this study, the
eigenvalues were normalized by expressing them as a percentage of the sum of all
176 eigenvalues, i.e., as a percentage of the entire variability in the input matrix. The PC-scores
were obtained by projecting each waveform onto the PC-vectors. PC-scores are a measure of
how similar the measured waveforms are to a specific PC. The group mean waveforms,
together with the lower-order PCs, captured the main features and modulations that are
180 common within the analyzed group of waveforms. The higher-order PCs represented
fluctuations that were small in amplitude and/or not representative of the whole group.

As a similarity criterion, absolute values of the Pearson's correlation coefficient r were
calculated for the 10 sets of intra-subject PC-vectors paired with the inter-subject PC-vectors
184 for each of the five muscles.

All analyses were performed in Matlab (The MathWorks, Version R2011a, Natick,
MA, USA) using custom-written programs.

188 **3 Results**

A visual representation of the inter-subject and intra-subject variability is shown in
Fig. 2. The normalized eigenvalues of the first seven PCs for the inter-subject (Fig. 3, left)
and intra-subject (Fig. 3, right) analyses identify two important results. Firstly, a substantial
192 fraction of the EMG waveform variability was represented by only a few PCs. Across all five
muscles, the first three inter-subject PCs accounted for 51.8 to 67.9% of the waveform
variance, and the first three intra-subject PCs accounted for $63.6 \pm 3.9\%$ to $77.7 \pm 3.7\%$
(mean \pm SD across the five muscles) of the waveform variance. Thus, the individual

196 waveforms reconstructed from the group mean waveform and the first three inter-subject PC-
vectors weighted by the mean individual PC-scores (mean over the 18 PC-scores of a subject)
(Fig. 2, dashed line) contain enough information to mirror the basic activation pattern of an
individual mean waveform (Fig. 2).

200 The second result was that the normalized eigenvalues of the intra-subject analysis
agreed with those of the inter-subject analysis: PC₂-eigenvalue range: 17.1-22.9% vs.
19.2 ± 2.0% to 23.7 ± 4.8% (all comparisons: inter vs. intra [mean ± SD] across the five
muscles), PC₃: 9.8-12.8% vs. 12.3 ± 2.8% to 14.4 ± 2.6%, PC₄: 8.2-9.5% vs. 7.7 ± 2.0% to
204 9.9 ± 2.2%, PC₅: 5.0-7.3% vs. 5.0 ± 2.0% to 6.5 ± 2.7% PC₆: 4.3-6.2% vs. 3.5 ± 1.5% to
4.3 ± 1.6%. The inter-subject analysis assessed the variability over 180 waveforms – with
10 times more potential sources of variability than the intra-subject analysis. The normalized
eigenvalues of the inter-subject analysis might intuitively cover substantially less variability
208 than in the intra-subject analysis. However, a notable increase of the normalized eigenvalues
was only displayed in PC₁, for the muscles RF (from 22.2% vs. 32.9 ± 5.6% [all comparisons:
inter vs. intra [mean ± SD] across the five muscles]), VM (28.9% vs. 39.0 ± 6.7%), VL
(30.2% vs. 37.9 ± 7.1%), and BF (26.1% vs. 32.2 ± 4.3%). The muscle ST showed similar
212 inter-subject and intra-subject variability in PC₁ (39.9% vs. 36.0 ± 5.0%). With regard to PC-
vector waveforms, PC₁, displayed a strong correlation between intra-subject and inter-subject
analyses, while higher-order PCs displayed moderate correlations (particularly PC₂) or
weak/no correlation (PC₃ and higher) (Fig. 4).

216 Based on conceptual considerations, shapes with specific features were predicted (see
Introduction) for the correlated deviations from the mean waveform, i.e. the PC-vectors. Such
features were found in the first (Fig. 5) and second (Fig. 6) PC-vector. Figure 5 shows for the
five analyzed muscles the shape of the inter-subject PC₁-vector (top row) and gives a visual
220 impression of how the waveforms changed when adding the inter-subject PC₁-vectors

weighted with the individual mean PC₁-scores of each subject to the group mean waveform (second row containing 10 graphs). Figure 6 shows the same for PC₂. The main waveform feature predicted for variations in the reaction to heel-strike, an activation peak 30-50 ms after heel-strike, was observed in PC₁ of the muscles VM, VL, ST, and BF (Fig. 5), and in PC₂ of the muscle RF (Fig. 6). These peaks occurred 51.3 ms, 40.0 ms, 52.5 ms, 42.5 ms, and 41.3 ms after heel-strike for the muscles RF, VM, VL, ST, and BF, respectively.

The waveform features that were predicted for variations in the activation prior to heel-strike – high muscle activation after heel-strike followed by a sharp decline at the same time where reactive mechanism peaked – were observed in PC₁ of the muscle RF (Fig. 5) and in PC₂ of the muscles VM, VL, ST, and BF (Fig. 6). All five muscles also showed a gradual increase in muscle activity in these PC-vectors, starting at least 50 ms before heel-strike for the muscles RF, VM, VL and 80-100 ms before heel-strike for the muscles BF and ST. In the three knee extensor muscles (RF, VM, and VL), activation continued to increase after heel-strike, whereas for the knee flexors BF and ST, activation displayed a gradual decline after heel-strike.

