

**The protonmotive force and respiratory control:**

**Building blocks of mitochondrial physiology**

**Part 1.**

[http://www.mitoeagle.org/index.php/MitoEAGLE\\_preprint\\_2017-09-21](http://www.mitoeagle.org/index.php/MitoEAGLE_preprint_2017-09-21)

Preprint version 04 (2017-09-24)

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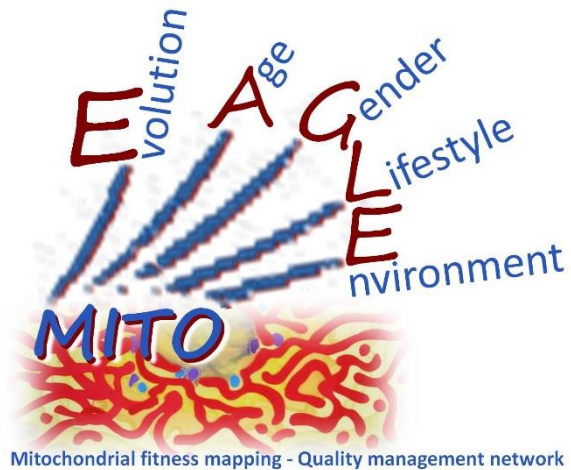
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This manuscript on 'The protonmotive force and respiratory control' is a position statement in the frame of COST Action CA15203 MitoEAGLE. The list of co-authors evolved from MitoEAGLE Working Group Meetings and a **bottom-up** spirit of COST in phase 1: This is an open invitation to scientists and students to join as co-authors, to provide a balanced view on mitochondrial respiratory control, a fundamental introductory presentation of the concept of the protonmotive force, and a consensus statement on reporting data of mitochondrial respiration in terms of metabolic flows and fluxes. We plan a series of follow-up reports by the expanding MitoEAGLE Network, to increase the scope of recommendations on harmonization and facilitate global communication and collaboration.



Phase 2 - until **October 12**: We continue to invite comments and suggestions on the MitoEAGLE preprint, particularly if you are an **early career investigator adding an open future-oriented perspective**, or an **established scientist providing a balanced historical basis**. Your critical input into the quality of the manuscript will be most welcome, improving our aims to be educational, general, consensus-oriented, and practically helpful for students working in mitochondrial respiratory physiology.

To join as a co-author, please feel free to focus on a particular section in terms of direct input and references, contributing to the scope of the manuscript from the perspective of your expertise. Your comments will be largely posted on the discussion page of the MitoEAGLE preprint website.

If you prefer to submit comments in the format of a referee's evaluation rather than a contribution as a co-author, I will be glad to distribute your views to the updated list of co-authors for a balanced response. We would ask for your consent on this open bottom-up policy.

We organize a MitoEAGLE session linked to our series of reports at the MiPconference Nov 2017 in Hradec Kralove in close association with the MiPsociety (where you hopefully will attend) and at EBEC 2018 in Budapest.

» [http://www.mitoeagle.org/index.php/MiP2017\\_Hradec\\_Kralove\\_CZ](http://www.mitoeagle.org/index.php/MiP2017_Hradec_Kralove_CZ)

I thank you in advance for your feedback.

With best wishes,

Erich Gnaiger

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140 **Abstract**

141 Clarity of concepts and consistency of nomenclature are trademarks of a research field across  
142 its specializations, facilitating transdisciplinary communication and education. As research and  
143 knowledge of mitochondrial physiology expand, the necessity for harmonizing nomenclature  
144 concerning mitochondrial respiratory states and rates has become apparent. Peter Mitchell's  
145 concept of the protonmotive force establishes the links between electrical and chemical  
146 components of energy transformation and coupling in oxidative phosphorylation. This unifying  
147 concept provides the framework for developing a consistent terminology of mitochondrial  
148 physiology and bioenergetics. We follow IUPAC guidelines on general terms of physical  
149 chemistry, extended by concepts of open systems and irreversible thermodynamics. We align  
150 the nomenclature of classical bioenergetics on respiratory states with a concept-driven  
151 constructive terminology to address the meaning of each respiratory state. Standards for  
152 evaluation of respiratory states must be followed for the development of databases of  
153 mitochondrial respiratory function in species, tissues and cells studied under diverse  
154 physiological and experimental conditions.

155

156 *Keywords:* Mitochondrial respiratory control, coupling control, mitochondrial  
157 preparations, protonmotive force, chemiosmotic theory, oxidative phosphorylation, OXPHOS,  
158 efficiency, electron transfer system, ETS; proton leak, LEAK, residual oxygen consumption,  
159 ROX, State 2, State 3, State 4, normalization, flow, flux


160

161

162 **Box 1:**

163

164 **In brief:**165 **mitochondria**166 **and Bioblasts**

- \* Does the public expect biologists to understand Darwin's theory of evolution? 
- \* Do students expect that researchers of bioenergetics can explain Mitchell's theory of chemiosmotic energy transformation?

167 **Mitochondria** are dynamic organelles contained within eukaryotic cells, with a double

168 membrane. The inner mitochondrial membrane shows dynamic tubular and disk-shaped cristae

169 that separate the mitochondrial matrix, *i.e.* the internal mitochondrial compartment, and the

170 intermembrane space; the latter being enclosed by the outer mitochondrial membrane.

171 Mitochondria were described for the first time in 1857 by Rudolph Albert von Kölliker as

172 granular structures or 'sarkosomes'. In 1886 Richard Altmann called them 'bioblasts' (published

173 1894). The word 'mitochondrium' (Greek mitos: thread; chondros: granule) was introduced by

174 Carl Benda (1898). Mitochondria are the oxygen consuming electrochemical generators which

175 evolved from endosymbiotic bacteria (Margulis 1970). The bioblasts of Richard Altmann

176 (1894) include not only the mitochondria as presently defined, but also symbiotic and free-

177 living bacteria. Mitochondria are the structural and functional elemental units of cell respiration,

178 where cell respiration is defined as the consumption of oxygen coupled to electrochemical

179 proton translocation across the inner mitochondrial membrane. In the process of oxidative

180 phosphorylation (OXPHOS), the reduction of O<sub>2</sub> is electrochemically coupled to conservation

181 of energy in the form of ATP (Mitchell 2011). As part of the OXPHOS system, these

182 powerhouses of the cell contain the transmembrane respiratory complexes (*i.e.* FMN, Fe-S and183 cytochrome *b, c, aa<sub>3</sub>* redox systems), alternative dehydrogenases and oxidases, the coenzyme

184 ubiquinone (coenzyme Q) and ATP synthase together with the enzymes of the tricarboxylic

185 acid cycle and the fatty acid oxidation enzymes, ion transporters, including substrate, co-factor

186 and metabolite transporters as well as proton pumps, and mitochondrial kinases related to

187 energy transfer pathways. The mitochondrial proteome comprises over 1,200 proteins

188 (Mitocharta), mostly encoded by nuclear DNA (nDNA), with a variety of functions, many of



189 which are relatively well known (*e.g.* apoptosis-regulating proteins), are still under  
190 investigation, or need to be identified (alanine transporter). Mitochondria maintain several  
191 copies of their own genome (hundred to thousands per cell) which is maternally inherited and  
192 known as mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). mtDNA is 16.5 Kb in length, contains 13 protein-  
193 coding genes for subunits of the transmembrane respiratory Complexes CI, CIII, CIV and ATP  
194 synthase, and also encodes 22 tRNAs and the mitochondrial 16S and 12S rRNA. The  
195 mitochondrial genome is both regulated and supplemented by nuclear-encoded mitochondrial  
196 targeted proteins. Evidence has accumulated that additional gene content is encoded in the  
197 mitochondrial genome, *e.g.* microRNAs, smithRNAs, and even additional proteins. The inner  
198 mitochondrial membrane contains the non-bilayer phospholipid cardiolipin, which is not  
199 present in any other eukaryotic cellular membrane. Cardiolipin promotes the formation of  
200 respiratory supercomplexes, which are supramolecular assemblies based upon specific, though  
201 dynamic, interactions between individual respiratory complexes (Lenaz *et al.* 2017). There is a  
202 constant crosstalk between mitochondria and the other cellular components at the  
203 transcriptional or post-translational level, and through cell signalling in response to varying  
204 energy demands (Quiros *et al.* 2016). Mitochondrial morphology can change in response to  
205 energy requirements of the cell via processes known as fusion and fission through which  
206 mitochondria can communicate within a network, and in various pathological states which  
207 cause swelling or dysregulation of fission and fusion. Mitochondrial dysfunction is associated  
208 with a wide variety of genetic and degenerative diseases. Therefore, a better understanding of  
209 mitochondrial physiology will improve our understanding of the etiology of disease and the  
210 diagnostic repertoire of mitochondrial medicine. Abbreviation: mt, as generally used in  
211 mtDNA. Mitochondrion is singular and mitochondria is plural.

212 *‘For the physiologist, mitochondria afforded the first opportunity for an experimental*  
213 *approach to structure-function relationships, in particular those involved in active transport,*


214 *vectorial metabolism, and metabolic control mechanisms on a subcellular level* (Ernster and  
215 Schatz 1981).

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216

## 217 **1. Introduction**

218 Mitochondria are the powerhouses of the cell with numerous physiological, molecular,  
219 and genetic functions (**Box 1**). Every study of mitochondrial function and disease is faced with  
220 **E**volution, **A**ge, **G**ender and sex, **L**ifestyle, and **E**nvironment (EAGLE) as essential background  
221 conditions characterizing the individual patient or subject, cohort, species, tissue and to some  
222 extent even cell line. As a large and highly coordinated group of laboratories and researchers,  
223 the global MitoEAGLE Network's mission is to generate the necessary scale, type, and quality  
224 of consistent data sets and conditions to address this intrinsic complexity. Harmonization of  
225 experimental protocols and implementation of a quality control and data management system  
226 is required to interrelate results gathered across a spectrum of studies and to generate a  
227 rigorously monitored database focused on mitochondrial respiratory function. In this way,  
228 researchers within the same and across different disciplines will be positioned to compare their  
229 findings to an agreed upon set of clearly defined and accepted international standards.

230 Reliability and comparability of quantitative results depend on the accuracy of  
231 measurements under strictly-defined conditions. A conceptually clearly-defined framework is  
232 also required to warrant meaningful interpretation and comparability of experimental outcomes  
233 carried out by research groups at different institutes. With an emphasis on quality of research,  
234 collected data can be useful far beyond the specific question of a specific experiment ague or  
235 ambiguous jargon can lead to confusion and may relegate valuable signals to wasteful noise.  
236 For this reason, measured values must be expressed in standardized units for each parameter  
237 used to define mitochondrial respiratory function. Standardization of nomenclature and  
238 technical terms is essential to improve the awareness of the intricate meaning of divergent  
239 scientific vocabulary. The focus on coupling states in mitochondrial preparations is a first step



240 in the attempt to generate a harmonized and conceptually oriented nomenclature in  
241 bioenergetics and mitochondrial physiology. Coupling states of intact cells and respiratory  
242 control by fuel substrates and specific inhibitors of respiratory enzymes will be reviewed in  
243 subsequent communications.

244

## 245 **2. Respiratory coupling states in mitochondrial preparations**


246 *‘Every professional group develops its own technical jargon for talking about*  
247 *matters of critical concern ... People who know a word can share that idea with*  
248 *other members of their group, and a shared vocabulary is part of the glue that holds*  
249 *people together and allows them to create a shared culture’ (Miller 1991).*

### 250 *2.1. Definitions*

251 **Mitochondrial preparations** are defined as either isolated mitochondria, or tissue and  
252 cellular preparations in which the barrier function of the plasma membrane is disrupted. The  
253 plasma membrane separates the cytosol, nucleus and organelles (the intracellular compartment)  
254 from the environment of the cell. The plasma membrane consists of a lipid bilayer, embedded  
255 proteins and attached organic molecules which collectively control the selective permeability  
256 of ions, organic molecules and particles across the cell boundary. The intact plasma membrane,  
257 therefore, prevents the passage of many water-soluble mitochondrial substrates, such as  
258 succinate or ADP, that are required for the analysis of respiratory capacity at kinetically  
259 saturating concentrations, thus limiting the scope of investigations into mitochondrial  
260 respiratory function in intact cells. The cholesterol content of the plasma membrane is high  
261 compared to mitochondrial membranes. Therefore, mild detergents, such as digitonin and  
262 saponin, can be applied to selectively permeabilize the plasma membrane by interaction with  
263 cholesterol and allow free exchange of cytosolic components with ions and organic molecules  
264 of the immediate cell environment, while maintaining the integrity and localization of  
265 organelles, cytoskeleton and the nucleus. Application of optimum concentrations of these mild

266 detergents leads to the complete loss of cell viability, tested by nuclear staining, while  
267 mitochondrial function remains unaffected, as shown by the lack of a respiratory response of  
268 respiration of isolated mitochondria to the addition of such low concentrations of digitonin and  
269 saponin. Mechanical or chemical permeabilization is applied in tissue homogenates containing  
270 all components of the cell in the crude homogenate at highly diluted concentrations. Likewise,  
271 in permeabilized tissues or cells the functional and structural integrity of mitochondria are  
272 largely maintained. All mitochondria are retained in chemically permeabilized mitochondrial  
273 preparations and crude tissue homogenates. In the preparation of isolated mitochondria the cells  
274 or tissues are homogenized, and the mitochondria are separated from other cell fractions and  
275 purified by centrifugation, entailing the loss of a significant fraction of mitochondria. The term  
276 mitochondrial preparation does not include further fractionation of mitochondrial components,  
277 as well as submitochondrial particles.

278       **Control and regulation:** The terms metabolic *control* and *regulation* are frequently used  
279 synonymously, but are distinguished in metabolic control analysis: ‘We could understand the  
280 regulation as the mechanism that occurs when a system maintains some variable constant over  
281 time, in spite of fluctuations in external conditions (homeostasis of the internal state). On the  
282 other hand, metabolic control is the power to change the state of the metabolism in response to  
283 an external signal’ (Fell 1997). Respiratory control may be induced by experimental control  
284 signals that *exert* an influence on: (1) ATP demand and ADP phosphorylation rate; (2) fuel  
285 substrate, pathway competition and oxygen availability, *e.g.*, starvation and hypoxia; (3) the  
286 protonmotive force, redox states, flux-force relationships, coupling and efficiency; (4)  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and  
287 other ions including  $\text{H}^+$ ; (5) inhibitors, *e.g.*, nitric oxide or intermediary metabolites, such as  
288 oxaloacetate. *Mechanisms* of respiratory control and regulation include adjustments of (1)  
289 enzyme activities by allosteric mechanisms and phosphorylation, (2) enzyme content,  
290 concentrations of cofactors and conserved moieties (such as adenylates, nicotinamide adenine  
291 dinucleotide [ $\text{NAD}^+/\text{NADH}$ ], coenzyme Q, cytochrome *c*); (3) metabolic channeling by

292 supercomplexes; and (4) mitochondrial density (enzyme concentrations and membrane area)  
293 and morphology (cristae folding, fission and fusion). (5) Mitochondria are targeted directly by  
294 hormones, thereby affecting their energy metabolism (Lee *et al.* 2013; Gerö and Szabo 2016;  
295 Price and Dai 2016; Moreno *et al.* 2017). Evolutionary or acquired differences in the genetic  
296 and epigenetic basis of mitochondrial function (or dysfunction) between subjects and **gene**   
297 **therapy**; age; gender, biological sex, and hormone concentrations; life style including exercise  
298 and nutrition; and environmental issues including thermal, atmospheric, toxicological and  
299 pharmacological factors, exert an influence on all control mechanisms listed above (for reviews,  
300 see Brown 1992; Gnaiger 1993a, 2009; 2014; Paradies *et al.* 2014; Morrow *et al.* 2017).

301 **Respiratory control and response:** There is a difference between control by a fixed  
302 component of a metabolic system or module, e.g. ATP synthase, and the response to an  
303 experimental variable, e.g., fuel substrate or ADP. Whilst lack of control by a metabolic  
304 module, e.g. phosphorylation system, does mean that there will be no response to a variable  
305 activating it, e.g. [ADP], the reverse is not true; *i.e.*, lack of response to [ADP] does not exclude  
306 the phosphorylation system from having some degree of control. The degree of control of a  
307 component of the OXPHOS system on an output variable of the system, such as oxygen flux,  
308 will in general be different from the degree of control on other outputs, such as phosphorylation  
309 flux, cytochrome redox states, protonmotive force, phosphorylation potential, and proton leak  
310 flux (**Box 2**). As such, it is necessary to be specific as to which output is under consideration.  
311 Respiratory control is insufficiently specific in the context of specific interpretations (Fell  
312 1997).

