Spike-timing dependent plasticity

Spike order determines if potentiation or depression occurs [Poo98].

Plasticity depends on relative timing of pre- and post-synaptic spikes:
—Potentiates if pre precedes post repeatedly
—Depresses if post precedes pre repeatedly
Changes in synaptic efficacy, which rarely exceed a factor of two, persists for over half an hour—this criteria must be met to receive the moniker long-term potentiation or depression (LTP/D).
Glutaminergic synapses have two types of receptors

When a synapse is potentiated, AMPARs are inserted into its membrane [Barth06].

Excitatory synapses use the neurotransmitter glutamate, which binds to two types of receptors: NMDA and AMPA.

Newborn synapses, which have only NMDARs, are essentially silent. Because, whereas AMPARs pass current whenever they bind glutamate, NMDA receptors require the membrane to be depolarized first (releases a Mg block).

Potentiation inserts AMPARs
When a synapse is potentiated (Spd), its AMPA-to-NMDA ratio increases [Barth06].

Efficacy of AMPA and NMDA receptors was determined by taking advantage of NMDA's voltage dependence.

Voltage-clamping the cell to -70 or +40 mV resulted in a fast-inward (AMPA) or a slow-outward current (NMDA), respectively.

Calcium triggers potentiation and depression through kinase and phosphatase pathways [Lisman89].

As NMDARs pass calcium as well as sodium when open, coincident pre- and postsynaptic activity elevates the intracellular calcium concentration.

Large increases in calcium activate the kinase pathway (CaMKII), which promotes potentiation.

Moderate increases in calcium activate the phosphatase pathway (PP1), which promotes depression.

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Calcium comes in through voltage-controlled Ca-channels (VCCC) when dendrite is depolarized.

Subsequent binding of glutamate to metabotropic receptors (mGluR) triggers LTD.

Imaging Ca in single spines

Ca-signal, imaged with green dye, is normalized by spine size, imaged with red [Sakmann06].

In this imaging experiment, the change relative to baseline of a Ca-sensitive green fluorescent dye ($\Delta G$) was normalized by a Ca-insensitive red fluorescent dye (R) to account for differences in spine volume.
No difference in Ca thresholds

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The peak [Ca] level in dendritic spines of pyramidal cells (L2/3, somatosensory cortex) does not predict the occurrence of LTP or LTD.

Two coincidence-detector model
Spikes trigger and sample decay profiles, feeding samples to leaky integrators.

**Potentiation pathway**

When a presynaptic spike occurs, a decay element is activated (Glu).

When a subsequent postsynaptic spike occurs, it samples the decay-element's output (NMDA).

These samples are fed to a leaky integrator, where they accumulate (CaMK).

If the integrator reaches a threshold, the synapse potentiates.

**Depression pathway**

Works similarly, except that the roles of pre- and postsynaptic spikes are reversed (with CaVC, mGluR, and PL playing the roles of Glu, NMDA and CaMK).

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**Model waveforms**

![Waveform Diagram]

Pre-spike triggers as decaying profile that is sampled by post-spike, and vise versa.

Potentiation and depression time-windows are determined by decay elements.
LTP and LTD in model

Each dot represents a pre-post (left) or post-pre (right) pairing.

The state of the model synapse (potentiated or depressed) is remembered by a state-holding element (flip-flop). Its output determines whether or not AMPARs are inserted.

Model's equations: Pairing's efficacy

If we drive the synapse periodically at $T_s$ with a constant pre-post pairing $t_{\text{pair}}$, the LTP integrator's output after $n$ pairings is

$$ P = n S[t_{\text{pair}}] - (n - 1) L[T_s] $$

where $S(t_{\text{pair}})$ is the sampled decaying profile and $L(T_s)$ is the integrator's leakage. Thus, the number of pairings required to reach threshold ($P_{\text{th}}$) is

$$ n_{\text{th}} = \frac{P_{\text{th}} - L[T_s]}{S[t_{\text{pair}}] - L[T_s]} \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{1}{n_{\text{th}}} = \frac{S[t_{\text{pair}}] - L[T_s]}{P_{\text{th}} - L[T_s]} $$

is the efficacy of each pairing.
Model's equations: Linear decay profile

If the profile decays linearly from 1 to zero in $t_p$ seconds, then

$$S(t_{\text{pair}}) = 1 - t_{\text{pair}} / t_p, \ t_{\text{pair}} < t_p$$

And if the integrator's output decays by 1 every $\tau_p$ seconds, then

$$L[T_s] = T_s / \tau_p$$

Thus, we have

$$\frac{1}{n_{\text{th}}} = \frac{S(t_{\text{pair}}) - L[T_s]}{P_{\text{th}} - L[T_s]} = \frac{1 - t_{\text{pair}} / t_p - T_s / \tau_p}{P_{\text{th}} - T_s / \tau_p}$$

The equation for depression is similar—with $t_D$ and $\tau_D$ playing the roles of $t_P$ and $\tau_P$—except that $t_{\text{pair}}$'s sign is flipped.
Model's STDP curve

Pre-post pairings result in LTP and post-pre pairings result in LTD.