# Residue-Based Coarse Graining using MARTINI Force Field in NAMD 



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| A current version of this tutorial is available at |
| :---: |
| http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Training/Tutorials/ |

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## Introduction

In this session, we will learn about coarse-grained (CG) molecular dynamics (MD) simulations. Atomistic simulations are useful computational tools for investigating biological systems such as proteins, lipids and nucleic acids over timescales of nanoseconds. However, many interesting phenomena, including vesicle fusion, membrane deformation, protein-protein assembly etc., occur at longer time scales that fall outside the capabilities of atomic scale simulations. In order to reach the relevant timescales, simplification of the model is required. The term "coarse graining" (CG) can be used to refer to any simulation technique that simplifies the system by grouping several atoms of it into one component, thus to consist of fewer, larger components. CG thereby represents an attractive alternative to atomistic scale simulations since the reduction in interaction particles and number of degrees of freedom allow for simulations to be run over relatively long periods of time and length scales at a reduced level of detail.

This tutorial presents one CG method, termed residue-based coarse-grained (RBCG). In a residue-based coarse-grained (RBCG) model for biological systems comprising proteins and or lipids, several atoms are grouped together in a "virtual" bead that interacts through an effective potential. For example, each amino acid residue and 4 water molecules are represented by $2-5$ beads and 1 bead respectively (Figure 1). The reduction of the number of degrees of freedom and the use of shorter-range potential functions makes the model computationally very efficient, allowing a increase in the base time-step and thus a reduction of the simulation time by 2-3 orders of magnitude compared to the traditional atomistic models. RBCG MD simulations were performed in NAMDusing the MARTINI CG force field developed and parametrized by the group of Siewert Marrink for use with GROMACS. For the implemented CG force field in NAMD to be functional, in order to reproduce the results of GROMACS, we adapted the GROMACS switching function for LJ potential and a shifting function for Colomb potential only for use of CG simulations.

The tutorial introduces tools for RBCG modeling that are provided in VMD as plugins (http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Research/vmd/plugins/cgtools/).

For exercises, we will model protein-lipid assemblies called high-density lipoproteins (HDL) (Shih et al., J. Str. Biol., 157:579, 2007). HDL are known to function as cholesterol transporters, facilitating the removal of excess cholesterol from the body. Due to the heterogenity of native HDL particles, the details of how these protein-lipid particles form and the structure they assume in their lipid associated states are not well characterized. Coarse-grained (CG) molecular dynamics allows for long-time scale simulations needed to reveal the stable conformations and also self-assembly of discoidal HDL particles from disordered protein-lipid complexes. In this tutorial we focus on modeling a RBCG structure of discoidal HDL starting from all-atom for performing simulations to reveal the stablity of the widely accepted double-belt model.


Figure 1: Mapping all-atom to coarse-grained structure. Left, amino acid residues and lipid shown in all-atom representation. Right, a coarse-grained representation of the same.

To perform simulations using the RBCG representation, one uses VMD and NAMD without any changes in comparison with the all-atom case, and work with the same file types as for all-atom modeling, such as PSF and PDB for structures, and topology, parameter, and configuration files for running simulations (see VMD and NAMD tutorials, http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Training/Tutorials/). However, the RBCG PSF, PDB files first need to be created according to the all-atom model that one desires to coarse-grain. In this tutorial, we will learn how to use the RBCG plugins of VMD to build such files for simulations.

## Required Programs

The following programs are required for this tutorial:

- VMD: The tutorial assumes that you already have a working knowledge of VMD, which is available at http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Research/vmd/ (for all platforms). The VMD tutorial is available at http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Training/Tutorials/vmd/tutorial-html/
- NAMD "Nightly build May 31, 2012 or later (Linux only)" or NAMD version 2.10 (for all platforms when available): In order to perform simulations with the CG model in this tutorial, NAMD should be correctly installed on your computer. For installation instructions, please refer to the NAMD Users' Guide. The NAMD tutorial is available in both Unix/MacOSX and Windows versions:
http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Training/Tutorials/namd/namd-tutorial-unix-html/ http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Training/Tutorials/namd/namd-tutorial-win-html/

Most of the exercises in the tutorial are performed using Residue-Based Coarse-Graining (RBCG) Tools in VMD. The Tools are implemented as a set of plugins available with their Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs) through VMD menu:

Extensions $\rightarrow$ Modeling $\rightarrow$ CG Builder


Figure 2: Main Graphical User Interface for the CG Builder Tools in VMD. Available are several tools for two CG models, one of which is the RBCG model addressed in this tutorial.

