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## The effect of exercise and diet on rat skeletal muscle phospholipid molecular species profile: an electrospray ionisation mass spectrometric analysis

Todd Mitchell

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**THE EFFECT OF EXERCISE AND DIET ON RAT SKELETAL  
MUSCLE PHOSPHOLIPID MOLECULAR SPECIES PROFILE:  
AN ELECTROSPRAY IONISATION MASS SPECTROMETRIC  
ANALYSIS**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

From

**UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

by

**TODD W. MITCHELL BSc (Hons)**

**DEPARTMENT OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE**

October 2004

## **Declaration**

I, Todd W. Mitchell declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

**Todd W Mitchell**

6<sup>th</sup> October 2004

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and my wife Tracy for their endless love and support and to my son Zane whose strength and determination to survive after a very early arrival has inspired me to realise my goals without losing sight of what is most important.

## **Abstract**

Biological membranes separate cells from the external milieu and compartmentalise organelles within a cell, providing a specialised environment for many specific biochemical processes. They exist as bilayers of amphipathic lipids arranged with their hydrophobic moieties internalised and their hydrophilic regions directed to the membrane surfaces. Numerous proteins are also associated with membranes and are bound to the lipids by ionic or hydrophobic interactions. Phospholipids, however, are the major constituent of biological membranes and thus have a large influence upon the physical properties of the membrane and the many cellular functions membranes participate in.

To date our understanding of membrane lipid composition has been limited to phospholipid class or fatty acid analysis, primarily by thin layer chromatography, high performance liquid chromatography and gas chromatography. The results obtained by these techniques provide considerable evidence demonstrating an association between various metabolic disorders, such as insulin resistance and obesity and skeletal muscle phospholipid content. There is also a large pool of evidence confirming an effect of diet and exercise on the phospholipid fatty acid content of skeletal muscle membranes. Furthermore, these changes appear to have ameliorating effects upon the aforementioned metabolic disorders. An understanding of alterations in whole phospholipid molecular species induced by exercise and diet, however, is very limited. Recent advances in mass spectrometry allow the analysis of biological membranes at this whole molecule level.

In this thesis, a comparative analysis of skeletal muscle phospholipid molecular species profile between oxidative and glycolytic rat skeletal muscle and the effect of exercise and diet on these profiles have been performed using electrospray ionisation mass spectrometry (ESI-MS). Therefore, the primary aim of this thesis was to develop mass spectrometric techniques for analysing relative changes in phospholipid molecular species profile using a hybrid quadrupole time-of-flight (Q-ToF) mass spectrometer. To achieve this both total lipid and phospholipid extracts from various rat tissues such as brain, liver and skeletal muscle were obtained and used to (i) optimise instrument settings, (ii) ensure accurate identification of phospholipid molecular species, and (iii) ensure the

reproducibility of results. A normalisation procedure was then developed so that comparative analysis between groups could be performed. This was achieved by presenting the ion abundance of each phospholipid molecular species (after isotope corrections) as a percentage of the total ion abundance of all identified phospholipids within the  $m/z$  range analysed. The results obtained by the developed MS method were then compared to those attained by established GC methods and found to be in agreement, thus demonstrating the validity of the technique.

The methodology thus established was used to determine the effect of two exercise training intensities on the phospholipid profile of both glycolytic and oxidative muscle fibres of female Sprague-Dawley rats fed a standard laboratory chow diet. Animals were divided randomly into three training groups: control, which performed no exercise training; low intensity ( $8 \text{ m min}^{-1}$ ) treadmill running; or high intensity ( $28 \text{ m min}^{-1}$ ) treadmill running. All exercise-trained rats ran  $1000 \text{ m session}^{-1}$ ,  $4 \text{ days wk}^{-1}$  for 4 wks and were killed 48 h after the last training bout. Exercise training was found to produce no novel phospholipid species but was associated with significant alterations in the relative abundance of a number of phospholipid molecular species. These changes were more prominent in glycolytic (white vastus lateralis) than in oxidative (red vastus lateralis) muscle fibres. The largest observed change was a decrease of approximately 20 % in the abundance of 1-stearoyl-2-docosahexaenoyl phosphatidylethanolamine [PE(18:0,22:6),  $P < 0.001$ ] ions in both the low and high intensity training regimes in glycolytic fibres. Increases in the abundance of 1-oleoyl-2-linoleoyl phosphatidic acid [PA(18:1,18:2),  $P < 0.001$ ] and 1-alkenylpalmitoyl-2-linoleoyl phosphatidylethanolamine [Plasmenyl PE(16:0,18:2),  $P < 0.005$ ] ions were also observed for both training regimes in glycolytic fibres.