313 **Respiratory coupling control:** Respiratory control is monitored in a mitochondrial  
314 preparation under conditions defined as respiratory states. When phosphorylation of ADP to  
315 ATP is stimulated or depressed, an increase or decrease is observed in electron flux linked to  
316 oxygen consumption in ‘controlled’ coupling states in intact mitochondria. Alternatively,  
317 coupling of electron transfer with phosphorylation is disengaged by disruption of the integrity

318 of the inner mitochondrial membrane or by uncouplers, functioning like a clutch in a  
319 mechanical system. The corresponding coupling control state is characterized by high levels of  
320 oxygen consumption without control by phosphorylation ('uncontrolled state'; classical  
321 terminology). Energetic coupling is defined in **Box 3**. Respiratory control refers to the ability  
322 of mitochondria to adjust oxygen consumption in response to external control signals by  
323 engaging various mechanisms of control and regulation. Loss of coupling by intrinsic  
324 uncoupling and decoupling, or pathological dyscoupling lowers the efficiency. Such  
325 generalized uncoupling is different from switching to mitochondrial pathways that involve  
326 fewer than three proton pumps ('coupling sites': Complexes CI, CIII and CIV), bypassing CI  
327 through multiple electron entries into the Q-junction (**Fig. 1**). A bypass of CIII and CIV is  
328 provided by alternative oxidases, which reduce oxygen without proton translocation.  
329 Reprogramming of mitochondrial pathways may be considered as a switch of gears (changing  
330 the stoichiometry) rather than uncoupling (loosening the stoichiometry).


331 **Pathway control states** are obtained in mitochondrial preparations by depletion of  
332 endogenous substrates and addition to the mitochondrial respiration medium of fuel substrates  
333 (CHNO) and specific inhibitors, activating selected mitochondrial pathways (**Fig. 1**). Coupling  
334 control states and pathway control states are complementary, since mitochondrial preparations  
335 depend on an exogenous supply of pathway-specific fuel substrates and oxygen (Gnaiger 2014).

336

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### 337 **Box 2: Metabolic fluxes and flows: vectorial and scalar**

338 In the mitochondrial electron transfer system (**Fig. 1**), vectorial transmembrane proton flux is  
339 coupled through the proton pumps CI, CIII and CIV to the catabolic flux of scalar reactions,  
340 collectively measured as oxygen flux. In **Fig. 2**, the scalar catabolic reaction,  $k$ , of oxygen  
341 consumption,  $J_{O_2,k}$  [ $\text{mol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ ], is expressed as oxygen flux per volume,  $V$  [ $\text{m}^3$ ], of the  
342 experimental chamber (the system). Fluxes are *vectors*, if they have *spatial* direction in addition  
343 to magnitude. A vector flux (surface-density of flow) is expressed per unit cross-sectional area,

344  $A$  [ $\text{m}^2$ ], perpendicular to the direction of flux. If *flows*,  $I$ , are defined as extensive quantities of  
 345 the *system*, as vector or scalar flow,  $I$  or  $I$  [ $\text{mol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ ], respectively, then the corresponding vector  
 346 and scalar *fluxes*,  $J$ , are obtained as  $J=I\cdot A^{-1}$  [ $\text{mol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$ ] and  $J=I\cdot V^{-1}$  [ $\text{mol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ ], respectively,  
 347 expressing flux as an area-specific vector or volume-specific scalar quantity. Volume-specific  
 348 scalar  $\text{O}_2$  flux is coupled (**Box 3**) to vectorial translocation of protons across the inner  
 349 mitochondrial membrane, from the negative compartment (matrix space; N-phase) to the  
 350 positive compartment (inter-membrane space; P-phase; **Fig. 2**). The *scalar or compartmental*  
 351 direction of a chemical reaction,  $A \rightarrow B$ , is defined by assigning substrates and products, A and  
 352 B, as energetic ‘compartments’ ( $\text{O}_2$  is defined as a substrate in respiratory  $\text{O}_2$  consumption). In  
 353 direct analogy to  $A \rightarrow B$ , the compartmental direction of a vectorial translocation (*e.g.*  
 354 diffusion) from the N-phase to the P-phase is defined by assigning the initial and final state as  
 355 energetic compartments,  $\text{H}^+_{\text{in}} \rightarrow \text{H}^+_{\text{out}}$ , respectively (Gnaiger 1993b). Vectorial transmembrane  
 356 proton flux,  $J_{\text{H}^+,\text{out}}$ , is analyzed in a heterogenous compartmental system as a quantity with  
 357 *directional* but not *spatial*  information. In order to establish a quantitative relation between the  
 358 coupled fluxes, both  $J_{\text{O}_2,\text{k}}$  and  $J_{\text{H}^+,\text{out}}$  must be expressed in identical units ( $[\text{mol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}]$  or  
 359  $[\text{C}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}]$ ), yielding the  $\text{H}^+_{\text{out}}/\text{O}_2$  ratio (**Fig. 1**). The *vectorial* proton flux in compartmental  
 360 translocation has *compartmental direction*, distinguished from a *vector* flux with *spatial*  
 361 *direction*. Likewise, the corresponding protonmotive force is defined as an electrochemical  
 362 potential *difference* between two compartments, which is different from a vector force or  
 363 *gradient* across the membrane with defined spatial direction.

364

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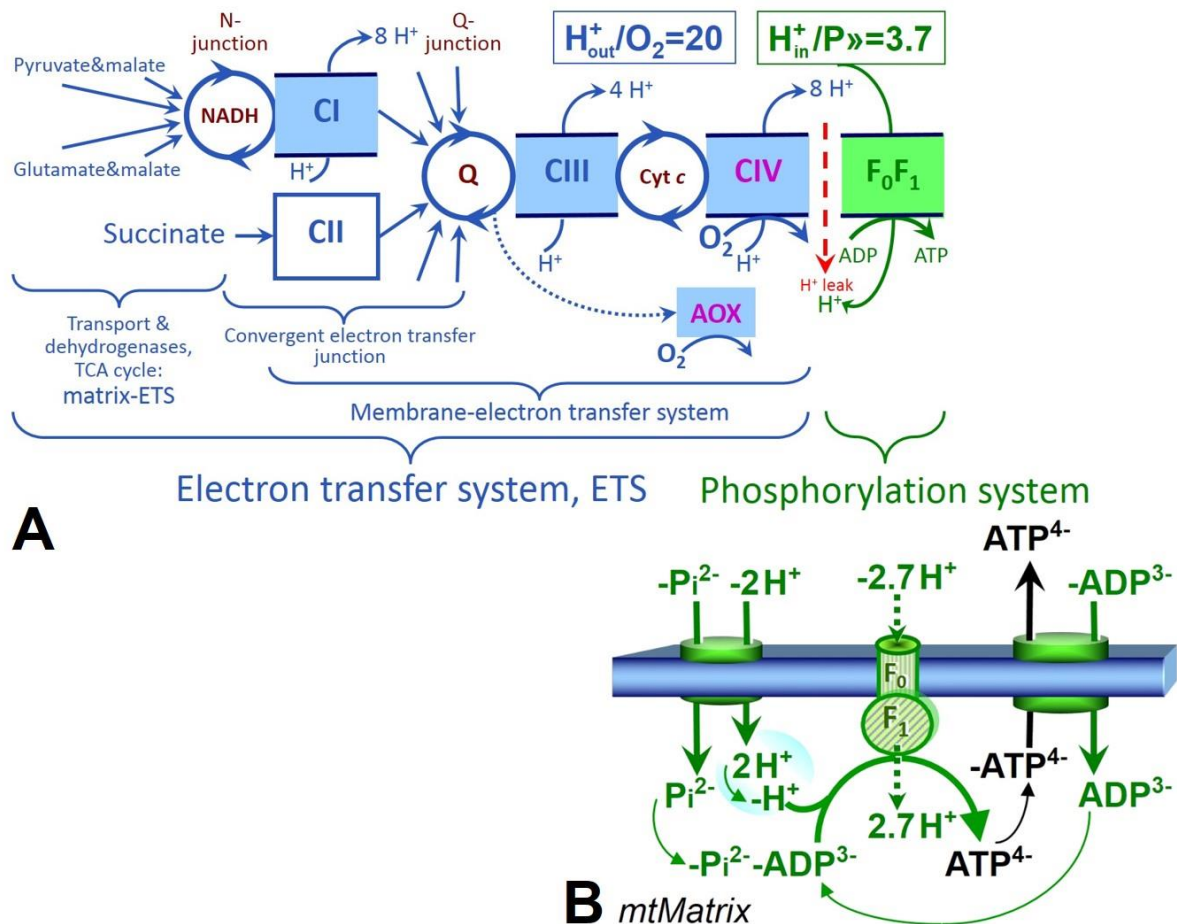
## 365 2.2. Three coupling states of mitochondrial preparations and residual oxygen consumption

366 **Coupling control states:** To extend the classical nomenclature on mitochondrial  
 367 coupling states (Section 2.3) by a concept-driven terminology that incorporates explicit  
 368 information on the nature of the respiratory states, the terminology must be general and not  
 369 restricted to any particular experimental protocol or mitochondrial preparation (Gnaiger 2009).

370 We focus primarily on the conceptual ‘why’, along with clarification of the experimental ‘how’.  
371 In the following section, the concept-driven terminology is explained and coupling states are  
372 defined. The capacity of *oxidative phosphorylation*, OXPHOS, provides diagnostic reference  
373 values for physiological respiratory capacities of defined pathways of core energy metabolism  
374 and is, therefore, measured at kinetically saturating concentrations of ADP and inorganic  
375 phosphate, P<sub>i</sub>. The *oxidative* capacity of the electron transfer system, ETS, reveals the limitation  
376 of OXPHOS capacity mediated by the *phosphorylation* system. ETS capacity is measured as  
377 noncoupled respiration by application of *external uncouplers*. The contribution of *intrinsically*  
378 *uncoupled* oxygen consumption is most easily studied by not stimulating or arresting  
379 phosphorylation, when oxygen consumption compensates mainly for the proton leak; the  
380 corresponding states are collectively classified as LEAK states (**Table 1**). Coupling states of  
381 mitochondrial preparations can be compared in any defined mitochondrial pathway control state  
382 (**Fig. 1**). Fuel substrates and ETS inhibitors are kept constant while (1) adding ADP or P<sub>i</sub>, (2)  
383 inhibiting the phosphorylation system, and (3) performing uncoupler titrations.

384 **Respiratory capacities and kinetic control:** Coupling control states are established in  
385 the study of mitochondrial preparations to obtain reference values for various output variables.  
386 Physiological conditions *in vivo* may deviate substantially from these experimentally obtained  
387 states. Since kinetically saturating concentrations, *e.g.* of ADP or oxygen, may not apply to  
388 physiological intracellular conditions, relevant information is obtained in studies of kinetic  
389 responses to conditions intermediate between the LEAK state at zero [ADP] and the OXPHOS  
390 state at saturating [ADP], or of respiratory capacities in the range between kinetically saturating  
391 [O<sub>2</sub>] and anoxia (Gnaiger 2001). We define respiratory capacities, comparable to channel  
392 capacity in information theory, as the upper bound of the rate of respiration measured in defined  
393 coupling and pathway control states of mitochondrial preparations (**Box 3**).

394



395

396 **Fig. 1. The mitochondrial respiratory system and oxidative phosphorylation. (A)** The electron

397 transfer system, ETS, and coupling to the phosphorylation system. Multiple convergent electron transfer

398 pathways are shown from NADH and succinate; additional arrows indicate electron entry through

399 electron transferring flavoprotein, glycerophosphate dehydrogenase, dihydro-otate dehydrogenase,

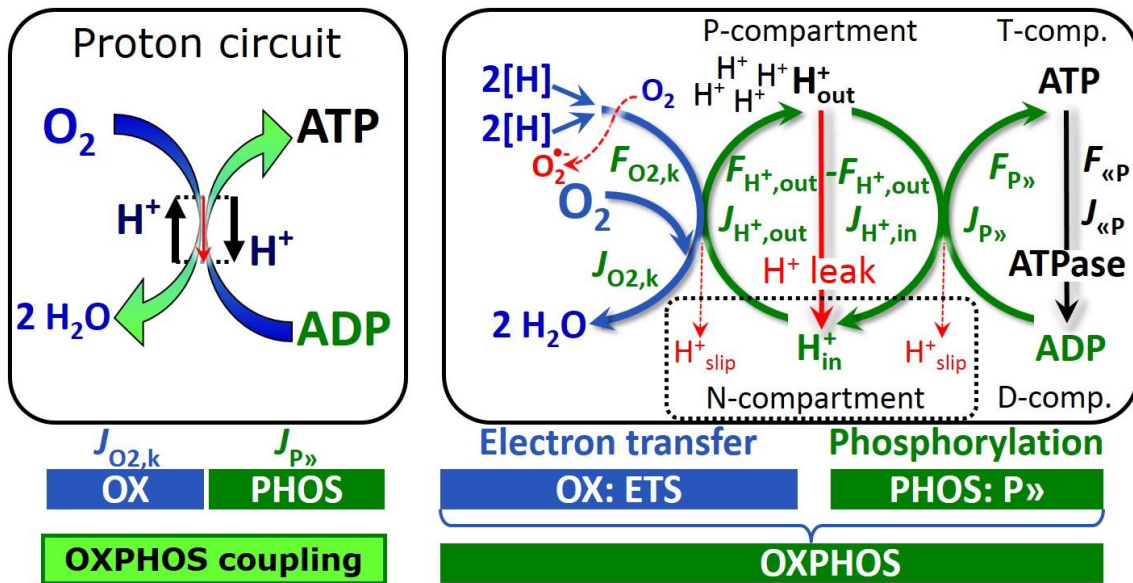
400 choline dehydrogenase, and sulfide-ubiquinone oxidoreductase. The branched pathway of oxygen

401 consumption by alternative quinol oxidase (AOX) is indicated by the dotted arrow.  $H_{out}^+ / O_2$  is the ratio of402 outward proton flux from the matrix space to catabolic O<sub>2</sub> flux in the NADH-linked pathway.  $H_{in}^+ / P \gg$  is

403 the ratio of inward proton flux from the inter-membrane space to the flux of phosphorylation of ADP to

404 ATP. Due to proton leak and slip these are not fixed stoichiometries. **(B)** Phosphorylation system405 consisting of the F<sub>1</sub>F<sub>0</sub> ATP synthase, adenine nucleotide translocase, and the inorganic phosphate406 transporter. The  $H_{in}^+ / P \gg$  stoichiometry is the sum of the coupling stoichiometry in the ATP synthase407 reaction (-2.7 H<sup>+</sup> from the intermembrane space, 2.7 H<sup>+</sup> to the matrix) and the proton balance in the408 translocation of ADP<sup>2-</sup>, ATP<sup>3-</sup> and Pi<sup>2-</sup>. See Eqs. 3 and 4 for further explanation. Modified from (A)409 Lemieux *et al.* (2017) and (B) Gnaiger (2014).

410



411  
 412 **Fig. 2. The proton circuit and coupling in oxidative phosphorylation (OXPHOS).** Oxygen flux,  $J_{O_2,k}$ ,  
 413 in a catabolic reaction  $k$  is coupled to the phosphorylation of ADP to ATP,  $J_{P\gg}$ , by the proton pumps of  
 414 the electron transfer system, ETS, pushing the outward proton flux,  $J_{H^+,out}$ , and generating the output  
 415 protonmotive force,  $F_{H^+,out}$ . ATP synthase is coupled to inward proton flux,  $J_{H^+,in}$ , to phosphorylate ADP  
 416 with inorganic phosphate to ATP, driven by the input protonmotive force,  $F_{H^+,in} = -F_{H^+,out}$ .  $2[H]$  indicates  
 417 the reduced hydrogen equivalents of fuel substrates that provide the chemical input force,  $F_{O_2,k}$  [kJ/mol  
 418  $O_2$ ], of the catabolic reaction  $k$  with oxygen (Gibbs energy of reaction per mole  $O_2$  consumed in reaction  
 419  $k$ ), typically in the range of -460 to -480 kJ/mol. The output force is given by the phosphorylation potential  
 420 difference (ADP phosphorylated to ATP),  $F_{P\gg}$ , which varies *in vivo* ranging from about 48 to 62 kJ/mol  
 421 under physiological conditions. Fluxes,  $J_B$ , and forces,  $F_B$ , are expressed in either chemical units,  
 422  $[mol \cdot s^{-1} \cdot m^{-3}]$  and  $[J \cdot mol^{-1}]$  respectively, or electrical units,  $[C \cdot s^{-1} \cdot m^{-3}]$  and  $[J \cdot C^{-1}]$  respectively, per volume,  
 423  $V [m^3]$ , of the system. The system defined by the boundaries shown as a full black line is not a black  
 424 box, but is analysed as a compartmental system. The negative compartment (N-compartment, enclosed  
 425 by the dotted line) is the matrix space, separated from the positive compartment (P-compartment) by  
 426 the inner mitochondrial membrane.  $ADP + P_i$  and  $ATP$  are the substrate- and product-compartments  
 427 (scalar D- and T-comp.), respectively. Chemical potentials of all substrates and products involved in the  
 428 scalar reactions are measured in the P-compartment for calculation of the scalar forces  $F_{O_2,k}$  and  
 429  $F_{P\gg} = -F_{\ll P}$ . Modified from Gnaiger (2014).