## Getting Started

If you downloaded the tutorial from the web you will also need to download the appropriate files, unzip them, and place them in a directory of your choosing. You should then navigate to that directory as described below. The files for this tutorial are available at
http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Training/Tutorials/

- Unix/Mac OS X Users: In a Terminal window type:

```
cd <path to the directory rbcg-martini-tutorial/files/>
```

You can list the content of this directory by using the command ls.

- Windows Users: Navigate to the rbcg-martini-tutorial $\rightarrow$ files directory using Windows Explorer.

You can find the files for this tutorial in the rbcg-martini-tutorial/files. Below you can see in Fig. 3 , the organization of files and directories of rbcg-martini-tutorial/files/


Figure 3: Directory Structure for tutorial exercises. Sample output for each exercise is provided in an "example-output" subdirectory within each folder.

To start VMD type vmd in a Unix terminal window. Double-click on the VMD application icon likely located in the Applications folder in Mac OS X, or click on the Start $\rightarrow$ Programs $\rightarrow$ VMD menu item in Windows.

## 1 Coarse-graining an atomic structure

In this unit you will build the PDB and PSF required for simulation of the lipoprotein assembly, learning how to take a raw all-atom structure and build a $R B C G$ system out of it.

### 1.1 Structural model of lipoprotein.

High-density lipoproteins (HDL) are protein-lipid particles, which circulate in the blood collecting cholesterol. Apolipoprotein A-I (apo A-I), the primary protein component of HDL , is a 243 residue amphipathic protein containing an N-terminal globular domain and a C-terminal lipid binding domain. The lipid binding domain comprises 200 residues, however, the first 11 to 22 residues of the domain are known not to be involved in binding of lipids in the discoidal shaped HDL particles. Due to heterogenity of HDL particles, high resolution structures have been difficult to obtain. Nanodiscs are nanometer-sized discoidal HDL that are being developed as a platform for studying membrane proteins. The scaffold protein that were used to surround nanodiscs (MSP1) were engineered to contain the lipid binding domain of 200 residues. In this tutorial, we model a truncated discoidal HDL comprising a truncated lipid binding domain of apo A-I (MSP1 $\Delta(1-11)$ consisting of 189 residues by deleting the first 11 residues surrounding a lipid core consisting of 160 DPPC lipids. We employ RBCG VMD plugin to model this lipoprotein system.


Figure 4: The discoidal HDL nanodisc shown in side (left) and top (right) view. The two monomers of the apo A-I lipid binding domain are shown in violet and cyan. DPPC lipids are shown tan with lipid head groups in yellow.

Provided for you is the all-atom PDB/PSF nanodisc structure with truncated apo A-I (MSP1 $\Delta(1-11)$ ) (see Shih et al., J. Str. Biol., 157:579, 2007). To begin, you will build an all-atom PDB/PSF pair for the PDB structure of interest. This can be done using a PSFgen script or employing AutoPSF plugin in VMD. We assume that the reader is familiar with constructing a PSF from PDB. Such PDB and PSF are already created: see 01-AA-lipoprotien, 01-AA-lipoprotein.psf in the directory 01-build-cg-model/.

Navigate to the directory 01-build-cg-model/. You can examine the segments of the truncated lipid binding domain of the apo A-I (MSP1 $\Delta(1-11)$ in VMD (files 01-AA-lipoprotein.pdb and 01-AA-lipoprotein.psf in 1-build-cg-model/). One monomer is designated as segname P1, and the other as segname P2. The DPPC lipid patch is designated as resname DPPC.

### 1.2 Coarse-graining of a lipoprotein structure.

Let us now coarse-grain the all-atom lipoprotein structure .

1. Start VMD and load the all-atom lipoprotein structure (load 01-AA-lipoprotein.psf and 01-AA-lipoprotein.pdb into the same molecule).
2. Open the CG Builder in VMD (Extensions $\rightarrow$ Modeling $\rightarrow$ CG Builder), and choose the option "Create RBCG Model" and hit the button Next->. This will bring you to the RBCG Builder GUI (Fig. 5).