The up- or down-regulation of the changes in the waveform as characterized by PC₁ or PC₂ appeared to shift the peak in muscle activation from pre- to post-heel-strike (Figs. 5, 6). The higher-order inter-subject PC-vectors (PC₃ to PC₇) showed multimodal shapes in all muscles with inter-peak time intervals in the range: 53.3 ± 7.8 to 120.8 ± 11.6 ms (Fig. 7).

240

4 Discussion

This study aimed to assess intra-subject and inter-subject variability of knee muscle EMG signals at heel-strike. The main findings were (i) a large fraction of the variability

244 (> 60%) was represented using only a few (three) PCs; (ii) the eigenvalues of the second-order and higher-order PCs did not differ between the inter-subject and intra-subject analyses; and (iii) the shapes of the first two PC-vectors agreed well with predicted shapes derived from conceptual considerations.

248 These findings suggest that the structure within a muscle activation pattern is not randomly organized. A significant fraction of the variability can be explained by a linear combination of distinct activation patterns. The PCA resolved the complex variability in the EMG signal (Fig. 2) into a small number of characteristic waveform deviation patterns
252 (represented by PC-vectors). We hypothesized that these PC-vectors are not mere mathematical constructs, rather that they may be indicative of specific sources of variability affecting the EMG waveform. Specifically, the heel-strike event was identified as a major source of EMG variability, and it was found that for all five analyzed muscles, the shape of
256 the first two PC-vectors exhibited features that had been predicted based on considerations of physiological pre-activation and reaction mechanisms.

Our results suggest that an up- or down-regulation of a reactive mechanism adjusting for the specific conditions present at heel-strike may be an important source of EMG
260 variability represented in the PC₁-vector of the muscles VM, VL, ST, and BF, and in the PC₂-vector of the muscle RF. The strong correlation between inter-subject and intra-subject PC-vectors supports this interpretation. The delay between the heel-strike event and the peak in the PC-vector of the EMG activation was of the same order of magnitude as that previously
264 reported in unconstrained overground walking (af Klint et al., 2010).

Some features associated with pre-activation in preparation for the heel-strike seemed to agree with the shape of the PC₁-vector calculated for the muscle RF and the PC₂-vectors obtained for VM, VL, BF, and ST. Pre-activation ensures that the knee has sufficient stiffness

268 at the moment of heel-strike so as not to collapse; however, in all five muscles, the increase in
activation level was only gradual and set in only 50 to 100 ms before heel-strike. Considering
that the electromechanical delay between electrical stimulation and force production in a
muscle is of the same order of magnitude (Cavanagh and Komi, 1979; Vos et al., 1990; Zhou
272 et al., 1995), it seems questionable that the observed waveform would produce sufficient joint
stiffness at the time of heel-strike. However, the observed PC-vector would fit to a
mechanical model with variable knee stiffness: still relatively soft at the moment of heel-
strike, then rapidly stiffening afterwards. Furthermore, variable knee stiffness due to gradually
276 increasing muscle activation would lead to the soft tissue compartments around the knee
vibrating with an increasing rather than a constant frequency. In fact, variable soft-tissue
vibration frequencies were recently reported for running by Enders et al. (2012).

Variability in the EMG signal is often interpreted as an indication of different neuronal
280 control strategies (Ranganathan and Krishnan, 2012). However, if our interpretation is
correct, a significant fraction of the EMG variability around the time of heel-strike can be
attributed to processes that the neuro-muscular system uses to adjust for the mechanical
conditions present. Moreover, our results suggest the possibility of distinguishing and
284 separately investigating feedback and feed-forward mechanisms in the EMG signals of
complex movements.

Some of the higher-order PC-vectors may be modulations of the two predicted
waveforms as they also showed extreme values at approximately 30-50 ms after heel-strike.
288 Other waveforms exhibited a rhythmical variation with two or three oscillations. Recent
studies have reported a heel-strike adjusted rhythm in the EMG signal at around 40 Hz in both
running (Stirling et al., 2011) and walking (Huber et al., 2011). However, the exact pulse
frequency differed between subjects, which might have led to an inter-subject EMG
292 variability that contributed to the higher-order PC-vector waveforms.

This study offers a new approach for analysis and interpretation of the inter-subject and intra-subject variability in the EMG signals of muscles that control the knee joint. Our interpretation is consistent with the present study's results; however, it is not necessarily the only possible interpretation. Further work is necessary to support or contradict these findings, such as an investigation of EMG variability when the heel-strike characteristics are systematically modified.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors report no potential conflict of interest associated with the study presented in this manuscript.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the Laboratory for Movement Analysis of the Children's University Hospital Basel and the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery of the University Hospital of Basel for their gait analysis equipment. We also acknowledge the financial support of the Emilia Guggenheim-Schnurr foundation, the ProMotio foundation for biomechanical research Basel, and the donation of Dr. med. h.c. H.J. Wyss to the University of Basel in 2004. The authors also thank Beat Göpfert for his technical support and Dr. Tomas Correa for editing English style and grammar.

References

af Klint, R., Cronin, N.J., Ishikawa, M., Sinkjaer, T., Grey, M.J., 2010. Afferent Contribution to Locomotor Muscle Activity During Unconstrained Overground Human Walking: An Analysis of Triceps Surae Muscle Fascicles. *Journal of Neurophysiology* 103 (3), 1262-1274.

Araujo, R.C., Duarte, M., Amadio, A.C., 2000. On the inter- and intra-subject variability of the electromyographic signal in isometric contractions. *Electromyography and Clinical Neurophysiology* 40 (4), 225-229.