430



431       **Phosphorylation, P $\gg$** : *Phosphorylation* in the context of OXPHOS is defined as  
 432 phosphorylation of ADP to ATP. On the other hand, the term phosphorylation is used generally  
 433 in many different contexts, *e.g.* protein phosphorylation. This justifies consideration of a  
 434 symbol more discriminating and specific than P as used in the P/O ratio (phosphate to atomic  
 435 oxygen ratio), where P indicates phosphorylation of ADP to ATP or GDP to GTP. We propose  
 436 the symbol P $\gg$  for the endergonic direction of phosphorylation ADP $\rightarrow$ ATP, and likewise the  
 437 symbol  $\ll$ P for the corresponding exergonic hydrolysis ATP $\rightarrow$ ADP (**Fig. 2**). ATP synthase is  
 438 the proton pump of the phosphorylation system (**Fig. 1B**). P $\gg$  may also involve substrate-level  
 439 phosphorylation as part of the tricarboxylic acid cycle (succinyl-CoA ligase) and  
 440 phosphorylation of ADP catalyzed by phosphoenolpyruvate carboxykinase, adenylate kinase,  
 441 creatine kinase, hexokinase and nucleoside diphosphate kinase (NDPK). Kinase cycles are  
 442 involved in intracellular energy transfer and signal transduction for regulation of energy flux.  
 443 In isolated mammalian mitochondria ATP production catalyzed by adenylate kinase,  $2\text{ADP} \leftrightarrow$   
 444  $\text{ATP} + \text{AMP}$ , proceeds without fuel substrates in the presence of ADP (Komlódi and Tretter  
 445 2017).  $J_{\text{P}\gg}/J_{\text{O}_2,k}$  (P $\gg$ /O<sub>2</sub>) is two times the ‘P/O’ ratio of classical bioenergetics. The effective  
 446 P $\gg$ /O<sub>2</sub> ratio is diminished by: (1) the proton leak across the inner mitochondrial membrane from  
 447 low pH in the P-phase to high pH in the N-phase (P, positive; N, negative); (2) cycling of other  
 448 cations; (3) proton slip in the proton pumps when a proton effectively is not pumped; and (4)  
 449 electron leak in the univalent reduction of oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>; dioxygen) to superoxide anion radical  
 450 (O<sub>2</sub> $\cdot^-$ ).

451

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### 452 **Box 3: Coupling, power and efficiency, at constant temperature and pressure**

453 Energetic coupling means that two processes of energy transformation are linked such that the  
 454 input power,  $P_{\text{in}}$ , is the driving element of the output power,  $P_{\text{out}}$ , and the out/input power ratio  
 455 is the efficiency. In general, power is work per unit time [ $\text{J}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}=\text{W}$ ]. When describing a system  
 456 with volume  $V$  without information on the internal structure, the output is defined as the *external*

457 work (exergy) performed by the *total* system on its environment. Such as system may be open  
 458 for any type of exchange, or closed and thus allowing only heat and work to be exchanged  
 459 across the system boundaries. This is the classical black box approach of thermodynamics. In  
 460 contrast, in a colourful compartmental analysis of *internal* energy transformations (**Fig. 2**), the  
 461 system is structured and described by definition of internal compartments (with information on  
 462 the heterogeneity of the system; **Box 2**) and analysis of separate parts, *i.e.* a sequence of *partial*  
 463 energy transformations, *tr*. In general, power per unit volume,  $P_{tr}/V$  [ $W.L^{-1}$ ], is the product of a  
 464 volume-specific flux,  $J_{tr}$ , and its conjugated force,  $F_{tr}$ , and is closely linked to the dissipation  
 465 function using the terminology of irreversible thermodynamics (Prigogine 1967; Gnaiger  
 466 1993a,b). Output power of proton translocation and catabolic input power are (**Fig. 2**),

467 Output: 
$$P_{H^+,out}/V = J_{H^+,out} \cdot F_{H^+,out}$$

468 Input: 
$$P_k/V = J_{O_2,k} \cdot F_{O_2,k}$$

469  $F_{O_2,k}$  is the exergonic input force with a negative sign, and,  $F_{H^+,out}$ , is the endergonic output  
 470 force with a positive sign (**Box 4**). Ergodynamic efficiency is the ratio of output/input power,  
 471 or the flux ratio times force ratio (Gnaiger 1993a,b),

472 
$$\varepsilon = \frac{P_{H^+,out}}{-P_k} = \frac{J_{H^+,out}}{J_{O_2,k}} \cdot \frac{F_{H^+,out}}{-F_{O_2,k}}$$

473 The concept of incomplete coupling relates exclusively to the first term, *i.e.* the flux ratio, or  
 474  $H^+_{out}/O_2$  ratio (**Fig. 1**). Likewise, respirometric definitions of the  $P_{tr}/O_2$  ratio and biochemical  
 475 coupling efficiency (Section 3.2) consider flux ratios. In a completely coupled process, the  
 476 power efficiency,  $\varepsilon$ , depends entirely on the force ratio, ranging from zero efficiency at an  
 477 output force of zero, to the limiting output force and maximum efficiency of 1.0, when the total  
 478 power of the coupled process,  $P_{tr} = P_k + P_{H^+,out}$ , equals zero, and any net flows are zero at  
 479 ergodynamic equilibrium of a coupled process. Thermodynamic equilibrium is defined as the  
 480 state when all potentials (all forces) are dissipated and equilibrate towards their minima of zero.  
 481 In a fully or completely coupled process, output and input fluxes are directly proportional in a

482 fixed ratio technically defined as a stoichiometric relationship (a gear ratio in a mechanical  
 483 system). Such maximal stoichiometric output/input flux ratios are considered in OXPPOS  
 484 analysis as the upper limits or mechanistic  $H^+_{out}/O_2$  and  $P_{\gg}/O_2$  ratios (**Fig. 1**).

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485

486 **The steady-state:** Mitochondria represent a thermodynamically open system functioning  
 487 as a biochemical transformation system in non-equilibrium states. State variables (protonmotive  
 488 force; redox states) and metabolic fluxes (*rates*) are measured in defined mitochondrial  
 489 respiratory *states*. Strictly, steady states can be obtained only in open systems, in which changes  
 490 due to *internal* transformations, *e.g.*,  $O_2$  consumption, are instantaneously compensated for by  
 491 *external* fluxes *e.g.*,  $O_2$  supply, such that oxygen concentration does not change in the system  
 492 (Gnaiger 1993b). Mitochondrial respiratory states monitored in closed systems satisfy the  
 493 criteria of pseudo-steady states for limited periods of time, when changes in the system  
 494 (concentrations of  $O_2$ , fuel substrates, ADP,  $P_i$ ,  $H^+$ ) do not exert significant effects on metabolic  
 495 fluxes (respiration, phosphorylation). Such pseudo-steady states require respiratory media with  
 496 sufficient buffering capacity and kinetically saturating concentrations of substrates to be  
 497 maintained, and thus depend on the kinetics of the processes under investigation. Proton  
 498 turnover,  $J_{\infty H^+}$ , and ATP turnover,  $J_{\infty P}$ , proceed in the steady-state at constant  $F_{H^+,out}$ , when  $J_{\infty H^+}$   
 499  $= J_{H^+,out} = J_{H^+,in}$ , and at constant  $F_{P_{\gg}}$ , when  $J_{\infty P} = J_{P_{\gg}} = J_{\ll P}$  (**Fig. 2**).

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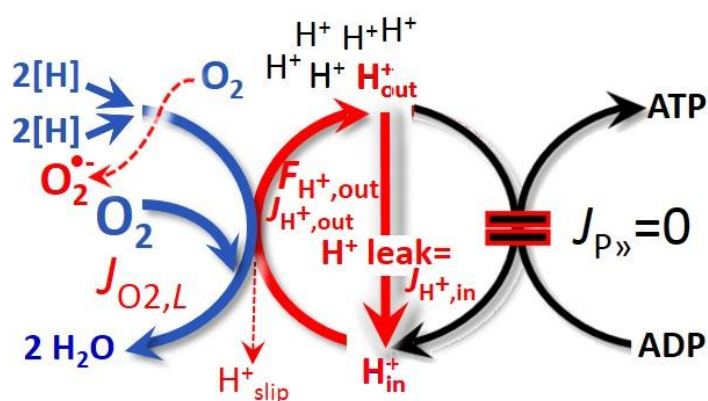
507 **Table 1. Coupling states and residual oxygen consumption in mitochondrial**  
 508 **preparations in relation to respiration and phosphorylation rate,  $J_{O_2,k}$  and  $J_{P_{\gg}}$ ,**  
 509 **and protonmotive force,  $F_{H^+,out}$ .** Coupling states are established at kinetically  
 510 saturating concentrations of fuel substrates and  $O_2$ .

State	$J_{O_2,k}$	$J_{P_{\gg}}$	$F_{H^+,out}$	Inducing factors	Limiting factors
LEAK	$L$ ; low proton leak-dependent respiration;	0	max.	Proton leak, slip, and cation cycling	$J_{P_{\gg}}=0$ : (1) without ADP, $L_N$ ; (2) max. ATP/ADP ratio, $L_T$ ; or (3) inhibition of the ADP phosphorylation system, $L_{Omy}$
OXPHOS	$P$ ; high ADP-stimulated respiration	max.	high	Kinetically saturating [ADP] and $[P_i]$	$J_{P_{\gg}}$ by phosphorylation system; or $J_{O_2,k}$ by electron transfer system
ETS	$E$ ; max. noncoupled respiration	0	low	Optimal external uncoupler concentration for max. oxygen flux	$J_{O_2,k}$ by electron transfer system
ROX	$R_{ox}$ ; min. residual $O_2$ consumption	0	0	$J_{O_2,Rox}$ in non-ETS oxidation reactions	Full inhibition of ETS or absence of fuel substrates

511  
 512  
 513 **LEAK state (Fig. 3):**


514 LEAK state is defined as a state  
 515 of mitochondrial respiration  
 516 when  $O_2$  flux mainly  
 517 compensates for the proton leak  
 518 in the absence of ATP synthesis,  
 519 at kinetically saturating  
 520 concentrations of  $O_2$  and  
 521 respiratory substrates. LEAK  
 522 respiration is measured to obtain

523 an indirect estimate of *intrinsic uncoupling* without addition of any experimental uncoupler: (1)



**Fig. 3. LEAK state:** Phosphorylation is arrested,  $J_{P_{\gg}}=0$ , and oxygen flux,  $J_{O_2,L}$ , is controlled mainly by the proton leak, which equals  $J_{H^+,in}$ , at maximum protonmotive force,  $F_{H^+,out}$  (See also Fig. 2).

524 in the absence of adenylates; (2) after depletion of ADP at maximum ATP/ADP ratio; or (3)  
525 after inhibition of the phosphorylation system by inhibitors of ATP synthase, such as  
526 oligomycin, or adenine nucleotide translocase, such as carboxyatractyloside.

527 **Proton leak:** Proton leak is the *uncoupled* process in which protons are translocated  
528 across the inner mitochondrial membrane in the dissipative direction of the downhill  
529 protonmotive force without coupling to phosphorylation (**Fig. 3**). The proton leak flux depends  
530 on the protonmotive force, is a property of the inner mitochondrial membrane, may be enhanced  
531 due to possible contaminations by free fatty acids, and is physiologically controlled. In  
532 particular, uncoupling mediated by uncoupling protein 1 (UCP1) is physiologically controlled,  
533 *e.g.*, in brown adipose tissue. UCP1 is a proton channel of the inner mitochondrial membrane  
534 facilitating the conductance of protons across the inner mitochondrial membrane. As  
535 consequence of this effective short-circuit, the protonmotive force diminishes, resulting in  
536 stimulation of electron transfer to oxygen and heat dissipation without phosphorylation of ADP.  
537 Mitochondrial injuries may lead to *dyscoupling* as a pathological or toxicological cause of  
538 *uncoupled* respiration, *e.g.*, as a consequence of opening the permeability transition pore.  
539 Dyscoupled respiration is distinguished from the experimentally induced *noncoupled*  
540 respiration in the ETS state. **Under physiological conditions, the proton leak is the dominant**  
541 **contributor to the overall leak current.** 

542 **Proton slip:** Proton slip is the *decoupled* process in which protons are only partially  
543 translocated by a proton pump of the ETS and slip back to the original compartment (Dufour *et*  
544 *al.* 1996). Proton slip can also happen in association with the ATP-synthase, in which case the  
545 proton slips downhill across the membrane to the matrix without contributing to ATP synthesis.  
546 In each case, proton slip is a property of the proton pump and increases with the turnover rate  
547 of the pump.

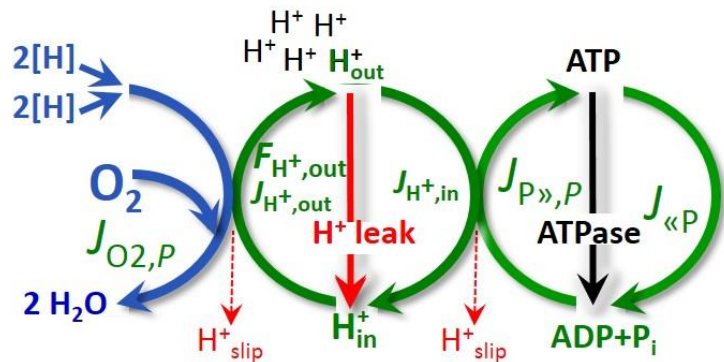
548 **Cation cycling:** Proton leak is a leak current of protons. There can be other cation  
549 contributors to leak current including calcium and probably magnesium. Calcium current is

550 balanced by mitochondrial Na/Ca exchange, which is balanced by Na/H exchange or K/H  
 551 exchange. This is another effective uncoupling mechanism different from proton leak and slip.

552 Small differences of terms, *e.g.*, uncoupled, noncoupled, are easily overlooked and may  
 553 be erroneously perceived as identical. Even with an attempt at rigorous definition, the common  
 554 use of such terms may remain vague (Table 2).

555 **OXPHOS state (Fig. 4):**

556 OXPHOS state is defined as the  
 557 respiratory state with kinetically  
 558 saturating concentrations of O<sub>2</sub>,  
 559 respiratory and phosphorylation  
 560 substrates, and absence of  
 561 exogenous uncoupler, which  
 562 provides an estimate of the  
 563 maximal capacity of OXPHOS in  
 564 any given pathway control state.



565 **Fig. 4. OXPHOS state:** Phosphorylation,  $J_{P \gg, P}$ , is stimulated  
 566 by kinetically saturating [ADP] and inorganic phosphate, [P<sub>i</sub>],  
 567 and is supported by a high protonmotive force,  $F_{H^+,out}$ . O<sub>2</sub>  
 568 flux,  $J_{O_2,P}$ , is highly coupled at a maximum P<sub>»</sub>/O<sub>2</sub> ratio,  
 569  $J_{P \gg, P}/J_{O_2,P}$  (See also Fig. 2).

565 Respiratory capacities at kinetically saturating substrate concentrations provide reference  
 566 values or upper limits of performance, aiming at the generation of data sets for comparative  
 567 purposes. Any effects of substrate kinetics are thus separated from reporting actual  
 568 mitochondrial capacity for oxidation during coupled respiration, against which physiological  
 569 activities can be evaluated.