| CG Builder - Residue-Based CG |  |  | $-\square$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Help |
| Coarse Grain Builder <br> Convert an all-atom representation to coarse-grained using residue-based coarse graining. |  |  |  |
| Molecule: | 0: 01-AA-lipoprotein.psf |  |  |
| [CG Database |  |  |  |
| (/Projects/vmd/pub/linux/lib/vmd191a8/plugins/noarch/tcl/cgtools1.0/protein.cgc) |  |  | Add |
| (/Projects/vmd/pub/linux/lib/vmd191a8/plugins/noarch/tcl/cgtools1.0/water.cgc) |  |  | Add |
| User Defined/Projects/rbgamini/rbcg-martini-tutorial/files/04-cgc-top-par-file: |  | Browse | Add |
| Bead Definitions Currently Loaded: |  | 115 |  |
| Output PDB: 01-CG-lipoprotein.pdb |  |  |  |
| Rev CG File: | 01-CG-lipoprotein.rcg |  |  |
| Back To Previous Screen |  | ild Coarse Grain | Model |

Figure 5: RBCG Builder GUI.
3. The first step in creating a coarse-grained model is to split the system into appropriate atom clusters and assign the correct bead types to them. The definitions of the atom clusters are provided in the .cgc files in the folder 04-cgc-top-par-files/martini-cgc/. To model our lipoprotein system, choose the User Defined option to browse and add martini-lipids.cgc and martini-protein.cgc. Note: The options Proteins and Water are set to use old RBCG parameters.

4. The main result of running the algorithm is the production of output files that are written on the hard drive, namely the RBCG PDB and RCG files. If you want to have specific names for those files, they can be changed in the RBCG Builder GUI before hitting "Build Coarse Grain Model" button. Here, the default filename for $\mathrm{PDB} / \mathrm{RCG} \mathrm{cg}-01-\mathrm{AA}-1$ ipoprotein is changed to 01-CG-lipoprotein.
5. Hit the "Build Coarse Grain Model" button. Completion of the RBCG algorithm will take a few moments.
6. The output PDB file containing the newly constructed RBCG model is automatically loaded in VMD as a new molecule, overlapped with the original all-atom model. In case something fails, we have provided the output files generated in this step 01-CG-lipoprotein.pdb and 01-CG-lipoprotein.rcg in the 01-build-cg-model/example-output/ folder.
7. The RBCG output PDB file determines the structure of the coarse-grained lipoprotein model. To obtain the complete structure for display in VMD, or for subsequent simulations, we need to make a PSF file for the PDB. This can be done the same way as commonly achieved for all-atom files, namely, using a PSFgen script or by employing the AutoPSF VMD plugin. Start VMD and load the cg-lipoprotein structure (load 01-CG-lipoprotein.pdb). To employ the AutoPSF plugin (Extensions $\rightarrow$ Modeling $\rightarrow$ Automatic PSF Builder), remember to delete the default topology file from the list of topologies in the plugin, and add the CG topology files (martini-protein.top and martini-lipids.top) located in the 04-cgc-top-par-files/martini-top/ directory. One caveat to keep in mind is to ensure you do not generate angles and dihedrals which are not defined in MARTINI. If you are using AutoPSF plugin, uncheck "Regenerate angles/dihedrals" under Options. Click
"Guess and split chains using current selections". Note that in the Segments Identified the NTER, CTER patches listed are not defined for RBCG in AutoPSF VMD plugin, therefore, we select each chain and hit "Edit Chain" to change the N terminal patch and C terminal patch to "NONE". Once the patches are changed, hit "Create chains". This will create a preliminary PSF file 01-CG-lipoprotein_autopsf.psf and the corresponding PDB file 01-CG-lipoprotein_autopsf.psf for your coarse-grained system.
MARTINI mapping for protein and lipids. In the MARTINI
model, each protein residue is represented by a "backbone bead"
and one or more "sidechain beads" (with the exception of ALA and
GLY, which are modeled solely by a backbone bead). Ring-shaped
sidechains (TRP, PHE, TYR, HIS) are treated in more detail, and
contain 3-4 lighter sidechain beads. Fig. 1 shows three examples of
coarse-grained residues. The type of bead to be assigned to each
cluster of atoms is defined by the non-bonded interactions of that
bead. There are four classes of beads: Q (charged), P (polar), N
(nonpolar) and C (apolar), each with several subtypes. Q and N
types have four subtypes, Qda, Qd, Qa, Q0 and Nda, Nd, Na, NO
which distinguish between the hydrogen-bonding capabilities of the
atom cluster (da = donor or acceptor, d = donor, a = acceptor, 0
= no hydrogen bonding). P and C types have five subtypes, P1,
P2, P3, P4, P5 and C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, wherein the subscripts 1-5
indicate increasing polar affinity. By convention, each bead has a
mass of 72 amu. In addition to these "heavy" beads, there is also a
class of light beads with mass 45 amu, used to describe ring shaped
residues. These beads are indicated with a prepended "S", e.g. SP1,
SC3, SQda, etc. In addition to their lighter mass, they are assigned
a smaller vdW radius and the vdW interaction strength is scaled
by $75 \%$. To be clear, the mass of a bead in MARTINI is 72 (or
45) amu regardless of whether the masses of the atoms comprising
that bead actually sum to 72 . The modeling of lipid molecules is
similar to that of proteins, except that the "small" bead types and
secondary structure assignments are not needed. See again Fig. 1 I
for a depiction of a lipid in coarse-grained representation.
8. Correction for protein segments. The next step is to correct the coarsegrained PSF file so that the bead types reflect the secondary structure of the protein. A PSFgen script is provided: fix_martini_psf.tcl in the folder $05-$ scripts for this purpose. Open the script to see how this is done. The script also allows you to choose for charged/uncharged N and C terminal. Copy the script to current working directory 01-build-cg-model. Also copy martini-protein.top. Start VMD and load the "all-atom-lipoprotein structure" (01-AA-lipoprotein.psf 01-AA-lipoprotein.pdb). Make sure this is the top molecule. And run the following command in the VMD Tk Console:
source fix martini_psf.tcl
fix_martini_psf 0 martini-protein.top 01-CG-lipoprotein_autopsf.psf

```
01-CG-lipoprotein_autopsf.pdb CG-fix_martini_psf 1 ../05-scripts 1 -1
```