- Arsenault, A.B., Winter, D.A., Marteniuk, R.G., (1986). Is there a 'normal' profile of EMG activity in gait? *Medical and Biological Engineering and Computing* 24 (4), 337-343.
- Astephen Wilson, J.L., Deluzio, K.J., Dunbar, M.J., Caldwell, G.E., Hubley-Kozey, C.L.,
320 2011. The association between knee joint biomechanics and neuromuscular control and moderate knee osteoarthritis radiographic and pain severity. *Osteoarthritis and Cartilage* 19 (2), 186-193.
- Basmajian, J.V, De Luca, C.J., 1985. *Muscles Alive: Their Functions Revealed by*
324 *Electromyography*, 5th ed. Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, MD, USA.
- Bizzi, E., Cheung, V.C.K., d'Avella, A., Saltiel, P., Tresch, M., 2008. Combining modules for movement. *Brain Research Reviews* 57 (1), 125-133.
- Blake, O.M., Champoux, Y., Wakeling, J.M., 2012. Muscle Coordination Patterns for
328 Efficient Cycling. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* 44 (5), 926-938.
- Blake, O.M., Wakeling, J.M., 2012. Muscle Coordination During an Outdoor Cycling Time Trial. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* 44 (5), 939-948.
- Boyer, K.A., Nigg, B.M., 2006. Soft tissue vibrations within one soft tissue compartment.
332 *Journal of Biomechanics* 39 (4), 645-651.
- Brooks, V., 1986. *The Neural Basis of Motor Control*. Oxford University Press, New York, USA.
- Cappellini, G., Ivanenko, Y.P., Poppele, R.E., Lacquaniti F., 2006. Motor Patterns in Human
336 Walking and Running. *Journal of Neurophysiology* 95 (6), 3426-3437.
- Cavanagh, P.R., Komi, P.V., 1979. Electromechanical delay in human skeletal muscle under concentric and eccentric contractions. *European Journal of Applied Physiology* 42 (3), 159-163.
- 340 Conforto, S., D'Alessio, T., Pignatelli, S., 1999. Optimal rejection of movement artefacts from myoelectric signals by means of a wavelet filtering procedure. *Journal of Electromyography and Kinesiology* 9 (1), 47-57.

- De Luca, C.J., 1997. The Use of Surface Electromyography in Biomechanics. *Journal of Applied Biomechanics* 13 (2), 135-163.
- Enders, H., von Tscharnner, V., Nigg, B.M., 2012. Analysis of damped tissue vibrations in time-frequency space: a wavelet-based approach. *Journal of Biomechanics* 45 (16), 2855-2859.
- Frigo, C., Crenna, P., 2009. Multichannel SEMG in clinical gait analysis: a review and state-of-the-art. *Clinical Biomechanics* 24 (3), 236-245.
- Giakas, G., Baltzopoulos, V., 1997. Time and frequency domain analysis of ground reaction forces during walking: an investigation of variability and symmetry. *Gait and Posture* 5(3), 187-197.
- Guidetti, L., Rivellini, G., Figura, F., 1996. EMG patterns during running: Intra- and inter-individual variability. *Journal of Electromyography and Kinesiology* 6 (1), 37-48.
- Hermens, H.J., Freriks, B., Disselhorst-Klug, C., Rau, G., 2000. Development of recommendations for SEMG sensors and sensor placement procedures. *Journal of Electromyography and Kinesiology* 10 (5), 361-374.
- Huber, C., Nüesch, C., Göpfert, B., Cattin, P.C., von Tscharnner, V., 2011. Muscular timing and inter-muscular coordination in healthy females while walking. *Journal of Neuroscience and Methods* 201 (1), 27-34.
- Hug, F., Turpin, N.A., Couturier, A., Dorel, S., 2010. Consistency of muscle synergies during pedaling across different mechanical constraints. *Journal of Neurophysiology* 106 (1), 91-103.
- Ivanenko, Y.P., Poppele, R.E., Lacquaniti, F., 2004. Five basic muscle activation patterns account for muscle activity during human locomotion. *Journal of Physiology* 556 (pt 1), 267-282.
- Jolliffe, I.T., 2002. *Principal Component Analysis*. 2nd ed. Springer, New York, USA.
- Kadaba, M.P., Ramakrishnan, H.K., Wootten, M.E., 1990. Measurement of lower extremity kinematics during level walking. *Journal of Orthopaedic Research* 8 (3), 383-392.