570 As discussed previously, 0.2 mM ADP does not fully saturate flux in isolated  
 571 mitochondria (Gnaiger 2001; Puchowicz *et al.* 2004); greater ADP concentration is required,  
 572 particularly in permeabilized muscle fibres and cardiomyocytes, to overcome limitations by  
 573 intracellular diffusion and by the reduced conductance of the outer mitochondrial membrane  
 574 (Jepihhina *et al.* 2011, Illaste *et al.* 2012, Simson *et al.* 2016) either through interaction with  
 575 tubulin (Rostovtseva *et al.* 2008) or other intracellular structures (Birkedal *et al.* 2014). In

576 permeabilized muscle fibre bundles of high respiratory capacity, the apparent  $K_m$  for ADP  
 577 increases up to 0.5 mM (Saks *et al.* 1998), indicating that >90% saturation is reached only at  
 578 >5 mM ADP. Similar ADP concentrations are also required for accurate determination of  
 579 OXPHOS capacity in human clinical cancer samples and permeabilized cells (ref).

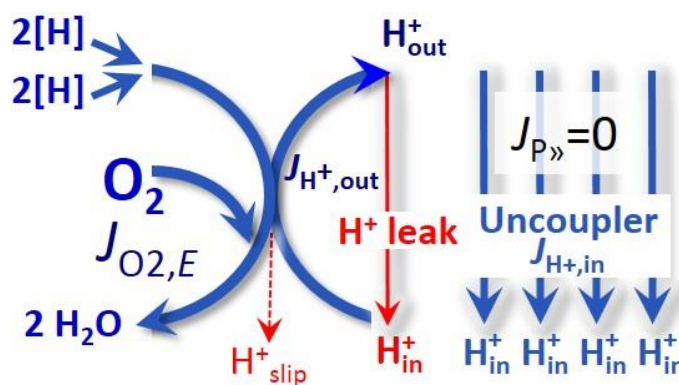
580

581 **Table 2. Distinction of terms related to coupling.**

Term	Respiration	$P_{\gg}/O_2$	Note
Fully coupled	$P - L$	Max.	OXPHOS capacity corrected for LEAK respiration ( <b>Fig. 6</b> )
Coupled	$P$	High	Phosphorylating respiration with a variable component of intrinsic LEAK respiration ( <b>Fig. 4</b> )
Uncoupled, Decoupled	$L$	0	Non-phosphorylating respiration without added protonophore ( <b>Fig. 3</b> )
Noncoupled	$E$	0	Non-phosphorylating respiration stimulated to maximum flux at optimum uncoupler concentration ( <b>Fig. 5</b> )
Dyscoupled	$P$	Low	Pathologically increased uncoupling, mitochondrial dysfunction

582

583 **ETS state (Fig. 5):** The  
 584 ETS state is defined as the  
 585 *noncoupled* state with kinetically  
 586 saturating concentrations of  $O_2$ ,  
 587 respiratory substrate and  
 588 optimum *exogenous* uncoupler  
 589 concentration for maximum  $O_2$   
 590 flux, as an estimate of oxidative  
 591 ETS capacity. Inhibition of  
 592 respiration is observed at higher than optimum uncoupler concentrations. As a consequence of  
 593 the nearly collapsed protonmotive force, the driving force is insufficient for phosphorylation  
 594 and  $J_{P_{\gg}}=0$ .



**Fig. 5. ETS state:** Noncoupled respiration,  $J_{O_2,E}$  is maximum at optimum exogenous uncoupler concentration and phosphorylation is zero,  $J_{P_{\gg}}=0$  (See also Fig. 2).

595 Besides the three fundamental coupling states of mitochondrial preparations, the  
596 following respiratory state also is relevant to assess respiratory function:

597 **ROX:** Residual oxygen consumption (ROX) is defined as O<sub>2</sub> consumption due to  
598 oxidative side reactions remaining after **inhibition** of the ETS. ROX is not a coupling state but  
599 represents a baseline that is used to correct mitochondrial respiration in defined coupling states.  
600 ROX is not necessarily equivalent to non-mitochondrial respiration, considering oxygen-  
601 consuming reactions in mitochondria not related to ETS, such as oxygen consumption in  
602 reactions catalyzed by monoamine oxidases (type A and B), monooxygenases (cytochrome  
603 P450 monooxygenases), dioxygenase (sulfur dioxygenase and trimethyllysine dioxygenase),  
604 several hydroxylases, and more. Mitochondrial preparations, especially those obtained from  
605 liver, are contaminated by peroxisomes. This fact makes the exact determination of  
606 mitochondrial oxygen consumption and mitochondria-associated generation of reactive oxygen  
607 species complicated (Schönfeld *et al.* 2009). The dependence of ROX-linked oxygen  
608 consumption needs to be studied in detail with respect to non-ETS enzyme activities,  
609 availability of specific substrates, oxygen concentration, and electron leakage leading to the  
610 formation of reactive oxygen species.

611

### 612 2.3. Coupling states and respiratory rates

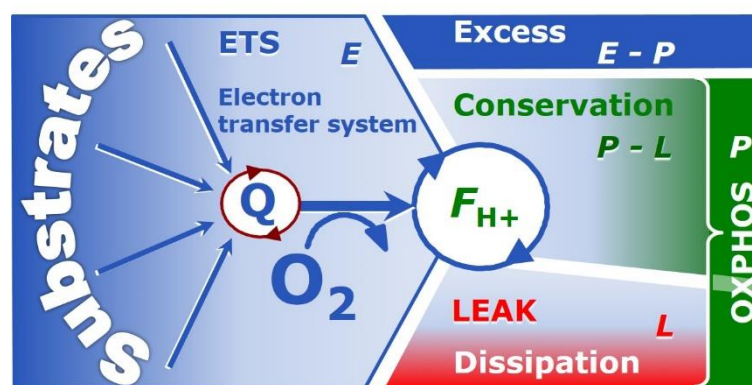
613 It is important to distinguish metabolic systems or modules from metabolic states and the  
614 corresponding metabolic rates; for example: electron transfer system, ETS (**Fig. 6**), ETS state  
615 (**Fig. 5**), and ETS capacity, *E*, respectively (**Table 1**). The protonmotive force is *high* in the  
616 OXPHOS state when it drives phosphorylation, *maximum* in the LEAK state of coupled  
617 mitochondria, driven by LEAK respiration at a minimum back flux of protons to the matrix  
618 side, and *very low* in the ETS state when uncouplers short-circuit the proton cycle (**Table 1**).



619

620 **Fig. 6. Four-compartment model**  
 621 **of oxidative phosphorylation.**

622 Respiratory states (ETS, OXPHOS,  
 623 LEAK) and corresponding rates ( $E$ ,  
 624  $P$ ,  $L$ ) are connected by the  
 625 protonmotive force,  $F_{H^+,out}$ . Electron  
 626 transfer system capacity,  $E$ , is



627 partitioned into the dissipative LEAK respiration,  $L$ , partial conservation of the protonmotive exergy (**Box**  
 628 **4**) as the phosphorylation exergy in net OXPHOS capacity,  $P-L$ , and the excess capacity,  $E-P$ . Modified  
 629 from Gnaiger (2014).

630

631 The three coupling states, ETS, LEAK and OXPHOS, are presented in a schematic  
 632 context with the corresponding respiratory rates, abbreviated as  $E$ ,  $L$  and  $P$ , respectively (**Fig.**  
 633 **6**). This clarifies that  $E$  may exceed or be equal to  $P$ , but  $E$  cannot theoretically be lower than  
 634  $P$ .  $E < P$  must be discounted as an artefact, which may be caused experimentally by: (1) loss of  
 635 oxidative capacity during the time course of the respirometric assay, since  $E$  is measured  
 636 subsequently to  $P$ ; (2) using too low uncoupler concentrations; (3) using high uncoupler  
 637 concentrations which inhibit the ETS (Gnaiger 2008); (4) high oligomycin concentrations  
 638 applied for measurement of  $L$  before titrations of uncoupler, when oligomycin exerts an  
 639 inhibitory effect on  $E$ . On the other hand, the excess ETS capacity is overestimated if non-  
 640 saturating  $[P_i]$  or  $[ADP]$  (State 3) are used.

641  $E > P$  is observed in many types of mitochondria, varying between species, tissues and cell  
 642 types. It is the excess ETS capacity pushing the phosphorylation system (**Fig. 1B**) to the limit  
 643 of its *capacity of utilizing* the protonmotive force. Within any type of mitochondria, the  
 644 magnitude of  $E > P$  depends on (1) the pathway control state with single or multiple electron  
 645 input into the Q-junction and involvement of three or fewer coupling sites determining the  
 646  $H^+_{out}/O_2$  coupling stoichiometry (**Fig. 1A**); and (2) the biochemical coupling efficiency

647 expressed as  $(E-L)/E$ , since an increase of  $L$  causes  $P$  to increase towards the limit of  $E$ . The  
648 *excess E-P* capacity,  $E-P$ , therefore, provides a sensitive diagnostic indicator of specific injuries  
649 of the phosphorylation system, under conditions when  $E$  remains constant but  $P$  declines  
650 relative to controls (**Fig. 6**). Substrate cocktails supporting simultaneous convergent electron  
651 transfer to the Q-junction for reconstitution of tricarboxylic acid cycle (TCA cycle) function  
652 establish pathway control states with high ETS capacity, and consequently increase the  
653 sensitivity of the  $E-P$  assay.

654       When subtracting  $L$  from  $P$ , the dissipative LEAK component in the OXPHOS state may  
655 be overestimated. This can be avoided by measuring LEAK respiration in a state when the  
656 protonmotive force is adjusted to its slightly lower value in the OXPHOS state, *e.g.*, by titration  
657 of an ETS inhibitor. Any turnover-dependent components of proton leak and slip, however, are  
658 underestimated under these conditions (Garlid *et al.* 1993). In general, it is inappropriate to use  
659 the term *ATP production* for the difference of oxygen consumption measured in states  $P$  and  $L$ .  
660 The difference  $P-L$  is the upper limit of the part of OXPHOS capacity that is freely available  
661 for ATP production (corrected for LEAK respiration) and is fully coupled to phosphorylation  
662 with a maximum mechanistic stoichiometry (**Fig. 6**).

663

#### 664 2.4. Classical terminology for isolated mitochondria

665       ‘When a code is familiar enough, it ceases appearing like a code; one forgets that  
666       there is a decoding mechanism. The message is identical with its meaning’  
667       (Hofstadter 1979).

668 Chance and Williams (1955; 1956) introduced five classical states of mitochondrial respiration  
669 and cytochrome redox states. **Table 3** shows a protocol with isolated mitochondria in a closed  
670 respirometric chamber, defining a sequence of respiratory states.

671

672  
673  
674**Table 3. Metabolic states of mitochondria (Chance and Williams, 1956; Table V).**

State	[O <sub>2</sub> ]	ADP level	Substrate level	Respiration rate	Rate-limiting substance
1	>0	low	low	Slow	ADP
2	>0	high	~0	Slow	Substrate
3	>0	high	high	Fast	respiratory chain
4	>0	low	high	Slow	ADP
5	0	high	high	0	Oxygen

675

676 **State 1** is obtained after addition of isolated mitochondria to air-saturated  
677 isoosmotic/isotonic respiration medium containing inorganic phosphate, but no fuel substrates  
678 and no adenylates, *i.e.*, AMP, ADP, ATP.

679 **State 2** is induced by addition of a high concentration of ADP (typically 100 to 300  $\mu\text{M}$ ),  
680 which stimulates respiration transiently on the basis of endogenous fuel substrates and  
681 phosphorylates only a small portion of the added ADP. State 2 is then obtained at a low  
682 respiratory activity limited by zero endogenous fuel substrate availability (**Table 3**). If addition  
683 of specific inhibitors of respiratory complexes, such as rotenone, does not cause a further  
684 decline of oxygen consumption, State 2 is equivalent to residual oxygen consumption (See  
685 below). If inhibition is observed, undefined endogenous fuel substrates are a confounding factor  
686 of pathway control by externally added substrates and inhibitors. In contrast to the original  
687 definition, an alternative protocol is frequently applied, in which State 2 is induced by addition  
688 of fuel substrate without ADP (LEAK state), followed by addition of ADP.

689 **State 3** is the state stimulated by addition of fuel substrates while the ADP concentration  
690 is still high (**Table 3**) and supports coupled energy transformation through oxidative  
691 phosphorylation. 'High ADP' is a concentration of ADP specifically selected to allow the  
692 measurement of State 3 to State 4 transitions of isolated mitochondria in a closed respirometric  
693 system. Repeated ADP titration re-establishes State 3 at 'high ADP'. Starting at oxygen  
694 concentrations near air-saturation (ca. 200  $\mu\text{M}$  O<sub>2</sub> at sea level and 37 °C), the total ADP  
695 concentration added must be low enough (typically 100 to 300  $\mu\text{M}$ ) to allow phosphorylation

696 to ATP at a coupled oxygen consumption that does not lead to oxygen depletion during the  
697 transition to State 4. In contrast, kinetically saturating ADP concentrations usually are an order  
698 of magnitude higher than 'high ADP', *e.g.* 2.5 mM in isolated mitochondria. The abbreviation  
699 State 3u is frequently used in bioenergetics, to indicate the state of respiration after titration of  
700 an uncoupler, without sufficient emphasis on the fundamental difference between OXPHOS  
701 capacity (*well-coupled* with an *endogenous* uncoupled component) and ETS capacity  
702 (*noncoupled*).

703 **State 4** is a LEAK state which is obtained only if the mitochondrial preparation is intact  
704 and well-coupled. Depletion of ADP by phosphorylation to ATP leads to a decline in oxygen  
705 consumption in the transition from State 3 to State 4. Under these conditions, a maximum  
706 protonmotive force and high ATP/ADP ratio are maintained, and the  $P_{\gg}/O_2$  ratio can be  
707 calculated. State 4 respiration,  $L_T$  (**Table 1**), reflects intrinsic proton leak and intrinsic ATP  
708 hydrolysis activity. Oxygen consumption in State 4 is an overestimation of LEAK respiration  
709 if the contaminating ATP hydrolysis activity recycles some ATP to ADP,  $J_{\ll P}$ , which stimulates  
710 respiration coupled to phosphorylation,  $J_{P\gg} > 0$ . This can be tested by inhibition of the  
711 phosphorylation system using oligomycin, ensuring that  $J_{P\gg} = 0$  (State 4o). Alternatively,  
712 sequential ADP titrations re-establish State 3, followed by State 3 to State 4 transitions while  
713 sufficient oxygen is available. However, anoxia may be reached before exhaustion of ADP  
714 (State 5).

715 **State 5** is the state after exhaustion of oxygen in a closed respirometric chamber.  
716 Diffusion of oxygen from the surroundings into the aqueous solution may be a confounding  
717 factor preventing complete anoxia (Gnaiger 2001).

718 In **Table 3**, only States 3 and 4 (and 'State 2' in the alternative protocol without ADP;  
719 not included in the table) are coupling control states, with the restriction that  $O_2$  flux in State 3  
720 may be limited kinetically by non-saturating ADP concentrations (**Table 1**).

721

722 **3. States and rates**723 *3.1. The protonmotive force and proton flux*

724 The protonmotive force across the inner mitochondrial membrane (Mitchell and Moyle  
725 1967) was introduced most beautifully in the *Grey Book 1966* (see Mitchell 2011),

$$726 \quad \Delta p_{\text{H}^+} = \Delta \Psi + \Delta \mu_{\text{H}^+}/F \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

727 The protonmotive force consists of two partial forces: (1) The electrical part,  $\Delta \Psi$ , is the  
728 difference of charge (electric potential difference) and is not specific for  $\text{H}^+$ . (2) The chemical  
729 part,  $\Delta \mu_{\text{H}^+}$ , is the chemical potential difference in  $\text{H}^+$ , is proportional to the pH difference, and  
730 incorporates the Faraday constant (**Table 4**).

