

In a typical **F wave** study, a strong electrical stimulus (supramaximal stimulation) is applied to the skin surface above the distal portion of a nerve so that the impulse travels both distally (towards the muscle fiber) and proximally (back to the motor neurons of the spinal cord). (These directions are also known as **orthodromic** and **antidromic**, respectively.) When the orthodromic stimulus reaches the muscle fiber, it elicits a strong M-response indicative of muscle contraction. When the antidromic stimulus reaches the motor neuron cell bodies, a small portion of the motor neurons backfire and orthodromic wave travels back down the nerve towards the muscle. This reflected stimulus evokes small proportion of the muscle fibers causing a small, second CMAP called the F wave.

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