- Klarner, T., Chan, H.K., Wakeling, J.M., Lam, T., 2010. Patterns of muscle coordination vary with stride frequency during weight assisted treadmill walking. *Gait and Posture* 31 (3), 360-365.
- 372 Murray, M.P., Kory, R.C., Sepic, S., 1970. Walking patterns of normal women. *Archives of physical medicine* 51 (11), 637-650.
- Nair, S.S., French, R.M., Laroche, D., Thomas, E., 2010. The Application of Machine Learning Algorithms to the Analysis of Electromyographic Patterns From Arthritic Patients. *IEEE Transactions on Neural Systems and Rehabilitation Engineering* 18 (2), 174-184.
- 376 Nigg, B.M., 2001. The Role of Impact Forces and Foot Pronation: A new Paradigm. *Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine* 11 (1), 2-9.
- Nigg, B.M., Liu, W., 1999. The effect of muscle stiffness and damping on simulated force peaks during running. *Journal of Biomechanics* 32 (8), 849-856.
- 380 Nigg, B.M., Wakeling, J.M., 2001. Impact Forces and Muscle Tuning: A new Paradigm. *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews* 29 (1), 37-41.
- Pain, M.T.G., Challis, J.H., 2006. The influence of soft tissue movement on ground reaction forces, joint torques and joint reaction forces in drop landing. *Journal of Biomechanics* 39 (1), 119-124.
- 384 Pain, M.T.G., Challis, J.H., 2004. Wobbling mass influence on impact ground reaction forces: A simulation model sensitivity analysis. *Journal of Applied Biomechanics* 20 (3), 309-316.
- 388 Ranganathan, R., Krishnan, C., 2012. Extracting synergies in gait: using EMG variability to evaluate control strategies. *Journal of Neurophysiology* 108 (5), 1537-1544.
- Sadeghi, H., Prince, F., Sadeghi, S., Labelle, H., 2000. Principal component analysis of the power developed in the flexion/extension muscles of the hip in able-bodied gait. *Medical Engineering & Physics* 22 (10), 703-710.
- 392 Schmidt, R., Lee, T., 1999. *Motor Control and Learning: A Behavioral Emphasis*, 3rd ed. Human Kinetics. Champaign, Ill, USA.

Stirling, L.M., von Tscharnar, V., Kugler, P., Nigg, B.M., 2011. Piper rhythm in the
396 activation of the gastrocnemius medialis during running. *Journal of Electromyography and
Kinesiology* 21 (1), 178-183.

von Tscharnar, V., 2000. Intensity analysis in time-frequency space of surface myoelectric
signals by wavelets of specified resolution. *Journal of Electromyography and Kinesiology* 10
400 (6), 433-445.

von Tscharnar, V., 2002. Time-frequency and principal-component methods for the analysis
of EMGs recorded during a mildly fatiguing exercise on a cycle ergometer. *Journal of
Electromyography and Kinesiology* 12 (6), 479-492.

404 von Tscharnar, V., Goepfert, B., 2003a. Gender dependent EMGs of runners resolved by
time/frequency and principal component analysis. *Journal of Electromyography and
Kinesiology* 13 (3), 253-272.

von Tscharnar, V., Goepfert, B., 2003b. Changes in EMG signals for the muscle tibialis
408 anterior while running barefoot or with shoes resolved by non-linearly scaled wavelets.
Journal of Biomechanics 36 (8), 1169-1176.

Vos, E.J., Mullender, M.G., van Ingen Schenau, G.L., 1990. Electromechanical delay in the
vastus lateralis muscle during dynamic isometric contractions. *European Journal of Applied
412 Physiology and Occupational Physiology* 60 (6), 467-471.

Williams, G.N., Chmielewski, T., Rudolph, K.S., Buchanan, T.S., Snyder-Mackler, L., 2001.
Dynamic Knee Stability: Current Theory and Implications for Clinicians and Scientists.
Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy 31 (10), 546-566.

416 Winter, D.A., Yack, H.J., 1987. EMG profiles during normal human walking: stride-to-stride
and inter-subject variability. *Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology* 67 (5),
402-411.

Zhou, S., Lawson, D.L., Morrison, W.E. Fairweather, I., 1995. Electromechanical delay of
420 knee extensors: the normal range and the effects of age and gender. *Journal of Human*

Movement Studies 28 (3), 127-146.

Figures

424 Fig. 1: Predicted components of the EMG waveform derived from conceptual considerations
of mechanisms that may play a role in the adaptation to the heel-strike. (a) Variability peak
due to attenuation of muscle activity to the specific heel-strike conditions, based on an
assumed reaction time of around 30 ms. (b) Pre-activation prior to impact, persisting until the
428 system attenuates to the specific impact conditions. The predicted waveforms (solid lines) are
affected by the normalization (in the present study, to unit power) that is necessary for
comparison of EMG signals between subjects (De Luca, 1997; Frigo and Crenna, 2009). The
dashed lines in (a) and (b) show a possibility of how the waveform might be distorted, taking
432 into account that muscle activation in the analyzed muscles is mostly absent 200 ms before
and 200 ms after heel-strike (Arsenault et al, 1986).

Fig. 2. The individual mean waveforms for each of the ten subjects (s01 to s10, solid black
436 lines), and the waveforms reconstructed from the group mean waveform and the first three
inter-subject PC-vectors weighted by the individual mean PC-scores (dashed black lines) for
the following muscles: rectus femoris, vastus medialis, vastus lateralis, semitendinosus, and
biceps femoris. Intra-subject variability is indicated by gray shaded areas representing the
440 standard error of the mean calculated for each subject. Each waveform has been scaled by its
maximum range. Time 0 indicates heel-strike (vertical black line).