731

732 **Table 4. Protonmotive force and flux matrix.** Rows: Electrical and chemical  
733 isomorphic format ( $e$  and  $n$ ). The Faraday constant,  $F$ , converts protonmotive force  
734 and flux from *isomorphic format e* to  $n$ . Columns: The protonmotive force is the sum of  
735 *partial isomorphic forces*  $F_{\text{el}}$  and  $F_{\text{H}^+,d}$ . In contrast to force (state), the conjugated flux  
736 (rate) cannot be partitioned.  
737

State	Force		electric	+ chem.	Unit	Notes
Protonmotive force, $e$	$\Delta p_{\text{H}^+}$	=	$\Delta \Psi$	+ $\Delta \mu_{\text{H}^+}/F$	$\text{J}\cdot\text{C}^{-1}$	$1e$
Chemiosmotic potential, $n$	$\Delta \tilde{\mu}_{\text{H}^+}$	=	$\Delta \Psi \cdot F$	+ $\Delta \mu_{\text{H}^+}$	$\text{J}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$	$1n$
State	Isomorphic force		$F_{\text{H}^+,out/i}$	=	$\mathbf{el}_{\text{out}}$	+ $\mathbf{H}^+_{\text{out},d}$
Electric charge, $e$	$F_{\text{H}^+,out/e}$	=	$F_{\text{el},out/e}$	+ $F_{\text{H}^+,out,d/e}$	$\text{J}\cdot\text{C}^{-1}$	$2e$
Amount of substance, $n$	$F_{\text{H}^+,out/n}$	=	$F_{\text{el},out/n}$	+ $F_{\text{H}^+,out,d/n}$	$\text{J}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$	$2n$
Rate	Isomorphic flux		$J_{\text{H}^+,out/i}$	=	$e$	or $n$
Electric charge, $e$	$J_{\text{H}^+,out/e}$		$J_{\text{H}^+,out/e}$			$\text{C}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ $3e$
Amount of substance, $n$	$J_{\text{H}^+,out/n}$				$J_{\text{H}^+,out/n}$	$\text{mol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ $3n$

738

739 1: The Faraday constant,  $F$ , is the product of elementary charge ( $e=1.602177\cdot 10^{-19}\cdot\text{C}$ ) and the  
740 Avogadro (Loschmidt) constant ( $N_A=6.022136\cdot 10^{23}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$ ),  $F=eN_A=96,485.3\text{ C/mol}$ .  $\Delta \tilde{\mu}_{\text{H}^+}$  is the  
741 chemiosmotic potential difference.  $1e$  and  $1n$  are the classical representations of  $2e$  and  $2n$ .

742 2: The protonmotive force is  $F_{H+,out}$ , expressed either in isomorphic format  $e$  or  $n$ .  $F_{el/e} \equiv \Delta\Psi$  is the partial  
 743 protonmotive force (el) acting generally on charged motive molecules (*i.e.* ions that are displaceable  
 744 across the inner mitochondrial membrane). In contrast,  $F_{H+,d/n} \equiv \Delta\mu_{H+}$  is the partial protonmotive force  
 745 specific for proton displacement ( $H^+_d$ ). The sign of the force is negative for exergonic transformations  
 746 in which exergy is lost or dissipated, and positive for endergonic transformations which conserve  
 747 exergy from a coupled exergonic process (**Box 4**).

748 3: The sign of the flux depends on the definition of the compartmental direction of the translocation (**Fig.**  
 749 **2**). Flux x force =  $J_{H+,out/e} \cdot F_{H+,out/e} = J_{H+,out/n} \cdot F_{H+,out/n} = \text{Volume-specific power [J}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}=\text{W}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}]$ .

750

751 **Faraday constant**,  $F=eN_A$  [C/mol] (**Table 4**), enables the conversion between  
 752 protonmotive force,  $F_{H+,out/e} \equiv \Delta p_{H+}$  [J/C], expressed per *motive charge*,  $e$  [C], and protonmotive  
 753 force or electrochemical potential difference,  $F_{H+,out/n} \equiv \Delta\tilde{\mu}_{H+} = \Delta p_{H+} \cdot F$  [J/mol], expressed per  
 754 *motive amount of protons*,  $n$  [mol]. Proton charge,  $e$ , and amount of substance,  $n$ , define the  
 755 units for the isomorphic formats. Taken together,  $F$  converts protonmotive force and flux from  
 756 isomorphic format  $e$  to  $n$  (Eq. 2; see also **Table 4**, Note 2),

$$757 \quad F_{H+,out/n} = F_{H+,out/e} \cdot eN_A \quad (\text{Eq. 2.1})$$

$$758 \quad J_{H+,out/n} = J_{H+,out/e} / (eN_A) \quad (\text{Eq. 2.2})$$

759 In each format, the protonmotive force is expressed as the sum of two partial forces. The  
 760 concept expressed by the complex symbols in Eq. 1 can be explained and visualized more easily  
 761 by *partial isomorphic forces* as the components of the protonmotive force:

762 **Electrical part of the protonmotive force:** (1) Isomorph  $e$ :  $F_{el/e} \equiv \Delta\Psi$  is the electrical  
 763 part of the protonmotive force expressed in units joule per coulomb, *i.e.* volt [V=J/C].  $F_{el/e}$  is  
 764 defined as partial Gibbs energy change per *motive elementary charge*,  $e$  [C], not specific for  
 765 proton charge (**Table 4**, Note 2e). (2) Isomorph  $n$ :  $F_{el/n} \equiv \Delta\Psi \cdot F$  is the electric force expressed  
 766 in units joule per mole [J/mol], defined as partial Gibbs energy change per *motive amount of*  
 767 *charge*,  $n$  [mol], not specific for proton charge (**Table 4**, Note 2n).

768 **Chemical part of the protonmotive force:** (1) Isomorph  $n$ :  $F_{d,H^+/n} \equiv \Delta\mu_{H^+}$  is the chemical  
 769 part (diffusion, displacement of  $H^+$ ) of the protonmotive force expressed in units joule per mole  
 770 [J/mol].  $F_{d,H^+/n}$  is defined as partial Gibbs energy change per *motive amount of protons*,  $n$  [mol]  
 771 (**Table 4**, Note 2*n*). (2) Isomorph  $e$ :  $F_{d,H^+/e} \equiv \Delta\mu_{H^+}/F$  is the chemical force expressed in units  
 772 joule per coulomb [V], defined as partial Gibbs energy change per *motive amount of protons*  
 773 *expressed in units of electric charge*,  $e$  [C], but specific for proton charge (**Table 4**, Note 2*e*).

774 Protonmotive means that there is a potential for the movement of protons, and force is a  
 775 measure of the potential for motion. Motion is relative and not absolute (Principle of Galilean  
 776 Relativity); likewise there is no absolute potential, but (isomorphic) forces are potential  
 777 differences. An electric partial force expressed in the format of electric charge,  $F_{el/e}$ , of -0.2 V  
 778 (**Table 5**, Note 5*e*) is equivalent to force in the format of amount,  $F_{el,H^+/n}$ , of  $19 \text{ kJ}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1} H^+_{\text{out}}$   
 779 (Note 5*n*). For a  $\Delta\text{pH}$  of 1 unit, the chemical partial force in the format of amount,  $F_{d,H^+/n}$ ,  
 780 changes by  $5.9 \text{ kJ}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$  (**Table 5**, Note 6*n*) and chemical force in the format of charge  $F_{d,H^+/e}$   
 781 changes by 0.06 V (Note 6*e*). Considering a driving force of  $-470 \text{ kJ}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1} O_2$  for oxidation, the  
 782 thermodynamic limit of the  $H^+_{\text{out}}/O_2$  ratio is reached at a value of  $470/19=24$ , compared to a  
 783 mechanistic stoichiometry of 20 (**Fig. 1**).

784

---

#### 785 **Box 4: Endergonic and exergonic transformations, exergy and dissipation**

786 A chemical reaction, or any transformation, is exergonic if the Gibbs energy change (exergy)  
 787 of the reaction is negative at constant temperature and pressure. The sum of Gibbs energy  
 788 changes of all internal transformations in a system can only be negative, i.e. exergy is  
 789 irreversibly dissipated. Endergonic reactions are characterized by positive Gibbs energies of  
 790 reaction and cannot proceed spontaneously in the forward direction as defined. For instance,  
 791 the endergonic reaction  $P \gg$  is coupled to exergonic catabolic reactions, such that the total Gibbs  
 792 energy change is negative, i.e. exergy must be dissipated for the reaction to proceed (**Fig. 2**).

793 In contrast, energy cannot be lost or produced in any internal process, which is the key  
 794 message of the first law of thermodynamics. Thus mitochondria are the sites of energy  
 795 transformation but not energy production. Open and closed systems can gain energy and exergy  
 796 only by external fluxes, *i.e.* uptake from the environment. Exergy is the potential to perform  
 797 work. In the framework of flux-force relationships (**Box 3**), the *partial* derivative of Gibbs  
 798 energy per advancement of a transformation is an isomorphic force,  $F_{tr}$  (**Table 5**, Note 2). In  
 799 other words, force is equal to exergy/motive unit (in integral form, this definition takes care of  
 800 non-isothermal processes). This formal generalization represents an appreciation of the  
 801 conceptual beauty of Peter Mitchell's innovation of the protonmotive force against the  
 802 background of the established paradigm of the electromotive force (emf) defined at the limit of  
 803 zero current (Cohen *et al.* 2008).

804

805 **Table 5. Power, exergy, force, flux, and advancement.**

806

Expression	Symbol	Definition	Unit	Notes
Power, volume-specific	$P_{V,tr}$	$P_{V,tr} = J_{tr} \cdot F_{tr} = \partial_{tr}G \cdot \partial t^{-1}$	$W = J \cdot s^{-1} \cdot m^{-3}$	1
Force, isomorphic	$F_{tr}$	$F_{tr} = \partial_{tr}G \cdot \partial_{tr}\xi^{-1}$	$J \cdot x^{-1}$	2
Flux, isomorphic	$J_{tr}$	$J_{tr} = d_{tr}\xi \cdot dt^{-1} \cdot V^{-1}$	$x \cdot s^{-1} \cdot m^{-3}$	3
Advancement, $n$	$d_{tr}\xi_{H+/n}$	$d_{tr}\xi_{H+/n} = d_{tr}n_{H+} \cdot \nu_{H+}^{-1}$	mol	$4n$
Advancement, $e$	$d_{tr}\xi_{H+/e}$	$d_{tr}\xi_{H+/e} = d_{tr}e_{H+} \cdot \nu_{H+}^{-1}$	C	$4e$
Electric partial force, $e$	$F_{el/e}$	$F_{el/e} \equiv \Delta\Psi$	V	$5e$
Electric partial force, $n$	$F_{el/n}$	$\Delta\Psi \cdot F = 96.5 \cdot \Delta\Psi$	$kJ \cdot mol^{-1}$	$5n$
Chemical partial force, $e$	$F_{d,H+/e}$	$\Delta\mu_{H+}/F = -$ $\ln(10) \cdot RT/F \cdot \Delta pH$	V	$6e$
at 37 °C		$= -0.06 \cdot \Delta pH$	$J \cdot C^{-1}$	
Chemical partial force, $n$	$F_{d,H+/n}$	$\Delta\mu_{H+} = -\ln(10) \cdot RT \cdot \Delta pH$	$J \cdot mol^{-1}$	$6n$
at 37 °C		$= -5.9 \cdot \Delta pH$	$kJ \cdot mol^{-1}$	

807

808 1 to 4: An isomorphic motive entity or transformant, expressed in units  $x$ , is defined for any

809

transformation, tr.  $x = \text{mol}$  or C in proton translocation.



- 810 2:  $\partial_{tr}G$  [J] is the partial Gibbs energy change in the advancement of transformation tr.
- 811 3: For  $x=C$ , flow is electric current,  $I_{el}$  [ $A = C \cdot s^{-1}$ ], vector flux is electric current density per area,  $J_{el}$ ,  
812 and compartmental flux is electric current density per volume,  $i_{el}$  [ $A \cdot m^{-3}$ ].
- 813 4n: For a chemical reaction, the advancement of reaction r is  $d_r \xi_B = d_r n_B \cdot V_B^{-1}$  [mol]. The stoichiometric  
814 number is  $\nu_B = -1$  or  $\nu_B = 1$ , depending on B being a product or substrate, respectively, in reaction r  
815 involving one mole of B. The conjugated *intensive* molar quantity,  $F_{B,r} = \partial_r G / \partial_r \xi_B$  [ $J \cdot mol^{-1}$ ], is the  
816 chemical force of reaction or *reaction-motive* force per stoichiometric amount of B. In reaction  
817 kinetics,  $d_r n_B$  is expressed as a volume-specific quantity, which is the partial contribution to the  
818 total concentration change of B,  $d_r c_B = d_r n_B / V$  and  $d_e c_B = d_e n_B / V$ , respectively. In open systems with  
819 constant volume  $V$ ,  $d c_B = d_r c_B + d_e c_B$ , where r indicates the *internal* reaction and e indicates the  
820 *external* flux of B into the unit volume of the system. At steady state the concentration does not  
821 change,  $d c_B = 0$ , when  $d_r c_B$  is compensated for by the external flux of B,  $d_r c_B = -d_e c_B$  (Gnaiger  
822 1993b). Alternatively,  $d c_B = 0$  when B is held constant by different coupled reactions in which B  
823 acts as a substrate or a product.
- 824 4e: Scalar potential difference across the mitochondrial membrane. In a scalar electric transformation  
825 (flux of charge, *i.e.* volume-specific current, from the matrix space to the intermembrane and  
826 extramitochondrial space) the motive force is the difference of charge (**Box 2**). The endergonic  
827 direction of translocation is defined in **Fig. 2** as  $H^+_{in} \rightarrow H^+_{out}$ .
- 828 5n:  $F = 96.5$  ( $kJ \cdot mol^{-1} / V$ ).
- 829 6: The electric partial force is independent of temperature (Note 5), but the chemical partial force  
830 depends on absolute temperature,  $T$  [K].
- 831 6e:  $RT$  is the gas constant times absolute temperature.  $\ln(10) \cdot RT / F = 59.16$  and  $61.54$  mV at 298.15  
832 and 310.15 K (25 and 37 °C), respectively.
- 833 6n:  $\ln(10) \cdot RT = 5.708$  and  $5.938$   $kJ \cdot mol^{-1}$  at 298.15 and 310.15 K (25 and 37 °C), respectively.

834

835 

### 3.2. Forces and fluxes in physics and irreversible thermodynamics

836 According to its definition in physics, a potential difference and as such the  
837 *protonmotive force*,  $\Delta p_{H^+}$ , is not a force *per se* (Cohen *et al.* 2008). The fundamental forces of  
838 physics are distinguished from *motive forces* of statistical and irreversible thermodynamics.  
839 Complementary to the attempt towards unification of fundamental forces defined in physics,

840 the concepts of Nobel laureates Lars Onsager, Erwin Schrödinger, Ilya Prigogine and Peter  
841 Mitchell (even if expressed in apparently unrelated terms) unite the diversity of *generalized* or  
842 ‘isomorphic’ *flux-force* relationships, the product of which links to the dissipation function and  
843 Second Law of thermodynamics (Schrödinger 1944; Prigogine 1967). A *motive force* is the  
844 derivative of potentially available or ‘free’ energy (exergy) per isomorphic *motive* unit (**Box 4**).  
845 Perhaps the first account of a *motive force* in energy transformation can be traced back to the  
846 Peripatetic school around 300 BC in the context of moving a lever, up to Newton’s motive force  
847 proportional to the alteration of motion (Coopersmith 2010).

848       **Vectorial and scalar forces, and fluxes:** In chemical reactions and osmotic or diffusion  
849 processes occurring in a closed heterogeneous system, such as a chamber containing isolated  
850 mitochondria, scalar transformations occur without measured spatial direction but between  
851 separate compartments (translocation between the matrix and intermembrane space) or between  
852 energetically-separated chemical substances (reactions from substrates to products). Hence, the  
853 corresponding fluxes are not vectorial but scalar, and are expressed per volume and not per  
854 membrane area (**Box 2**). The corresponding motive forces are also scalar potential *differences*  
855 across the membrane (**Table 5**), without taking into account the *gradients* across the 6 nm thick  
856 inner mitochondrial membrane (Rich 2003).

857       **Coupling:** In energetics (ergodynamics), coupling is defined as an exergy transformation  
858 fuelled by an exergonic (downhill) input process driving the advancement of an endergonic  
859 (uphill) output process. The (negative) output/input power ratio is the efficiency of a coupled  
860 energy transformation (**Box 3**). At the limit of maximum efficiency of a completely coupled  
861 system, the (negative) input power equals the (positive) output power, such that the total power  
862 approaches zero at the maximum efficiency of 1, and the process becomes fully reversible  
863 without any dissipation of exergy, i.e. without entropy production.