The same exercise protocol was then performed by Sprague-Dawley rats fed a carbohydrate-free, high-fat diet and the skeletal muscle phospholipid molecular species profiles analysed. In agreement with the previous study, no novel molecular species were observed in the exercised rats yet significant changes in the relative abundance of various phospholipid molecular species were apparent. In contrast, however, the observed changes were more prominent in oxidative than glycolytic muscle fibres. The largest effect of exercise was found to be an increase of approximately 28 % in 1-



palmitoyl-2-linoleoyl phosphatidylcholine [PC(16:0,18:2),  $P<0.05$ ] ions in oxidative muscle of rats in the low intensity training group when compared to the sedentary animals.

The phospholipid molecular species profile was found to be similar in both the oxidative and glycolytic muscles, however, a number of differences in the abundance of particular molecular species were observed. Of particular interest is the higher abundance of PE(18:0,22:6) in red vastus lateralis when compared to white vastus lateralis. In spite of the fact that the high-fat diet was completely deficient in n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids the ratio of PE(18:0,22:6) in oxidative to glycolytic muscle was almost identical across both diet groups. For example, in the sedentary rats this ratio was 1.35 for the carbohydrate diet group and 1.32 for the fat diet group.

It is concluded that exercise training results in a significant level of membrane remodelling at the level of phospholipid molecular species and that traditional methods used to analyse phospholipids such as TLC and GC are not able to uncover these changes. Moreover, it is probable that the observed changes will have effects upon the activity of various membrane bound proteins and in turn cell function. At present an understanding of the role specific phospholipid molecular species play in membrane function is extremely limited and further correlative and manipulative studies are required to remedy this. It is likely that electrospray ionisation mass spectrometry will play a significant role in these future studies.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Declaration</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Dedication</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of figures</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of tables</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>xvi</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>xviii</b>
<b>Publications arising from work in this thesis to date</b>	<b>xx</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Membrane Phospholipids</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 The Structure of Biological Membranes</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1.1 Phospholipids	3
1.1.2 The Fluid Membrane Bilayer	10
1.1.3 Regulation of Membrane Phospholipid Composition	13
<b>1.2 Membrane Function</b>	<b>16</b>
1.2.1 Membranes and Metabolic Rate	16
1.2.2 Membranes and Metabolic Disorders	19
<b>1.3 Skeletal Muscle Phospholipids</b>	<b>21</b>
1.3.1 Exercise and Skeletal Muscle Phospholipid FA Composition	24
1.3.2 Diet and Skeletal Muscle Phospholipid FA Composition	27
<b>1.4 Conclusions</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>1.5 Thesis Outline</b>	<b>30</b>

<b>Chapter 2 Mass Spectrometry and the Analysis of Phospholipids</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2.1 Mass Spectrometry</b>	<b>33</b>
2.1.1 Ionisation Techniques	34
2.1.1.a Electrospray Ionisation	35
2.1.1.b Matrix Assisted Laser Desorption / Ionisation	41
2.1.1.c Fast Atom Bombardment	45
2.1.2 Mass Analysers	46
2.1.2.a Quadrupole Mass Analysers	47
2.1.2.b Time-of-flight Mass Analysers	49
2.1.3 Tandem Mass Spectrometry	51
<b>2.2 Mass Spectrometric Analysis of Lipids</b>	<b>57</b>
2.2.1 Mass Spectrometric Analysis of Fatty Acids	57
2.2.2 Mass Spectrometric Analysis of Triacylglycerols	58
<b>2.3 Mass Spectrometric Analysis of Phospholipids</b>	<b>60</b>
2.3.1 FAB-MS	60
2.3.2 ESI-MS	63
2.3.2.a Neutral Phospholipid Species	64
2.3.2.b Acidic Phospholipid Species	71
2.3.2.c Precursor ion and neutral loss scanning	83
2.3.2.d Quantification	85
2.3.2.e Research Applications	87
2.3.3 MALDI-MS	88