Fig. 3. The percentage variability explained by the first seven principal components (gray
444 shaded bars) for the inter-subject PCA (left) and the intra-subject PCA (right, error bars

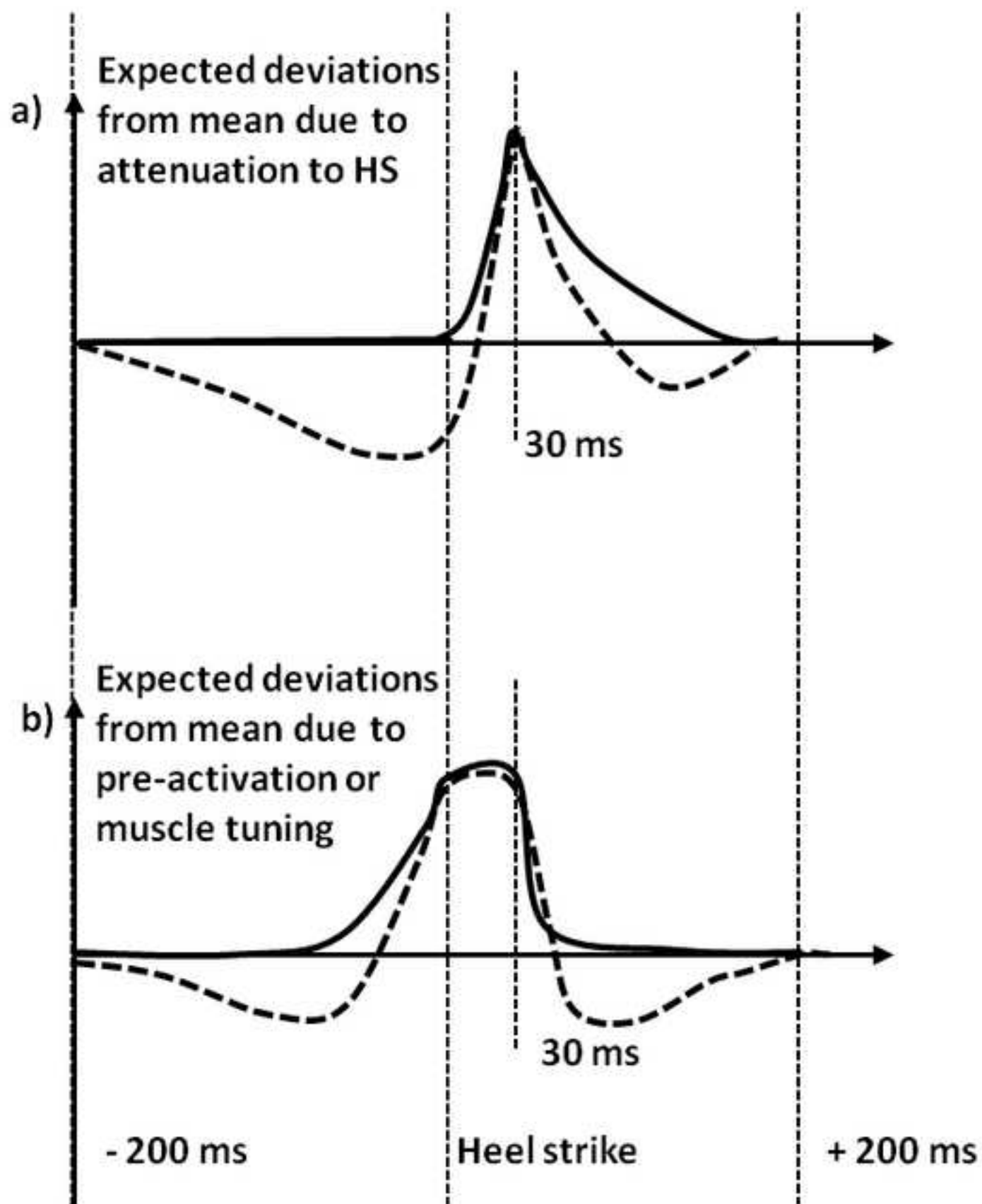
represent SDs across the 10 subjects) for the following muscles: rectus femoris (RF), vastus medialis (VM), vastus lateralis (VL), semitendinosus (ST), and biceps femoris (BF).

448 Fig. 4. Distributions of the correlation coefficients calculated for the 10 sets of intra-subject PC-vectors paired with the inter-subject PC-vector for the first seven PCs. Negative correlation coefficients have been inverted.

