



The Neuron: Cell and Molecular Biology

Irwin B. Levitan, Leonard K. Kaczmarek

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Intended for use by advanced undergraduate, graduate, and medical students, *The Neuron: Cell and Molecular Biology* is an intriguing study of the unique biochemical and physiological properties of neurons, which emphasizes the molecular mechanisms that generate and regulate their activity. Keeping abreast of the enormous advances in neuroscience in the five years since the first edition was published, the authors have revised all their chapters in the second edition. What was formerly the first chapter has been expanded substantially and divided into two separate chapters to emphasize the cell biology of neurons and glia, and their commonalities with other kinds of cells. The section on intracellular communication has also been expanded and reorganized.

Levitan and Kaczmarek introduce the concept of ion channels as specialized membrane proteins at an early stage, making the idea of selective membrane permeability more accessible in terms of the properties of specific ion channel proteins. In addition, they emphasize the astonishing diversity of voltage-dependent ion channels that has become evident in recent years, and discuss the implications of this diversity for neuronal physiology.

In the section on intercellular communication, the chapter on neurotransmitter secretion has also been rewritten to reflect the new level of understanding of secretion that has resulted from the identification of many of the molecular players in vesicle fusion and exocytosis. The other chapters in this section have also been fully revised to incorporate new information resulting from the cloning and characterization of the multitude of glutamate receptors as well as to describe novel elements of intracellular signaling pathways in neurons and other cells. Finally, the last section has been substantially updated to reflect the recent successes of molecular studies of development and plasticity. As more and more of the molecular entities that are essential for neuronal development and adult plasticity are identified and characterized, phenomena that previously could be studied only at the descriptive level can now be explained in greater depth.

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