## **Chapter 3 Development of ESI-MS Techniques for Analysing Phospholipids Using a Hybrid Quadrupole Time-of-Flight Mass**

<b>Spectrometer</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>3.1 Introduction</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>3.2 Results/Discussion</b>	<b>91</b>
3.2.1 Optimisation of instrument settings	91
3.2.2 Positive ion MS	93
3.2.3 Negative ion MS	99
3.2.4 Precursor ion / neutral loss scans	116
3.2.5 Reproducibility	122
3.2.6 Isotope correction and data normalisation	125
3.2.7 Method validation: A comparison with gas chromatography	125
<b>3.3 Conclusions</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>3.4 Methods</b>	<b>132</b>
3.4.1 Animal care	132
3.4.2 Lipid extraction	132
3.4.3 Mass spectrometry	133
3.4.4 Gas chromatography	135
3.4.5 Statistical analysis	135
 <b>Chapter 4 The Effect of Exercise on Skeletal Muscle Phospholipid Molecular Species Profile in Rats Fed a Laboratory-Chow Diet</b>	 <b>136</b>
<b>4.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>4.2 METHODS</b>	<b>140</b>
4.2.1 Animal care, dietary treatments and exercise-training program	140
4.2.2 Animal sacrifice and tissue preparation	143
4.2.3 Phospholipid extraction	143

4.2.4 Mass spectrometry _____	144
4.2.5 Statistical analysis _____	144
<b>4.3 RESULTS _____</b>	<b>144</b>
4.3.1 Compliance with training programs and anthropometric adaptations _____	144
4.3.2 Phospholipid molecular species composition _____	145
4.3.2.a Training comparisons _____	145
4.3.2.b Comparison of oxidative and glycolytic fibres _____	150
4.3.2.c Interaction of training and fibre type _____	150
<b>4.4 DISCUSSION _____</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Chapter 5 The Effect of Exercise on the Skeletal Muscle Phospholipid Molecular Species Profile of Rats Fed a Carbohydrate-Free High Saturated Fat Diet _____</b>	<b>158</b>
5.1 Introduction _____	159
5.2 Methods _____	162
<b>5.3 RESULTS _____</b>	<b>163</b>
5.3.1 Compliance with training programs and anthropometric adaptations _____	163
5.3.2 Phospholipid molecular species composition _____	164
5.3.2.a Training comparisons _____	164
5.3.2.b Comparison of oxidative and glycolytic fibres _____	169
5.3.2.c Interaction of training and fibre type _____	169
<b>5.4 DISCUSSION _____</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Chapter 6 Conclusions _____</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Chapter 7 Bibliography _____</b>	<b>183</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Number	Page
Figure 1-1: Model of a biological membrane. _____	3
Figure 1-2: The general structure of (A) a phosphoglyceride showing the three types of bonds found at the <i>sn</i> -1 position (i) ester, (ii) vinyl ether (plasmalogen), (iii) alkyl ether and (B) a sphingomyelin. _____	4
Figure 1-3: Phospholipid head groups _____	6
Figure 1-4: Structure and nomenclature of two common fatty acids, stearic acid (18:0) and arachidonic acid (20:4 n-6) _____	7
Figure 1-5: The general structure of cardiolipin _____	10
Figure 1-6: Schematic diagrams of the three membrane models proposed by 1966. ____	11
Figure 1-7: Specificity of phospholipases _____	14
Figure 2-1: Basic components of a mass spectrometer. _____	34
Figure 2-2: Drawing of the electrospray process operating in positive ion mode. ____	35
Figure 2-3: Schematic representation of the ion evaporation model (IEM) and the charge residue model (CRM) of ion formation in ESI. _____	37
Figure 2-4: Diagram of the matrix assisted laser desorption / ionisation technique. ____	42
Figure 2-5: Some simple matrix/analyte clusters and their ionic and neutral products produced by MALDI when operating in positive (A) and negative ion mode (B). ____	44
Figure 2-6: A schematic diagram of a quadrupole mass analyser. _____	47
Figure 2-7: Stability diagram for ions in a hyperbolic quadrupole field as a function of DC (U) and RF (V) voltage. _____	48
Figure 2-8: Schematic diagram of a linear ToF (A) and a reflectron ToF (B) mass spectrometer with a MALDI ion source. _____	50
Figure 2-9: Schematic diagram of the steps involved in tandem mass spectrometry. ____	52