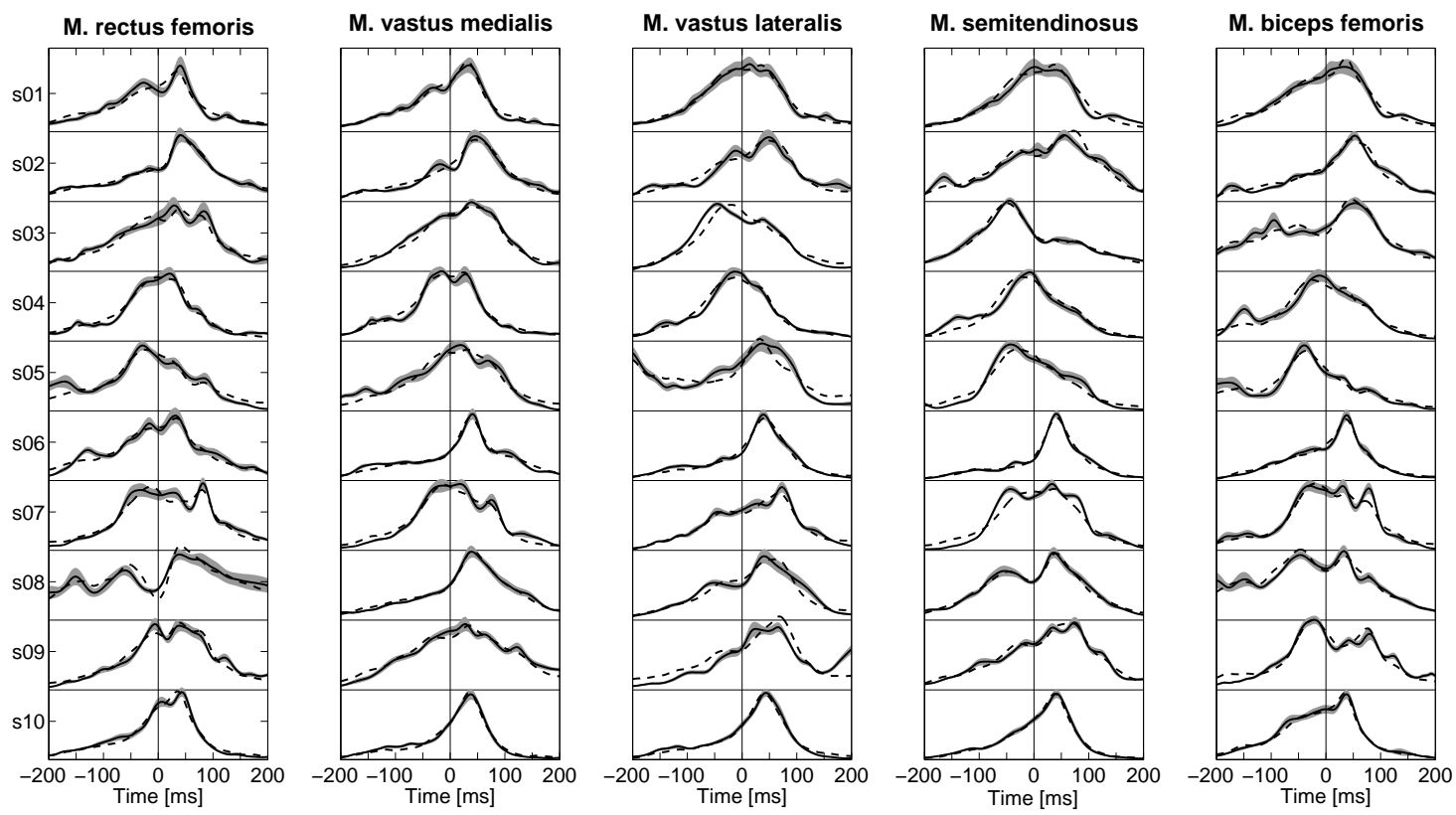
452 Fig. 5. Shape of the inter-subject PC_1 -vector (top row) and line graphs for each of the 10 subjects (s01 to s10) representing changes in the waveform when the PC_1 -vector (weighted by the individual mean PC_1 -score of each subject) was added to the group mean waveform (second row containing 10 graphs). The waveforms have been sorted from positive to
456 negative PC_1 -scores (displayed within each graph). Each waveform has been scaled by its maximum range.

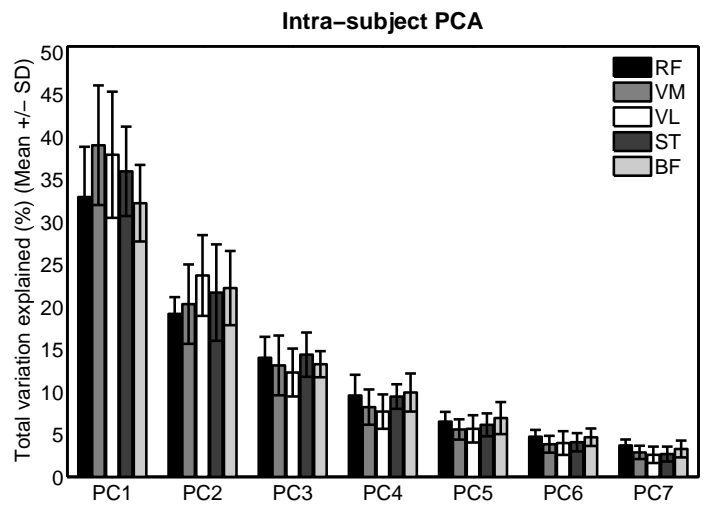
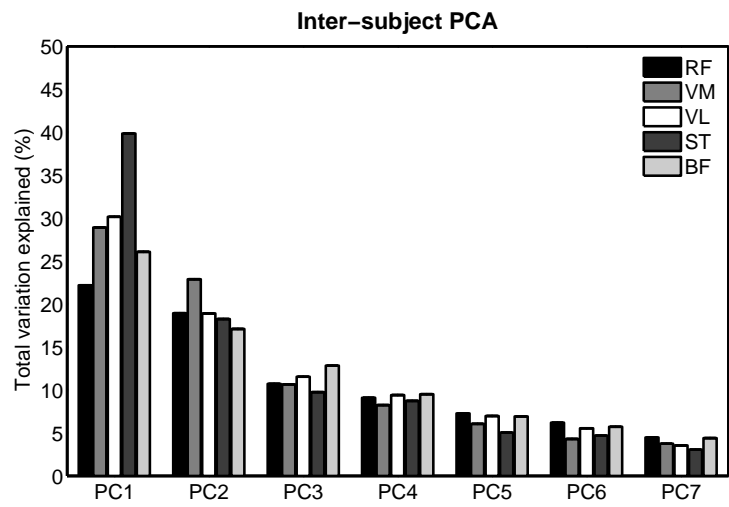
Fig. 6. Shape of the inter-subject PC_2 -vector (top row) and line graphs for each of the
460 10 subjects (s01 to s10) representing changes in the waveform when the PC_2 -vector (weighted by the individual mean PC_2 -score of each subject) was added to the group mean waveform (second row containing 10 graphs). The waveforms have been sorted from positive to
464 negative PC_2 -scores (displayed within each graph). Each line graph is scaled by its maximum range.

