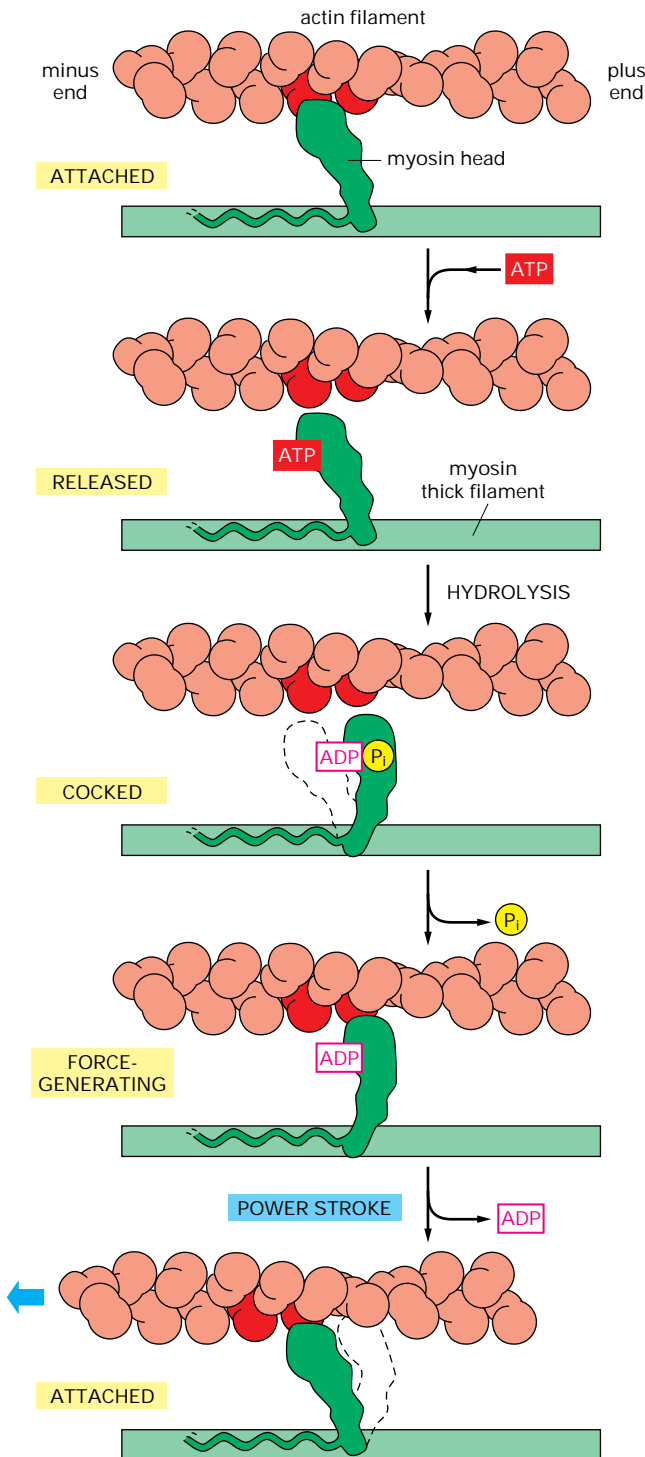


Myosin and Actin Model

©1998 by Alberts, Bray, Johnson, Lewis, Raff, Roberts, Walter <http://www.essentialcellbiology.com>
Published by Garland Publishing, a member of the Taylor & Francis Group.



ATTACHED—At the start of the cycle shown in this figure, a myosin head lacking a bound nucleotide is locked tightly onto an actin filament in a *rigor* configuration (so named because it is responsible for *rigor mortis*, the rigidity of death). In an actively contracting muscle this state is very short-lived, being rapidly terminated by the binding of a molecule of ATP.

RELEASED—A molecule of ATP binds to the large cleft on the “back” of the head (that is, on the side farthest from the actin filament) and immediately causes a slight change in the conformation of the domains that make up the actin-binding site. This reduces the affinity of the head for actin and allows it to move along the filament. (The space drawn here between the head and actin emphasizes this change, although in reality the head probably remains very close to the actin.)

COCKED—The cleft closes like a clam shell around the ATP molecule, triggering a large shape change that causes the head to be displaced along the filament by a distance of about 5 nm. Hydrolysis of ATP occurs, but the ADP and P_i produced remain tightly bound to the protein.

FORCE-GENERATING—The weak binding of the myosin head to a new site on the actin filament causes release of the inorganic phosphate produced by ATP hydrolysis, concomitantly with the tight binding of the head to actin. This release triggers the power stroke—the force-generating change in shape during which the head regains its original conformation. In the course of the power stroke, the head loses its bound ADP, thereby returning to the start of a new cycle.

ATTACHED—At the end of the cycle, the myosin head is again locked tightly to the actin filament in a rigor configuration. Note that the head has moved to a new position on the actin filament.