Figure 2-10: A schematic diagram of the Q-ToF 2 <sup>®</sup> .	56
Figure 2-11: Negative ion CID spectra from $m/z$ 60 to 265 of $\gamma$ - and $\alpha$ -linolenic acids.	58
Figure 2-12: General structure of a triacylglycerol.	59
Figure 2-13: Positive ion FAB-MS spectra of 1-palmitoyl-2-oleoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (A) and 1-O-hexadecyl-2-oleoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (B).	62
Figure 2-14: Positive-ion ESI-MS spectrum of human erythrocyte plasma membrane phospholipid extract containing 13.5 pmol of total phosphatidyl choline (PC) species.	64
Figure 2-15: Positive ion ESI-MS spectrum of a total lipid extract from rat bile dominated by PC species.	65
Figure 2-16: MS/MS spectrum obtained from the CID of PC(16:0,18:1) $[M+H]^+$ ions.	66
Figure 2-17: MS/MS spectrum obtained from the CID of PC(16:0,18:1) $[M+Li]^+$ ions.	68
Figure 2-18: Negative ion ESI-MS spectrum of a total lipid extract from Chinese hamster ovary cells with various PE, PS and PI species labelled.	71
Figure 2-19: MS/MS spectrum obtained from the CID of PA(16:0,18:1) $[M-H]^-$ ions.	73
Figure 2-20: MS/MS spectrum obtained from the CID of PI(16:0,18:2) $[M-H]^-$ ions.	77
Figure 2-21: MS/MS spectrum obtained from the CID of PE(16:0,18:2) $[M-H]^-$ ions.	78
Figure 2-22: MS/MS spectrum obtained from the CID of PS(18:0,18:1) $[M-H]^-$ ions.	80
Figure 2-23: MS/MS spectrum obtained from the CID of PG(16:0,18:2) $[M-H]^-$ ions.	81
Figure 3-1: A comparison of negative ion ESI-MS spectra of the same total lipid extract from rat skeletal muscle using a cone voltage of 30 v (top) and 70 v (bottom).	92
Figure 3-2: Positive ion mass spectrum of protonated and sodiated phospholipids extracted from red vastus lateralis muscle of a rat fed a high fat diet.	93
Figure 3-3: Positive ion MS/MS spectrum of $[PC34:2+H]^+$ ions ( $m/z$ 758 in Figure 3-1).	94
Figure 3-4: Phosphocholine cation formed during the CID of protonated PC molecular ions (A) and sodiated O,O'-dimethylenephosphoric acid cation formed during the CID of sodiated PC molecular ions (B).	94
Figure 3-5: Positive ion MS/MS spectrum of $[PC34:2+Na]^+$ ions ( $m/z$ 780 in Figure 3-1).	95