Fig. 7. Higher-order inter-subject PC-vectors: PC₃- (first row), PC₄- (second row), PC₅- (third row), PC₆- (fourth row), and PC₇-vectors (sixth row). Time 0 indicates heel-strike (vertical black line).

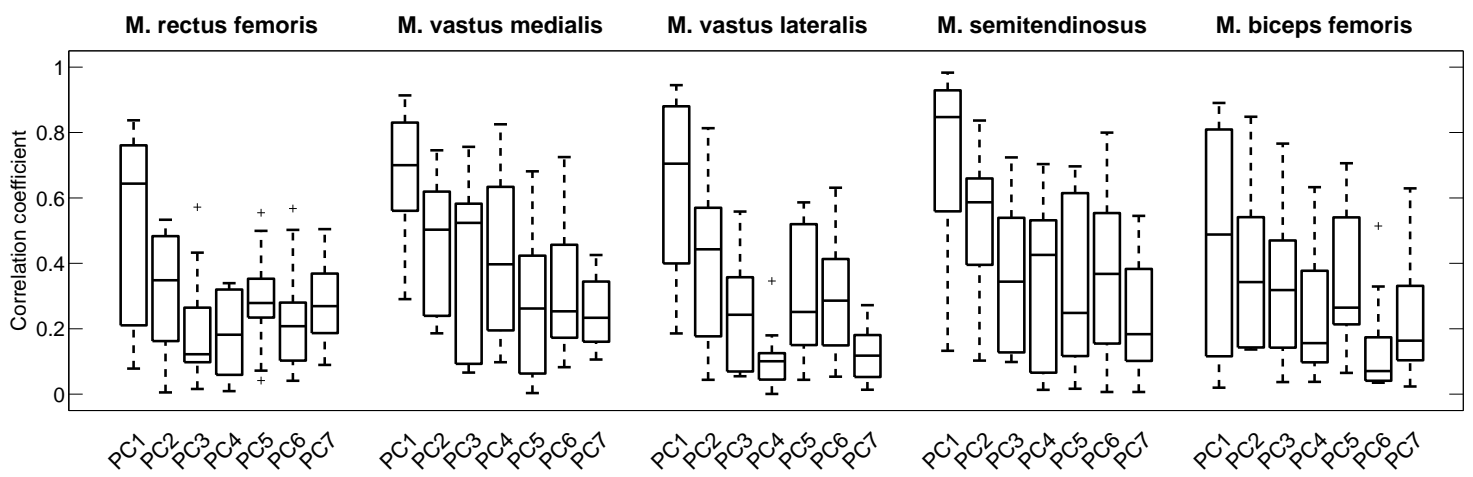


Fig#2

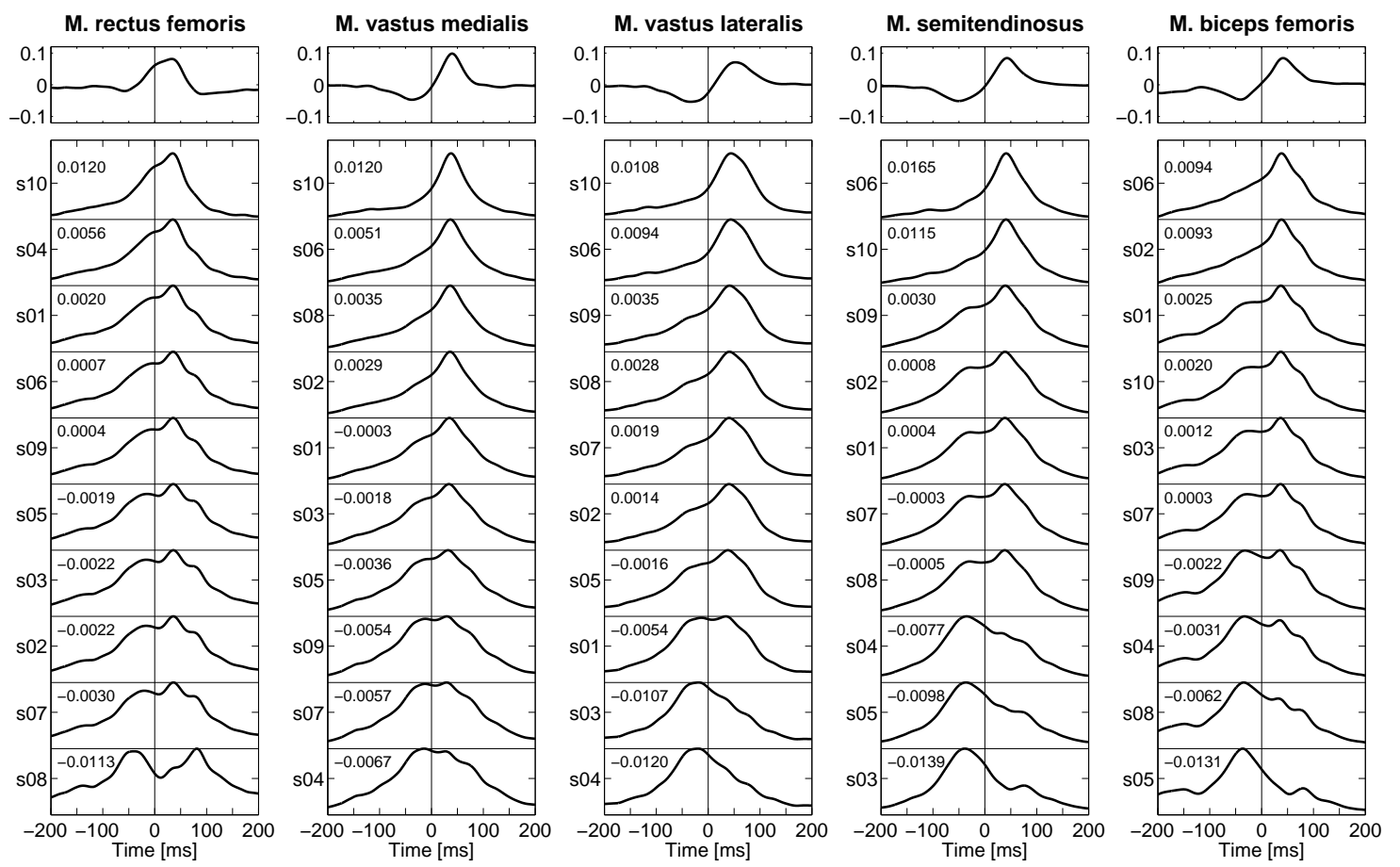




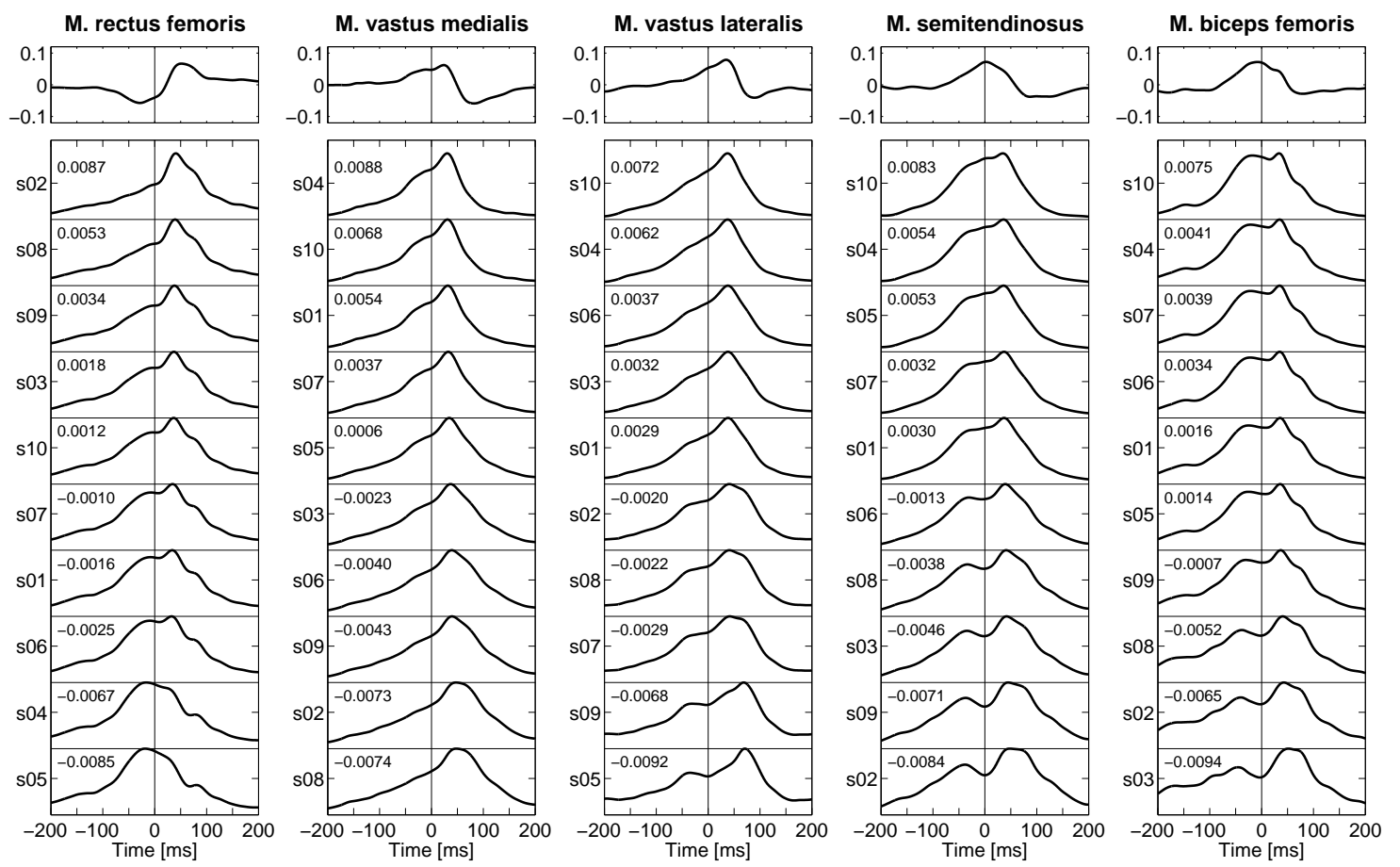
Fig#4



Fig#5



Fig#6



Fig#7

