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## Protein mechanics probed by high-speed force spectroscopy

The mechanical properties of individual proteins play a crucial role during essential cellular processes, such as migration, muscle contraction and adhesion. Thus, knowing the mechanical response at the single molecule level is important to understand biological function. Atomic force microscopy (AFM) is a unique technology that combines nanometric-imaging capabilities with piconewton force resolution. However, AFM is often limited to millisecond time scales, while many biological processes occur at faster rates. We have recently adapted high-speed AFM in force spectroscopy mode to probe protein and cell mechanics at high rates with microsecond time resolution<sup>2</sup>. We applied high-speed force spectroscopy (HS-FS) to probe protein mechanics, including single protein unfolding and receptor/ligand unbinding, at the speeds of molecular dynamics simulations. This combined approach provides an atomic description of unfolding and unbinding processes based on experimental results. We propose HS-FS as a novel tool to confirm molecular dynamics simulations and to access new biophysical regimes relevant in biological function.

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