Figure 3-6: Positive ion MS/MS spectrum of the isobaric ions $[\text{PC34:1+Na}]^+$ and $[\text{PC36:4+H}]^+$ ( $m/z$ 782 in Figure 3-2).	96
Figure 3-7: Positive ion mass spectrum of lithiated phospholipids extracted from red vastus lateralis muscle of a rat fed a high fat diet.	97
Figure 3-8: Positive ion MS/MS spectrum of $[\text{PC34:1+Li}]^+$ ions ( $m/z$ 766 in Figure 3-6).	98
Figure 3-9: Negative ion mass spectrum of deprotonated phospholipids extracted from red vastus lateralis muscle of a rat fed a high fat diet.	100
Figure 3-10: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of $[\text{PA34:2-H}]^-$ ions ( $m/z$ 671 in Figure 3-9).	101
Figure 3-11: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of $[\text{PS40:6-H}]^-$ ions ( $m/z$ 834 in Figure 3-9).	102
Figure 3-12: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of $[\text{PI38:4-H}]^-$ ions ( $m/z$ 885 in Figure 3-9).	104
Figure 3-13: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of $[\text{PE38:4-H}]^-$ ions ( $m/z$ 766 in Figure 3-9).	105
Figure 3-14: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of [plasmenyl $\text{PE20:4-H}]^-$ ions ( $m/z$ 722 in Figure 3-9).	106
Figure 3-15: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum obtained from synthetic [plasmenyl $\text{PE20:4-H}]^-$ ions	107
Figure 3-16: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of $[\text{Cardiolipin72:8-2H}]^{2-}$ ions from rat heart.	109
Figure 3-17: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of synthetic $[\text{Cardiolipin72:8-2H}]^{2-}$ ions.	111
Figure 3-18: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of $[\text{PE38:4-H}]^-$ ions from a rat brain total lipid extract.	114
Figure 3-19: Negative ion MS/MS spectrum of overlapping $[\text{PA40:6-H}]^-$ and $[\text{PG34:1-H}]^-$ ions ( $m/z$ 747 in Figure 3-8).	115
Figure 3-20: Positive ion chromatogram of protonated PC and SM ions in a total lipid extract from rat brain obtained by a precursor ion scan of the product ion $m/z$ 184 (phosphocholine).	117
Figure 3-21: Positive ion mass spectrum of protonated phospholipids from rat brain total lipid extract.	118



Figure 3-22: Positive ion chromatogram of protonated PE ions in a total lipid extract from rat brain obtained by a neutral loss scan of 141 Da (phosphoethanolamine). _____	119
Figure 3-23: Positive ion chromatogram of protonated PS ions in a total lipid extract from rat brain obtained by a neutral loss scan of 185 Da (phosphoserine). _____	120
Figure 3-24: The MS/MS spectrum produced at scan 142 (labelled mass 840.5) in Figure 3-18. _____	121
Figure 3-25: A comparison of two MS analyses of the same WVL phospholipid extract of a rat fed a high carbohydrate chow diet in (A) positive ions and (B) negative ions performed on the same day. _____	123
Figure 3-26: A comparison of two negative ion MS analyses of the same WVL phospholipid extract of a rat fed a high fat diet in performed approximately one month apart. _____	124
Figure 3-27: Comparison of the FA profile of rat skeletal muscle after a high n-3 or high saturated fat diet. _____	127
Figure 3-28: Comparison of the neutral phospholipid molecular species profile of rat skeletal muscle after a high n-3 or high saturated fat diet. _____	128
Figure 3-29: Comparison of the acidic phospholipid molecular species profile of rat skeletal muscle after a high n-3 or high saturated fat diet. _____	129
Figure 4-1: Ventral view of the rat superficial muscles. _____	140
Figure 4-2: Change in mean relative abundance of phospholipid molecular species after exercise in White (top) and Red (bottom) Vastus Lateralis. _____	149
Figure 5-1: Change in mean relative abundance of phospholipid molecular species after exercise in White (top) and Red (bottom) vastus lateralis. _____	168
Figure 5-2: Approximate percentage of skeletal muscle phospholipids containing n-6 and n-3 PUFAs in sedentary rats from both diet groups. _____	171