864       **Coupled versus bound processes:** Since the chemiosmotic theory describes the  
865 mechanisms of coupling in OXPHOS, it may be interesting to ask if the electrical and chemical

866 parts of proton translocation are coupled processes. This is not the case according to the  
 867 definition of coupling. If the coupling mechanism is disengaged, the output process becomes  
 868 independent of the input process, and both proceed in their downhill (exergonic) direction (**Fig.**  
 869 **2**). It is not possible to physically uncouple the electrical and chemical processes, which are  
 870 only *theoretically* partitioned as electrical and chemical components and can be measured  
 871 separately. If partial processes are non-separable, *i.e.*, cannot be uncoupled, then these are not  
 872 *coupled* but are defined as *bound* processes. The electrical and chemical parts are tightly bound  
 873 partial forces of the protonmotive force, since a flux cannot be partitioned but expressed only  
 874 in either an electrical or chemical isomorphic format (**Table 4**).

875

#### 876 **4. Normalization: fluxes and flows**

##### 877 *4.1. Flux per chamber volume*

878 The volume-specific *flux of a chemical reaction*  $r$  is the time derivative of the  
 879 advancement of the reaction per unit volume,  $J_{V,B} = d_r \zeta_B / dt \cdot V^{-1}$  [(mol·s<sup>-1</sup>)·L<sup>-1</sup>]. The *rate of*  
 880 *concentration change* is  $dc_B/dt$  [(mol·L<sup>-1</sup>)·s<sup>-1</sup>], where concentration is  $c_B = n_B/V$ . It is helpful to  
 881 make the subtle distinction between [(mol·s<sup>-1</sup>)·L<sup>-1</sup>] and [(mol·L<sup>-1</sup>)·s<sup>-1</sup>] for the fundamentally  
 882 different quantities of volume-specific flux and rate of concentration change, which merge to a  
 883 single expression only in closed systems. In open systems, external fluxes (such as O<sub>2</sub> supply)  
 884 are distinguished from internal transformations (metabolic flux, O<sub>2</sub> consumption). In a closed  
 885 system, external flows of all substances are zero and O<sub>2</sub> consumption (internal flow),  $I_{O_2}$   
 886 [pmol·s<sup>-1</sup>], causes a decline of the amount of O<sub>2</sub> in the system,  $n_{O_2}$  [nmol]. Normalization of  
 887 these quantities for the volume of the system,  $V$  [L=dm<sup>3</sup>], yields volume-specific O<sub>2</sub> flux,  
 888  $J_{V,O_2} = I_{O_2}/V$  [nmol·s<sup>-1</sup>·L<sup>-1</sup>], and O<sub>2</sub> concentration,  $[O_2]$  or  $c_{O_2} = n_{O_2}/V$  [nmol·mL<sup>-1</sup>=μmol·L<sup>-1</sup>=μM].  
 889 Instrumental background O<sub>2</sub> flux is due to external flux into a non-ideal closed respirometer,  
 890 such that total volume-specific flux has to be corrected for instrumental background O<sub>2</sub> flux,  
 891 *i.e.* O<sub>2</sub> diffusion into or out of the instrumental chamber.  $J_{V,O_2}$  is relevant mainly for

892 methodological reasons and should be compared with the accuracy of instrumental resolution  
 893 of background-corrected flux, *e.g.*  $\pm 1 \text{ nmol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  (Gnaiger 2001). ‘Metabolic’ or catabolic  
 894 indicates  $\text{O}_2$  flux,  $J_{\text{O}_2, \text{k}}$ , corrected for instrumental background  $\text{O}_2$  flux and chemical background  
 895  $\text{O}_2$  flux due to autoxidation of chemical components added to the incubation medium.

896

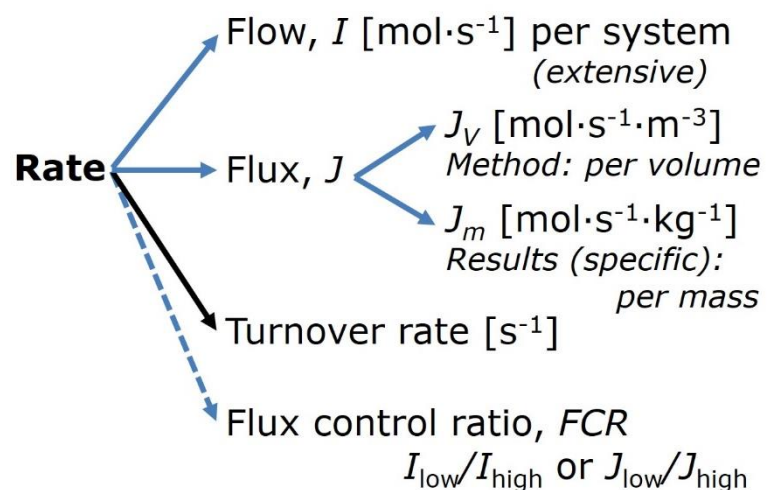
#### 897 4.2. Extensive quantities and size-specific normalization

898 Application of common and generally defined units is required for direct transfer of  
 899 reported results into a database. The second [s] is the *SI* unit for the base quantity *time*. It is also  
 900 the standard time-unit used in solution chemical kinetics. **Table 6** lists some conversion factors  
 901 to obtain *SI* units. The term *rate* is not sufficiently defined to be useful for a database (**Fig. 7**).  
 902 The inconsistency of the meanings of rate becomes fully apparent when considering Galileo  
 903 Galilei’s famous principle, that ‘bodies of different weight all fall at the same rate (have a  
 904 constant acceleration)’ (Coopersmith 2010).

905 **Extensive quantities:** An extensive quantity increases proportionally with system size.  
 906 The magnitude of an extensive quantity is completely additive for non-interacting subsystems,  
 907 such as mass or flow expressed per defined system. The magnitude of these quantities depends  
 908 on the extent or size of the system (Cohen *et al.* 2008).

909

910 **Fig. 7. Different meanings of rate**  
 911 **may lead to confusion, if the**  
 912 **normalization is not sufficiently**  
 913 **specified.** Results are frequently  
 914 expressed as mass-specific flux,  $J_m$ ,  
 915 per mg protein, dry or wet weight  
 916 (mass). Cell volume,  $V_{\text{cell}}$ , or  
 917 mitochondrial volume,  $V_{\text{mt}}$ , may be  
 918 used for normalization (volume-



919 specific flux,  $J_{\text{vcell}}$  or  $J_{\text{vmt}}$ ), which then must be clearly distinguished from flux,  $J_{\text{v}}$ , expressed for  
 920 methodological reasons per volume of the measurement system, or flow per cell,  $I_{\text{x}}$ .

921

922 **Size-specific quantities:** ‘The adjective *specific* before the name of an extensive quantity  
 923 is often used to mean *divided by mass*’ (Cohen *et al.* 2008). Mass-specific flux is flow divided  
 924 by mass of the system. A mass-specific quantity is independent of the extent of non-interacting  
 925 homogenous subsystems. Tissue-specific quantities are of fundamental interest in comparative  
 926 mitochondrial physiology, where *specific* refers to the *type* rather than *mass* of the tissue. The  
 927 term *specific*, therefore, must be further clarified, such that tissue mass-specific, *e.g.*, muscle  
 928 mass-specific quantities are defined.

929 **Molar quantities:** ‘The adjective *molar* before the name of an extensive quantity  
 930 generally means *divided by amount of substance*’ (Cohen *et al.* 2008). The notion that all molar  
 931 quantities then become *intensive* causes ambiguity in the meaning of *molar Gibbs energy*. It is  
 932 important to emphasize the fundamental difference between normalization for amount of  
 933 substance *in a system* or for amount of motive substance *in a transformation*. When the Gibbs  
 934 energy of a system,  $G$  [J], is divided by the amount of substance B in the system,  $n_{\text{B}}$  [mol], a  
 935 *size-specific* molar quantity is obtained,  $G_{\text{B}} = G/n_{\text{B}}$  [J·mol<sup>-1</sup>], which is not any force at all. In  
 936 contrast, when the partial Gibbs energy change,  $\partial_{\text{r}}G$  [J], is divided by the motive amount of  
 937 substance B in reaction r (advancement of reaction),  $\partial_{\text{r}}\xi_{\text{B}}$  [mol], the resulting intensive molar  
 938 quantity,  $F_{\text{r,B}} = \partial G/\partial_{\text{r}}\xi_{\text{B}}$  [J·mol<sup>-1</sup>], is the chemical motive force of reaction r involving 1 mol B  
 939 (Table 5, Note 4).

940 **Flow per system,  $I$ :** In analogy to electrical terms, flow as an extensive quantity ( $I$ ; per  
 941 system) is distinguished from flux as a size-specific quantity ( $J$ ; per system size) (Fig. 7).  
 942 Electric current is flow,  $I_{\text{el}}$  [A=C·s<sup>-1</sup>] per system (extensive quantity). When dividing this  
 943 extensive quantity by system size (membrane area), a size-specific quantity is obtained, which  
 944 is electric flux (electric current density),  $J_{\text{el}}$  [A·m<sup>-2</sup> = C·s<sup>-1</sup>·m<sup>-2</sup>].

945       **Size-specific flux,  $J$ :** Metabolic O<sub>2</sub> flow per tissue increases as tissue mass is increased.  
946 Tissue mass-specific O<sub>2</sub> flux should be independent of the size of the tissue sample studied in  
947 the instrument chamber, but volume-specific O<sub>2</sub> flux (per volume of the instrument chamber,  
948  $V$ ) should increase in direct proportion to the amount of sample in the chamber. Accurate  
949 definition of the experimental system is decisive: whether the experimental chamber is the  
950 closed, open, isothermal or non-isothermal *system* with defined volume as part of the  
951 measurement apparatus, in contrast to the experimental *sample* in the chamber (**Table 6**).  
952 Volume-specific O<sub>2</sub> flux depends on mass-concentration of the sample in the chamber, but  
953 should be independent of the chamber volume. There are practical limitations to increasing the  
954 mass-concentration of the sample in the chamber, when one is concerned about crowding  
955 effects and instrumental time resolution.

956       **Sample concentration  $C_{mX}$ :** Normalization for sample concentration is required for  
957 reporting respiratory data. Consider a tissue or cells as the sample,  $X$ , and the sample mass,  $m_X$   
958 [mg] from which a mitochondrial preparation is obtained. The sample mass is frequently  
959 measured as wet or dry weight ( $m_X \equiv W_w$  or  $W_d$  [mg]), or as amount of tissue or cell protein  
960 ( $m_X \equiv m_{\text{Protein}}$ ). In the case of permeabilized tissues, cells, and homogenates, the sample  
961 concentration,  $C_{mX} = m_X/V$  [mg·mL<sup>-1</sup>=g·L<sup>-1</sup>], is simply the mass of the subsample of tissue that is  
962 transferred into the instrument chamber. Part of the mitochondria from the tissue is lost during  
963 preparation of isolated mitochondria, and only a fraction of mitochondria is obtained, expressed  
964 as the mitochondrial yield (**Fig. 8**). At a high mitochondrial yield the sample of isolated  
965 mitochondria is more representative of the total mitochondrial population than in preparations  
966 characterized by low mitochondrial yield. Determination of the mitochondrial yield is based on  
967 measurement of the concentration of a mitochondrial marker in the tissue homogenate,  $C_{\text{mte,thom}}$ ,  
968 which simultaneously provides information on the specific mitochondrial density in the sample  
969 (**Fig. 8**).

970 Tissues can contain multiple cell populations which may have distinct mitochondrial  
 971 subtypes. Mitochondria are also in a constant state of flux due to highly dynamic fission and  
 972 fusion cycles, and can exist in multiple stages and sizes which may be altered by a range of  
 973 factors. The isolation of mitochondria (often achieved through differential centrifugation) can  
 974 therefore yield a subsample of the mitochondrial types present in a tissue, dependent on  
 975 isolation protocols utilized (e.g. centrifugation speed). This possible artefact should be taken  
 976 into account when planning experiments using isolated mitochondria. The tendency for  
 977 mitochondria of specific sizes to be enriched at different centrifugation speeds also has the  
 978 potential to allow the isolation of specific mitochondrial subpopulations and therefore the  
 979 analysis of mitochondria from multiple cell lineages within a single tissue.

980

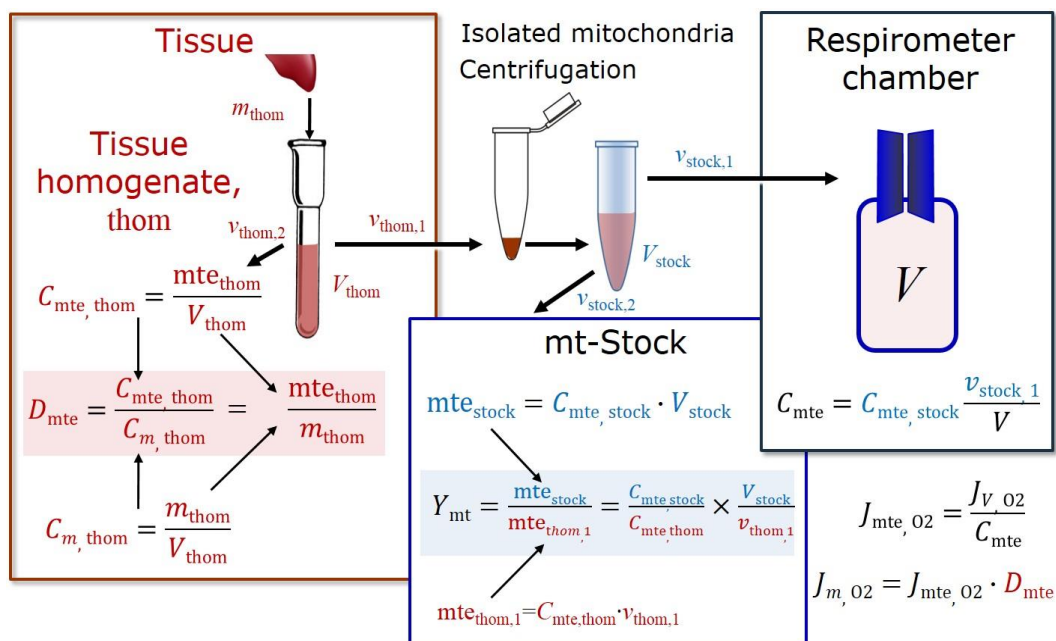
981 **Table 6. Sample concentrations and normalization of flux with SI/base units.**  
 982

Expression	Symbol	Definition	SI Unit	Notes
<b>Sample</b>				
Identity of sample	$X$	Cells, animals, patients		
Number of sample entities $X$	$N_X$	Number of cells, <i>etc.</i>	x	
Mass of sample $X$	$m_X$		kg	1
Mass of entity $X$	$M_X$	$M_X = m_X \cdot N_X^{-1}$	$\text{kg} \cdot \text{x}^{-1}$	1
<b>Mitochondria</b>				
Mitochondria	mt	$X = \text{mt}$		
Amount of mt-elements	mte	Quantity of mt-marker	$x_{\text{mte}}$	
<b>Concentrations</b>				
Sample number concentration	$C_{NX}$	$C_{NX} = N_X \cdot V^{-1}$	$\text{x} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$	2
Sample mass concentration	$C_{mX}$	$C_{mX} = m_X \cdot V^{-1}$	$\text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$	
Mitochondrial concentration	$C_{\text{mte}}$	$C_{\text{mte}} = \text{mte} \cdot V^{-1}$	$x_{\text{mte}} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$	3
Specific mitochondrial density	$D_{\text{mte}}$	$D_{\text{mte}} = \text{mte} \cdot m_X^{-1}$	$x_{\text{mte}} \cdot \text{kg}^{-1}$	4
Mitochondrial content, mte per entity $X$	$\text{mte}_X$	$\text{mte}_X = \text{mte} \cdot N_X^{-1}$	$x_{\text{mte}} \cdot \text{x}^{-1}$	5
<b>O<sub>2</sub> flow and flux</b>				
Flow	$I_{\text{O}_2}$	Internal flow	$\text{mol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$	6
Volume-specific flux	$J_{V,\text{O}_2}$	$J_{V,\text{O}_2} = I_{\text{O}_2} \cdot V^{-1}$	$\text{mol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$	7
Flow per sample entity $X$	$I_{X,\text{O}_2}$	$I_{X,\text{O}_2} = J_{V,\text{O}_2} \cdot C_{NX}^{-1}$	$\text{mol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{x}^{-1}$	8
Mass-specific flux	$J_{mX,\text{O}_2}$	$J_{mX,\text{O}_2} = J_{V,\text{O}_2} \cdot C_{mX}^{-1}$	$\text{mol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{kg}^{-1}$	9
Mitochondria-specific flux	$J_{\text{mte},\text{O}_2}$	$J_{\text{mte},\text{O}_2} = J_{V,\text{O}_2} \cdot C_{\text{mte}}^{-1}$	$\text{mol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot x_{\text{mte}}^{-1}$	10