Note that the script uses the all-atom PSF PDB and RBCG PSF PDB files you have just created. The first argument here " 0 " refers to molid of the top molecule 01-AA-lipoprotein.psf and 01-AA-lipoprotein.psf. The second argument is the topology file martini-protein.top placed in the current directory; if you did not place these files in the directory where fix_martini_psf.tcl is located, you will need to specify the correct paths for all the input files while calling the proc fix_martini_psf. The fifth argument "CG-fix_martini_psf" refers to name of the corrected "output PSF/PDB" files. In the sixth argument we provide the "path" for DSSP secondary structure assignment plugin ". ./05-script"-the default is STRIDE. The last two arguments is for having a positive N terminus and negative C terminus.
Now open the original 01-CG-lipoprotein_autopsf.psf and the corrected CG-fix_martini_psf.psf PSF files with a text editor. Note that in the original PSF file, the bacbone beads (BAS) have generic types (such as P4, P5), whereas in the corrected PSF file, they have been give bead types corresponding to the secondary structure assignment for each residue.


RBCG Builder output files. Sample RBCG Builder output files are provided in the folder 1-build-cg-model/example-output, including also the output files from running the AutoPSF and PSFgen script fix_martini_psf.tcl. Note that all these output files are generally going to be somewhat different from those you create, due to the probabilistic nature of the RBCG algorithm.

We are almost there! We only have to solvate and ionize the system, then we can start using the NAMD to actually perform a simulation of the RBCG lipoprotein system.

### 1.3 Solvation and Ionization.

We will now solvate and ionize the system. We will use the VMD's Solvate Plugin, just as in the all-atom case, except that you will use the non-standard solvent option and place the system in a MARTINI water box in place of the default.


Figure 6: High-density lipoprotein (HDL) nanodisc structure. The two monomers of the apo A-I lipid binding domain are shown in orange and red and the DPPC lipids are shown in blue with lipid head groups in green. The all-atom structure is shown on the left, and an example of a RBCG structure is shown on the right. Both all-atom and RBCG structures are shown from the sideview.

1. First, load the files 01-CG-fix_martini_psf.psf and 01-CG-fix_martini_psf.pdb into VMD.
MARTINI water. Water molecules in MARTINI are represented by
a single bead (of mass 72 amu ). To protect against the possibility
of the water box "freezing" on very large timescales, a second type
of water molecule is defined with a slighly larger VdW radius. These
are referred to as "antifreeze particles", and it is recommended that
$10 \%$ of the waterbox be antifreeze particles.
2. To use the Solvate plugin, select Extensions $\rightarrow$ Modeling $\rightarrow$ Add Solvation Box in the main window.
3. Set "Boundary", the minimum distance between water and solute to 5 instead of the default 2.4.
4. Set "Box Padding" to 15 angstrom padding in $\mathrm{x}, \mathrm{y}$ and z directions.
5. Check the "nonstandard solvent" to use the equilibrated CG waterbox. The PDB/PSF files are provided in the folder 02-solvate-ionize/cg-waterbox/ and the TOP file is located in the folder / 04-cgc-top-par-files/martini-top.
6. Set "Solvent box side length" to 100. This corresponds to the box side length of the provided equilibrated CG waterbox.
7. Set "Solvent box key selection" to "name W WAF". This corresponds to the water and anti-freeze CG beads.