## LIST OF TABLES

Number	Page
Table 1-1: Naturally occurring fatty acids commonly found in vertebrates _____	9
Table 1-2: Contribution of energy consuming processes to basal metabolic rate _____	18
Table 1-3: Phospholipid fatty acid composition of skeletal muscle _____	23
Table 2-1: Characteristic headgroup fragments observed in the MS/MS spectra of $[M-H]^-$ and $[M+H]^+$ ions _____	84
Table 3-1: Fatty acid composition of the two diets _____	126
Table 3-2: Q-ToF 2 instrument conditions used to analyse phospholipids _____	134
Table 4-1: Fatty acid composition of the laboratory chow diet _____	141
Table 4-2: Exercise training parameters for each group of rats during the last four weeks of the exercise intervention _____	143
Table 4-3: Neutral phospholipid molecular species _____	146
Table 4-4: Acidic phospholipid molecular species _____	147
Table 5-1: Fatty acid composition of the diet _____	163
Table 5-2: Neutral phospholipid molecular species _____	165
Table 5-3: Acidic phospholipid molecular species _____	166

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
APCI	Atmospheric pressure chemical ionisation
BMR	Basal metabolic rate
CAD	Collision-activated dissociation
CI	Chemical ionisation
CID	Collision-induced dissociation
CRM	Charge residue model
DEFA	Deficient in essential fatty acids
DHA	Docosahexaenoic acid
DPA	Docosapentaenoic acid
DPG	Diphosphatidylglycerol (Cardiolipin)
ED <sub>50</sub>	Half-maximal glucose disposal
EDL	Extensor digitorum longus
EI	Electron ionisation
EPA	Eicosapentaenoic acid
ESI	Electrospray ionisation
ESI-MS	Electrospray ionisation mass spectrometry
FA	Fatty acid
FAB	Fast atom bombardment
GC	Gas chromatography
GLUT	Glucose transporter
HIGH	High intensity exercise training
HPLC	High performance liquid chromatography
IEM	Ion evaporation model
LC/MS	Liquid chromatography mass spectrometry
LOW	Low intensity exercise training
LSIMS	Liquid secondary ion mass spectrometry
<i>m/z</i>	Mass to charge ratio
MALDI	Matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionisation
MS	Mass spectrometry
MS/MS	Tandem mass spectrometry
MUFA	Monounsaturated fatty acid
oaToF	Orthogonal acceleration time-of-flight
PA	Phosphatic acid

PC	Phosphatidylcholine
PE	Phosphatidylethanolamine
PG	Phosphatidylglycerol
PI	Phosphatidylinositol
PLA <sub>1</sub>	Phospholipase A <sub>1</sub>
PLA <sub>2</sub>	Phospholipase A <sub>2</sub>
PLC	Phospholipase C
PLD	Phospholipase D
PS	Phosphatidylserine
PSD	Post source decay
PUFA	Polyunsaturated fatty acid
Q-ToF	Quadrupole time-of-flight
RF	Radio frequency
RVL	Red vastus lateralis
SED	Sedentary
SEM	Standard error of the mean
SFA	Saturated fatty acid
SIMS	Secondary ion mass spectrometry
SM	Sphingomyelin
TAG	Triacylglycerol
TLC	Thin layer chromatography
ToF	Time-of-flight
VO <sub>2max</sub>	Maximal oxygen uptake
WVL	White vastus lateralis

## PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM WORK IN THIS THESIS TO DATE

### *Journal Articles*

Turner N, Lee JS, Bruce CR, **Mitchell TW**, Else PL, Hulbert AJ & Hawley JA (2004) Greater effect of diet than exercise training on the fatty acid profile of rat skeletal muscle. *Journal of Applied Physiology* 96, 974-980.

**Mitchell TW**, Turner N, Hulbert AJ, Else PL, Hawley JA, Lee JS, Bruce CR & Blanksby SJ (2004) Exercise alters the profile of phospholipid molecular species in rat skeletal muscle. *Journal of Applied Physiology* 97, in press.

### *Abstracts*

Morrissey B, Thomas MC, **Mitchell TW**, Ung AT, Pine SG & Blanksby SJ (2004) Negative ion phospholipid fragmentation: a mechanistic and regiochemical study. *Proc. LII American Society for Mass Spectrometry (Nashville)*. ThPI - 148.

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