983

- 984 1 The SI prefix k is used for the SI base unit of mass (kg=1,000 g). In praxis, various SI prefixes are  
 985 used for convenience, to make numbers easily readable, e.g. 1 mg tissue, cell or mitochondrial mass  
 986 instead of 0.000001 kg.
- 987 2 In case X=cells, the sample number concentration is  $C_{N_{\text{cell}}}=N_{\text{cell}} \cdot V^{-1}$ , and volume may be expressed  
 988 in [dm<sup>3</sup>=L] or [cm<sup>3</sup>=mL]. See Table 7 for different sample types.
- 989 3 mt-concentration is an experimental variable, dependent on sample concentration: (1)  $C_{\text{mte}}=\text{mte} \cdot V^{-1}$ ;  
 990 (2)  $C_{\text{mte}}=\text{mte}_X \cdot C_{NX}$ ; (3)  $C_{\text{mte}}=C_{mX} \cdot D_{\text{mte}}$ .
- 991 4 If the amount of mitochondria, mte, is expressed as mitochondrial mass, then  $D_{\text{mte}}$  is the mass  
 992 fraction of mitochondria in the sample. If mte is expressed as mitochondrial volume,  $V_{\text{mt}}$ , and the  
 993 mass of sample,  $m_X$ , is replaced by volume of sample,  $V_X$ , then  $D_{\text{mte}}$  is the volume fraction of  
 994 mitochondria in the sample.
- 995 5  $\text{mte}_X=\text{mte} \cdot N_X^{-1}=C_{\text{mte}} \cdot C_{NX}^{-1}$ .
- 996 6 Entity O<sub>2</sub> can be replaced by other chemical entities B to study different reactions.
- 997 7  $l_{O_2}$  and  $V$  are defined per instrument chamber as a system of constant volume (and constant  
 998 temperature), which may be closed or open.  $l_{O_2}$  is abbreviated for  $l_{O_2,r}$ , i.e. the metabolic or internal  
 999 O<sub>2</sub> flow of the chemical reaction r in which O<sub>2</sub> is consumed, hence the negative stoichiometric  
 1000 number,  $\nu_{O_2}=-1$ .  $l_{O_2,r}=drn_{O_2}/dt \cdot \nu_{O_2}^{-1}$ . If r includes all chemical reactions in which O<sub>2</sub> participates, then  
 1001  $drn_{O_2} = dn_{O_2} - d_e n_{O_2}$ , where  $dn_{O_2}$  is the change in the amount of O<sub>2</sub> in the instrument chamber and  
 1002  $d_e n_{O_2}$  is the amount of O<sub>2</sub> added externally to the system. At steady state, by definition  $dn_{O_2}=0$ , hence  
 1003  $drn_{O_2}=-d_e n_{O_2}$ .
- 1004 8  $J_{V,O_2}$  is an experimental variable, expressed per volume of the instrument chamber.
- 1005 9  $l_{X,O_2}$  is a physiological variable, depending on the size of entity X.
- 1006 10 There are many ways to normalize for a mitochondrial marker, that are used in different experimental  
 1007 approaches: (1)  $J_{\text{mte},O_2} = J_{V,O_2} \cdot C_{\text{mte}}^{-1}$ ; (2)  $J_{\text{mte},O_2} = J_{V,O_2} \cdot C_{mX}^{-1} \cdot D_{\text{mte}}^{-1} = J_{mX,O_2} \cdot D_{\text{mte}}^{-1}$ ; (3)  $J_{\text{mte},O_2} =$   
 1008  $J_{V,O_2} \cdot C_{NX}^{-1} \cdot \text{mte}_X^{-1} = l_{X,O_2} \cdot \text{mte}_X^{-1}$ ; (4)  $J_{\text{mte},O_2} = l_{O_2} \cdot \text{mte}^{-1}$ .
- 1009
- 1010
- 1011
- 1012
- 1013





1014

Symbol	Definition [Units]
$C_{mte}$	Mitochondrial concentration in chamber [ $x_{mte} \cdot L^{-1}$ ]
$C_m$	Sample mass concentration in chamber [ $g \cdot L^{-1}$ ]
$D_{mte}$	Specific mte-density per tissue mass [ $x_{mte} \cdot g^{-1}$ ]
$J_{m,O_2}$	Mass-specific $O_2$ flux [ $nmol \cdot s^{-1} \cdot g^{-1}$ ]
$J_{mte,O_2}$	Mitochondria-specific $O_2$ flux [ $nmol \cdot s^{-1} \cdot x_{mte}^{-1}$ ]
$mte$	Amount of mitochondrial elements [ $x_{mte}$ ]
$m_{thom}$	Mass of tissue in the homogenate [g]
$Y_{mt}$	Yield of isolated mitochondria

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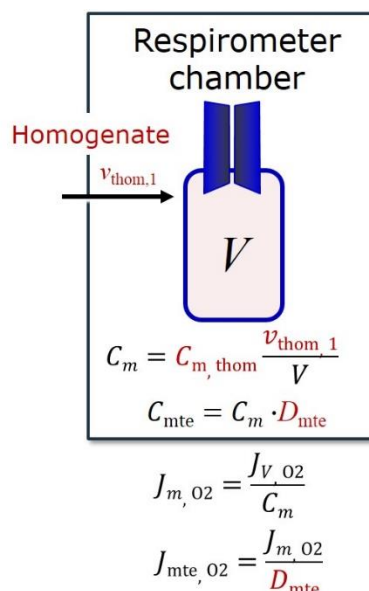
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1024



**Fig. 8. Normalization of volume-specific flux of isolated mitochondria and tissue**

**homogenate. A:** Mitochondrial yield,  $Y_{mt}$ , in preparation of isolated mitochondria.  $v_{thom,1}$

and  $v_{stock,1}$  are the volumes transferred from the total volume,  $V_{thom}$  and  $V_{stock}$ , respectively.

$mte_{thom,1}$  is the amount of mitochondrial elements in volume  $v_{thom,1}$  used for isolation. **B:**

In respirometry with homogenate,  $v_{thom,1}$  is transferred directly into the respirometer

chamber. See **Table 6** for further explanation of symbols.

1025 **Table 7. Some useful abbreviations**  
 1026 **of various sample types, X.**

---

1028	Identity of sample	X
------	--------------------	---

---

1030	Mitochondrial preparations	mtprep
1031	Isolated mitochondria	imt
1032	Tissue homogenate	thom
1033	Permeabilized tissue	pti
1034	Permeabilized fibres	pfi
1035	Permeabilized cells	pce
1036	Cells	ce

---

1037  
1038

1039 **Mass-specific flux,  $J_{mX,O_2}$ :** Mass-specific flux is obtained by expressing respiration per  
 1040 mass of sample,  $m_X$  [mg].  $X$  is the type of sample, *e.g.*, tissue homogenate, permeabilized fibres  
 1041 or cells. Volume-specific flux is divided by mass concentration of  $X$ ,  $J_{mX,O_2} = J_{V,O_2}/C_{mX}$ ; or flow  
 1042 per cell is divided by mass per cell,  $J_{mcell,O_2} = I_{cell,O_2}/M_{cell}$ . If mass-specific  $O_2$  flux is constant  
 1043 and independent of sample size (expressed as mass), then there is no interaction between the  
 1044 subsystems. A 1.5 mg and a 3.0 mg muscle sample respire at identical mass-specific flux.  
 1045 Mass-specific  $O_2$  flux, however, may change with the mass of a tissue sample, cells or isolated  
 1046 mitochondria in the measuring chamber, in which case the nature of the interaction becomes an  
 1047 issue. Optimization of cell density and arrangement is generally important and particularly in  
 1048 experiments carried out in wells, considering the confluency of the cell monolayer or clumps  
 1049 of cells (Salabei *et al.* 2014).


1050 **Number concentration,  $C_{NX}$ :** The experimental *number concentration* of sample in the  
 1051 case of cells or animals, *e.g.*, nematodes is  $C_{NX} = N_X/V$  [ $x \cdot mL^{-1}$ ], where  $N_X$  is the number of cells  
 1052 or organisms in the chamber (**Table 6**).

1053 **Flow per sample entity,  $I_{X,O_2}$ :** A special case of normalization is encountered in  
 1054 respiratory studies with permeabilized (or intact) cells. If respiration is expressed per cell, the  
 1055  $O_2$  flow per measurement system is replaced by the  $O_2$  flow per cell,  $I_{cell,O_2}$  (**Table 6**).  $O_2$  flow  
 1056 can be calculated from volume-specific  $O_2$  flux,  $J_{V,O_2}$  [ $nmol \cdot s^{-1} \cdot L^{-1}$ ] (per  $V$  of the measurement  
 1057 chamber [L]), divided by the number concentration of cells,  $C_{N_{ce}} = N_{ce}/V$  [ $cell \cdot L^{-1}$ ], where  $N_{ce}$  is  
 1058 the number of cells in the chamber. Cellular  $O_2$  flow can be compared between cells of identical  
 1059 size. To take into account changes and differences in cell size, further normalization is required  
 1060 to obtain cell size-specific or mitochondrial marker-specific  $O_2$  flux (Renner *et al.* 2003).

1061 The complexity changes when the sample is a whole organism studied as an experimental  
 1062 model. The well-established scaling law in respiratory physiology reveals a strong interaction  
 1063 of  $O_2$  consumption and individual body mass of an organism, since *basal* metabolic rate (flow)  
 1064 does not increase linearly with body mass, whereas *maximum* mass-specific  $O_2$  flux,  $\dot{V}_{O_2max}$  or  
 1065  $\dot{V}_{O_2peak}$ , is approximately constant across a large range of individual body mass (Weibel and  
 1066 Hoppeler 2005), with individuals, breeds, and certain species deviating substantially from this  
 1067 general relationship.  $\dot{V}_{O_2peak}$  of human endurance athletes is 60 to 80 mL  $O_2 \cdot min^{-1} \cdot kg^{-1}$  body  
 1068 mass, converted to  $J_{m,O_2peak}$  of 45 to 60  $nmol \cdot s^{-1} \cdot g^{-1}$  (Gnaiger 2014; **Table 8**).

1069

#### 1070 4.2. Normalization for mitochondrial content


1071 Normalization is a problematic subject and it is essential to consider the question of the  
 1072 study. If the study aims to compare tissue performance, such as the effects of a certain treatment  
 1073 on a specific tissue, then normalization can be successful, using tissue mass or protein content,  
 1074 for example. If the aim, however, is to find differences of mitochondrial function independent  
 1075 of mitochondrial density (**Table 6**), then normalization to a mitochondrial marker is imperative.  
 1076 However, one cannot assume that quantitative changes in various markers such as  
 1077 mitochondrial proteins necessarily occur in parallel with one another. **It is important to first**  
 1078 **establish that the marker chosen is not selectively altered by the performed treatment.** In 

1079 conclusion, the normalization must reflect the question under investigation to reach a satisfying  
1080 answer. On the other hand, the goal of comparing results across projects and institutions  
1081 requires some standardization on normalization for entry into a databank.

1082       **Mitochondrial concentration,  $C_{mte}$ , and mitochondrial markers:** It is important that  
1083 mitochondrial content in the tissue and the measurement chamber be quantified, as a  
1084 physiological output and result of mitochondrial biogenesis and degradation, and as a quantity  
1085 for normalization in functional analyses. Mitochondrial organelles comprise a cellular  
1086 reticulum that is in a continual flux of fusion and fission. Hence the definition of an "amount"  
1087 of mitochondria is often misconceived: mitochondria cannot be counted as a number of  
1088 occurring elements. Therefore, quantification of the "amount" of mitochondria depends on  
1089 measurement of chosen mitochondrial markers. 'Mitochondria are the structural and functional  
1090 elemental units of cell respiration' (Gnaiger 2014). The quantity of a mitochondrial marker can  
1091 be considered as the measurement of the amount of *elemental mitochondrial units* or  
1092 *mitochondrial elements*, mte. However, since mitochondrial quality changes under certain  
1093 stimuli, particularly in mitochondrial dysfunction, some markers can vary while other markers  
1094 are unchanged. (1) Mitochondrial volume or membrane area are structural markers, whereas  
1095 mitochondrial protein mass is frequently used as a marker for isolated mitochondria. (2)  
1096 Mitochondrial marker enzymes (amounts or activities) and molecular markers can be selected  
1097 as matrix markers, *e.g.*, citrate synthase activity, mtDNA; or inner mt-membrane markers, *e.g.*,  
1098 cytochrome *c* oxidase activity, *aa<sub>3</sub>* content, cardiolipin, TOM20. (3) Extending the  
1099 measurement of mitochondrial marker enzyme activity to mitochondrial pathway capacity,  
1100 measured as ETS or OXPHOS capacity, can be considered as an integrative functional  
1101 mitochondrial marker.

1102       Depending on the type of mitochondrial marker, the mitochondrial elements, mte, are  
1103 expressed in marker-specific units. Although concentration and density are used synonymously  
1104 in physical chemistry, it is recommended to distinguish *experimental mitochondrial*

1105 concentration,  $C_{\text{mte}}=\text{mte}/V$  and physiological mitochondrial density,  $D_{\text{mte}}=\text{mte}/m_X$ . Then  
 1106 mitochondrial density is the amount of mitochondrial elements per mass of tissue. The former  
 1107 is mitochondrial density multiplied by sample mass concentration,  $C_{\text{mte}}=D_{\text{mte}}\cdot C_{mX}$ , or  
 1108 mitochondrial content multiplied by sample number concentration,  $C_{\text{mte}}=\text{mte}_X\cdot C_{NX}$  (**Table 6**).

1109 **Mitochondria-specific flux,  $J_{\text{mte},\text{O}_2}$ :** Volume-specific metabolic  $\text{O}_2$  flux depends on: (1)  
 1110 the sample concentration in the volume of the instrument chamber,  $C_{mX}$ , or  $C_{NX}$ ; (2) the  
 1111 mitochondrial density in the sample,  $D_{\text{mte}}=\text{mte}/m_X$  or  $\text{mte}_X=\text{mte}/N_X$ ; and (3) the specific  
 1112 mitochondrial activity or performance per elemental mitochondrial unit,  $J_{\text{mte},\text{O}_2}=J_{V,\text{O}_2}/C_{\text{mte}}$   
 1113 (**Table 6**). Obviously, the numerical results for  $J_{\text{mte},\text{O}_2}$  vary according to the type of  
 1114 mitochondrial marker chosen for measurement of mte and  $C_{\text{mte}}=\text{mte}/V$ . Some problems are  
 1115 common for all mitochondrial markers: (1) Accuracy of measurement is crucial, since even a  
 1116 highly accurate and reproducible measurement of  $\text{O}_2$  flux becomes inaccurate and noisy if  
 1117 normalized for a biased and noisy measurement of a mitochondrial marker. This problem is  
 1118 acute in mitochondrial respiration because the denominators used (the mitochondrial marker)  
 1119 are often very small moieties whose accurate and precise determination is difficult. This  
 1120 problem can be avoided when  $\text{O}_2$  fluxes measured in substrate-uncoupler-inhibitor titration  
 1121 protocols are normalized for flux in a defined respiratory reference state, which is used as an  
 1122 *internal* marker and yields flux control ratios, *FCRs* (**Fig. 7**). *FCRs* are independent of any   
 1123 *externally* measured markers and, therefore, are statistically very robust. *FCRs* indicate  
 1124 qualitative changes of mitochondrial respiratory control, with highest quantitative resolution,  
 1125 separating the effect of mitochondrial density or concentration on  $J_{mX,\text{O}_2}$  or  $I_{X,\text{O}_2}$  from that of  
 1126 function per elemental mitochondrial marker,  $J_{\text{mte},\text{O}_2}$  (Pesta *et al.* 2011; Gnaiger 2014). (2) If  
 1127 mitochondrial quality does not change and only the amount of mitochondria, defined by the  
 1128 chosen mitochondrial marker, varies as a determinant of mass-specific flux, then any marker is  
 1129 equally qualified and selection of the optimum marker depends only on the accuracy and  
 1130 precision of measurement of the mitochondrial marker. (3) If mitochondrial flux control ratios

1131 change, then there may not be any best mitochondrial marker. In general, measurement of  
1132 multiple mitochondrial markers enables a comparison and evaluation of normalization for a  
1133 variety of mitochondrial markers.

1134

#### 1135 4.3. Conversion: units and normalization

1136 Many different units have been used to report the rate of oxygen consumption, OCR  
1137 (**Table 8**). *SI* base units provide the common reference for introducing the theoretical principles  
1138 (**Fig. 7**), and are used with appropriately chosen *SI* prefixes to express numerical data in the  
1139 most practical format, with an effort towards unification within specific areas of application  
1140 (**Table 9**). For studies of cells, we recommend that respiration be expressed, as far as possible,  
1141 as (1) O<sub>2</sub> flux normalized for a mitochondrial marker, for separation of the effects of  
1142 mitochondrial quality and content on cell respiration (this includes *FCRs* as a normalization for  
1143 a functional mitochondrial marker); (2) O<sub>2</sub> flux in units of cell volume or mass, for comparison  
1144 of respiration of cells with different cell size (Renner *et al.* 2003) and with studies on tissue  
1145 preparations, and (3) O<sub>2</sub> flow in units of attomole (10<sup>-18</sup> mol) of O<sub>2</sub> consumed by each cell in a  
1146 second [amol·s<sup>-1</sup>·cell<sup>-1</sup>], numerically equivalent to [pmol·s<sup>-1</sup>·10<sup>-6</sup> cells]. This convention allows  
1147 information to be easily used when designing experiments in which oxygen consumption must  
1148 be considered. For example, to estimate the volume-specific O<sub>2</sub> flux in an instrument chamber  
1149 that would be expected at a particular cell number concentration, one simply needs to multiply  
1150 the flow per cell by the number of cells per volume of interest. This provides the amount of O<sub>2</sub>  
1151 [mol] consumed per time [s<sup>-1</sup>] per unit volume [L<sup>-1</sup>]. At an O<sub>2</sub> flow of 100 amol·s<sup>-1</sup>·cell<sup>-1</sup> and a  
1152 cell density of 10<sup>9</sup> cells·L<sup>-1</sup> (10<sup>6</sup> cells·mL<sup>-1</sup>), the volume-specific O<sub>2</sub> flux is 100 nmol·s<sup>-1</sup>·L<sup>-1</sup> (100  
1153 pmol·s<sup>-1</sup>·mL<sup>-1</sup>). Although volume is expressed as m<sup>3</sup> using the *SI* base unit, the litre [dm<sup>3</sup>] is the  
1154 basic unit of volume for concentration and is used for most solution chemical kinetics. If one  
1155 multiplies  $I_{\text{cell},\text{O}_2}$  by  $C_{N_{\text{cell}}}$ , then the result will not only be the amount of O<sub>2</sub> [mol] consumed per  
1156 time [s<sup>-1</sup>] in one litre [L<sup>-1</sup>], but also the change in the concentration of oxygen per second (for

1157 any volume of an ideally closed system). This is ideal for kinetic modeling as it blends with  
 1158 chemical rate equations where concentrations are typically expressed in mol·L<sup>-1</sup> (Wagner *et al.*  
 1159 2011). In studies of multinuclear cells, such as differentiated skeletal muscle cells, it is easy to  
 1160 determine the number of nuclei but not the total number of cells. A generalized concept,  
 1161 therefore, is obtained by substituting cells by nuclei as the sample entity. This does not hold,  
 1162 however, for enucleated platelets.

1163

1164 **Table 8. Conversion of various units used in respirometry and**  
 1165 **ergometry.** *e* is the number of electrons or reducing equivalents. *z<sub>B</sub>* is the  
 1166 charge number of entity B.

1167

1 Unit	x	Multiplication factor	SI-Unit	Note
ng.atom O·s <sup>-1</sup>	(2 e)	0.5	nmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	
ng.atom O·min <sup>-1</sup>	(2 e)	8.33	pmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	
natom O·min <sup>-1</sup>	(2 e)	8.33	pmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	
nmol O <sub>2</sub> ·min <sup>-1</sup>	(4 e)	16.67	pmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	
nmol O <sub>2</sub> ·h <sup>-1</sup>	(4 e)	0.2778	pmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	
mL O <sub>2</sub> ·min <sup>-1</sup> at STPD <sup>a</sup>		0.744	μmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	1
W = J/s at -470 kJ/mol O <sub>2</sub>		-2.128	μmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	
mA = mC·s <sup>-1</sup>	(z <sub>H+</sub> =1)	10.36	nmol H <sup>+</sup> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	2
mA = mC·s <sup>-1</sup>	(z <sub>O2</sub> =4)	2.59	nmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	2
nmol H <sup>+</sup> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	(z <sub>H+</sub> =1)	0.09649	mA	3
nmol O <sub>2</sub> ·s <sup>-1</sup>	(z <sub>O2</sub> =4)	0.38594	mA	3

1168

1169 1 At standard temperature and pressure dry (STPD: 0 °C=273.15 K and 1  
 1170 atm=101.325 kPa=760 mmHg), the molar volume of an ideal gas, *V<sub>m</sub>*, and *V<sub>m,O2</sub>*  
 1171 is 22.414 and 22.392 L·mol<sup>-1</sup> respectively. Rounded to three decimal places, both  
 1172 values yield the conversion factor of 0.744. For comparison at NTPD (20 °C),  
 1173 *V<sub>m,O2</sub>* is 24.038 L·mol<sup>-1</sup>. Note that the *SI* standard pressure is 100 kPa.

1174 2 The multiplication factor is  $10^6/(z_B \cdot F)$ .

1175 3 The multiplication factor is  $z_B \cdot F/10^6$ .

1176

1177 **Table 9. Conversion for units with preservation of numerical values.**

Name	Frequently used unit	Equivalent unit	Note
Volume-specific flux, $J_{V,O_2}$	$\text{pmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{mL}^{-1}$	$\text{nmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$	1
Cell-specific flow, $I_{O_2}$	$\text{mmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$	$\text{mol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$	
	$\text{pmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot 10^{-6} \text{ cells}$	$\text{amol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{cell}^{-1}$	2
Cell number concentration, $C_{Nce}$	$\text{pmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot 10^{-9} \text{ cells}$	$\text{zmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{cell}^{-1}$	3
	$10^6 \text{ cells} \cdot \text{mL}^{-1}$	$10^9 \text{ cells} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$	
Mitochondrial protein concentration, $C_{mte}$	$0.1 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{mL}^{-1}$	$0.1 \text{ g} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$	
Mass-specific flux, $J_{m,O_2}$	$\text{pmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{mg}^{-1}$	$\text{nmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{g}^{-1}$	4
Catabolic power, $P_{k,O_2}$	$\mu\text{W} \cdot 10^{-6} \text{ cells}$	$\text{pW} \cdot \text{cell}^{-1}$	1
Volume	1,000 L	$\text{m}^3$ (1,000 kg)	
	L	$\text{dm}^3$ (kg)	
	mL	$\text{cm}^3$ (g)	
	$\mu\text{L}$	$\text{mm}^3$ (mg)	
	fL	$\mu\text{m}^3$ (pg)	
Amount of substance concentration	$\text{M} = \text{mol} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$	$\text{mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$	

1178

1179 1 pmol: picomole =  $10^{-12}$  mol

1180 2 amol: attomole =  $10^{-18}$  mol

1181 3 zmol: zeptomole =  $10^{-21}$  mol

1182 4 nmol: nanomole =  $10^{-9}$  mol

1183

#### 1184 4.4. Conversion: oxygen, proton and ATP flux

1185  $J_{O_2,k}$  is coupled in mitochondrial steady states to proton cycling,  $J_{\infty H^+} = J_{H^+,out} = J_{H^+,in}$  (**Fig.**

1186 **2**).  $J_{H^+,out/n}$  and  $J_{H^+,in/n}$  [ $\text{nmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$ ] are converted into electrical units,  $J_{H^+,out/e}$

1187 [ $\text{mC} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1} = \text{mA} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$ ] =  $J_{H^+,out/n}$  [ $\text{nmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$ ]  $\cdot F$  [ $\text{C} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$ ]  $\cdot 10^{-6}$  (**Table 4**). At a  $J_{H^+,out}/J_{O_2,k}$  ratio

1188 or  $H^+_{out}/O_2$  of 20 ( $H^+_{out}/O_2=10$ ), a volume-specific  $O_2$  flux of  $100 \text{ nmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$  would correspond

1189 to a proton flux of  $2,000 \text{ nmol} \text{ H}^+_{out} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$  or volume-specific current of  $193 \text{ mA} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$ .

$$1190 J_{V,H^+out/e} [\text{mA} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}] = J_{V,H^+out/n} \cdot F \cdot 10^{-6} [\text{nmol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1} \cdot \text{mC} \cdot \text{nmol}^{-1}] \quad (\text{Eq. 3.1})$$

$$1191 J_{V,H^+out/e} [\text{mA} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}] = J_{V,O_2} \cdot (H^+_{out}/O_2) \cdot F \cdot 10^{-6} [\text{mC} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{L}^{-1} = \text{mA} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}] \quad (\text{Eq. 3.2})$$

1192 ETS capacity in various human cell types including HEK 293, primary HUVEC and fibroblasts

1193 ranges from 50 to  $180 \text{ amol} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{cell}^{-1}$ , measured in intact cells in the noncoupled state (see



1194 Gnaiger 2014). At  $100 \text{ amol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{cell}^{-1}$  corrected for ROX (corresponding to a catabolic power  
 1195 of  $-48 \text{ pW}\cdot\text{cell}^{-1}$ ), the current across the mt-membranes,  $I_e$ , approximates  $193 \text{ pA}\cdot\text{cell}^{-1}$  or 0.2  
 1196 nA per cell. See Rich (2003) for an extension of quantitative bioenergetics from the molecular  
 1197 to the human scale, with a transmembrane proton flux equivalent to 520 A in an adult at a  
 1198 catabolic power of -110 W. Modelling approaches illustrate the link between proton motive  
 1199 force and currents (Willis *et al.* 2016). For NADH- and succinate-linked respiration, the  
 1200 mechanistic  $\text{P}\gg/\text{O}_2$  ratio (referring to the full 4 electron reduction of  $\text{O}_2$ ) is calculated at  $20/3.7$   
 1201 and  $12/3.7$ , respectively (Eq. 4) equal to 5.4 and 3.3. The classical  $\text{P}\gg/\text{O}$  ratios (referring to the  
 1202 2 electron reduction of  $0.5 \text{ O}_2$ ) are 2.7 and 1.6 (Watt *et al.* 2010), in direct agreement with the  
 1203 measured  $\text{P}\gg/\text{O}$  ratio for succinate of  $1.58 \pm 0.02$  (Gnaiger *et al.* 2000; for detailed reviews see  
 1204 Wikström and Hummer 2012; Sazanov 2015),

$$1205 \quad \text{P}\gg/\text{O}_2 = (\text{H}^+_{\text{out}}/\text{O}_2)/(\text{H}^+_{\text{in}}/\text{P}\gg) \quad (\text{Eq. 4})$$

1206 In summary (**Fig. 1**),

$$1207 \quad J_{V,\text{P}\gg} [\text{nmol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}] = J_{V,\text{O}_2} \cdot (\text{H}^+_{\text{out}}/\text{O}_2) / (\text{H}^+_{\text{in}}/\text{P}\gg) \quad (\text{Eq. 5.1})$$

$$1208 \quad J_{V,\text{P}\gg} [\text{nmol}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}] = J_{V,\text{O}_2} \cdot (\text{P}\gg/\text{O}_2) \quad (\text{Eq. 5.2})$$

1209 We consider isolated mitochondria as powerhouses and proton pumps as molecular machines  
 1210 to relate experimental results to energy metabolism of the intact cell. The cellular  $\text{P}\gg/\text{O}_2$  based  
 1211 on oxidation of glycogen is increased by the glycolytic (fermentative) substrate-level  
 1212 phosphorylation of 3  $\text{P}\gg/\text{Glyc}$ , *i.e.*, 0.5 mol  $\text{P}\gg$  for each mol  $\text{O}_2$  consumed in the complete  
 1213 oxidation of a mol glycosyl unit (Glyc). Adding 0.5 to the mitochondrial  $\text{P}\gg/\text{O}_2$  ratio of 5.4  
 1214 yields a bioenergetic cell physiological  $\text{P}\gg/\text{O}_2$  ratio close to 6. Two NADH equivalents are  
 1215 formed during glycolysis and transported from the cytosol into the mitochondrial matrix, either  
 1216 by the malate-aspartate shuttle or by the glycerophosphate shuttle resulting in different  
 1217 theoretical yield of ATP generated by mitochondria, the energetic cost of which potentially  
 1218 must be taken into account. Considering also substrate-level phosphorylation in the TCA cycle,  
 1219 this high  $\text{P}\gg/\text{O}_2$  ratio not only reflects proton translocation and OXPHOS studied in isolation,

1220 but integrates mitochondrial physiology with energy transformation in the living cell (Gnaiger  
1221 1993a).

1222

## 1223 **5. Conclusions**

1224 MitoEAGLE can serve as a gateway to better diagnose mitochondrial respiratory defects  
1225 linked to genetic variation, age-related health risks, sex-specific mitochondrial performance,  
1226 lifestyle with its effects on degenerative diseases, and thermal and chemical environment. The  
1227 present recommendations on coupling control states and rates, linked to the concept of the  
1228 protonmotive force (Part 1) will be extended in a series of reports on pathway control of  
1229 mitochondrial respiration, respiratory states in intact cells, and harmonization of experimental  
1230 procedures.

1231

---

### 1232 **Box 5: Mitochondrial and cell respiration**

1233 Mitochondrial and cell respiration is the process of highly exothermic energy transformation in  
1234 which scalar redox reactions are coupled to vectorial ion translocation across a semipermeable  
1235 membrane, which separates the small volume of a bacterial cell or mitochondrion from the  
1236 larger volume of its surroundings. The electrochemical exergy can be partially conserved in the  
1237 phosphorylation of ADP to ATP or in ion pumping, or dissipated in an electrochemical short-  
1238 circuit. Respiration is thus clearly distinguished from fermentation as the counterpart of cellular  
1239 core energy metabolism. Respiration is separated in mitochondrial preparations from the partial  
1240 contribution of fermentative pathways of the intact cell. According to this definition, residual  
1241 oxygen consumption, as measured after inhibition of the mitochondrial electron transfer system,  
1242 does not belong to the class of catabolic reactions and is, therefore, subtracted from total oxygen  
1243 consumption to obtain baseline-corrected respiration.

---

1244

1245           The optimal choice for expressing mitochondrial and cell respiration (**Box 5**) as O<sub>2</sub> flow  
1246 per biological system, and normalization for specific tissue-markers (volume, mass, protein)  
1247 and mitochondrial markers (volume, protein, content, mtDNA, activity of marker enzymes,  
1248 respiratory reference state) is guided by the scientific question. Interpretation of the obtained  
1249 data depends critically on appropriate normalization, and therefore reporting rates merely as  
1250 nmol·s<sup>-1</sup> is discouraged, since it restricts the analysis to intra-experimental comparison of  
1251 relative (qualitative) differences. Expressing O<sub>2</sub> consumption per cell may not be possible when  
1252 dealing with tissues. For studies with mitochondrial preparations, we recommend that  
1253 normalizations be provided as far as possible: (1) on a per cell basis as O<sub>2</sub> flow (a biophysical  
1254 normalization); (2) per g cell or tissue protein, or per cell or tissue mass as mass-specific O<sub>2</sub>  
1255 flux (a cellular normalization); and (3) per mitochondrial marker as mt-specific flux (a  
1256 mitochondrial normalization). With information on cell size and the use of multiple  
1257 normalizations, maximum potential information is available (Renner *et al.* 2003; Wagner *et al.*  
1258 2011; Gnaiger 2014). When using isolated mitochondria, mitochondrial protein is a frequently  
1259 applied mitochondrial marker, the use of which is basically restricted to isolated mitochondria.  
1260 Mitochondrial markers, such as citrate synthase activity as an enzymatic matrix marker, provide  
1261 a link to the tissue of origin on the basis of calculating the mitochondrial yield, *i.e.*, the fraction  
1262 of mitochondrial marker obtained from a unit mass of tissue.

1263

#### 1264 **Acknowledgements**

1265 We thank M. Beno for management assistance. Supported by COST Action CA15203  
1266 MitoEAGLE and K-Regio project MitoFit (EG).

1267 **Competing financial interests:** E.G. is founder and CEO of Oroboros Instruments, Innsbruck,  
1268 Austria.

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- 1271 **6. References** (*incomplete; www links will be deleted in the final version*)
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