Figure 7: Solvate plugin in VMD.
8. Then click Solvate and wait for a minute or two. The Solvate should generate the 02-solvate PSF PDB files.
9. To ionize and neutralize the system, we will use the modified version of autoionize PSFgen script cg-ionize.tcl provided in the folder 05-scripts. Make sure the the output files of Solvate (02-solvate.psf and 02-solvate.pdb) are currently loaded into VMD.
MARTINI ions. lons are also represented as single (charged)
particles of mass 72 amu.
10. Type in the Tk Console window:
source cg-ionize.tcl
autoionize -psf 02-solvate.psf -pdb 02-solvate.pdb -sc 0.1-o 02-ionize
The -sc 0.1 option tells autoionize to neutralize and set salt concentration to $0.1(\mathrm{~mol} / \mathrm{L})$. The default cation is CL and default anion is NA. The option -cation -anion can be used to specify the cation and anion other than default ions.
11. Load the output files of autoionize (02-ionize.psf and 02-ionize.pdb) into VMD and check the ions are really there and the system is neutral.

Type in the Tk Console window:
set all [atomselect top all]
measure sumweights \$all weight charge
You should get:
0.0

Finally, after all this work, we are ready for minimization and equilibration with NAMD. This is described in the next unit.


Figure 8: Final simulation system including the truncated apo A-I protein, DPPC, water, and ions.

## 2 Running a coarse-grained simulation

We are now almost ready to simulate the system of RBCG lipoprotien assembly. In this section we will discuss first how to write a NAMD configuration file for an RBCG system. We will then perform the simulation, and discuss the file outputs and simulation result.

To perform exercises, navigate to the folder 03-simulation/.

### 2.1 Preparing a configuration file.

Since RBCG was designed to be compatible with NAMD, an RBCG configuration file looks similar to a normal, all-atom, NAMD configuration file that you might have used before.

1. A sample configuration file system-npt-01. conf has been prepared for you in the directory example-output/. Copy it to the folder where you want to run the simulation, and open it with a text editor. Remember to create in the same folder subfolder output and input, and add your CG files to the folder input analogously to how it is done in example-output/. Note that you will need here RBCG parameter files for CG lipids and proteins, which we have not used before. The paramter files are located in 04-cgc-top-par-files/martini-par/ folder.
2. The configuration file contains many options (entries in the first column), followed by their parameters (entries in the second column) specifically chosen for the simulated system. Assuming readers already have experience with NAMD simulations, here we will only go through those options that require special adjustments for an RBCG system. New NAMD users are encouraged to consult the NAMD Tutorial and NAMD User's Guide.
3. We introduce a new parameter cosAngles. This is required to allow for the cosine-based angle potential energy term conventionally used in GROMACS, as opposed to the harmonic angle term used in NAMD. cosAngles is turned on.
4. In the text editor displaying the content of system-npt-01.conf, scroll down to the section \# Force-Field Parameters. Note all lines beginning with \# are comments ignored by NAMD.

Under \# Force-Field Parameters, you will find simulation options that might need different parameters than those of an all-atom simulation. These options define how you want the interactions between beads to be computed. exclude parameter is set 1-2, martiniSwitching, a new key parameter, is turned on,PME is turned off and dielectric is set 15.0.

It should be noted that for the use of MARTINI force field in NAMD, a GROMACS switching function is adapted for LJ potential with switchdist 9.0 and cutoff 12.0 , and a shifting function for Colomb potential with switchdist
0.0 hardcoded in the NAMD source code and cutoff 12.0 .
5. Scroll down to the section \# Integrator Parameters.

The parameter timestep has a value of 20.0, implying that the integration timestep of the simulation is $20 \mathrm{fs} /$ step. A typical all-atom simulation uses 1 or $2 \mathrm{fs} / \mathrm{step}$, hence the RBCG gives a speedup of 20 from the choice of integration timestep alone. The choice of the timestep depends on how fast beads are moving in the simulation, and, thus, the maximal timestep possible (so that the simulation does not crash) is determined by the strength of interactions, e.g., stiffness of bonds, as mentioned above. If your simulation crashes with a timestep of $20 \mathrm{fs} /$ step, starting the simulation with a shorter timestep might fix the problem. Then timestep can be increased when the system becomes stable later in the simulation. For minimization, one can do a larger value for timestep of $40 \mathrm{fs} /$ step.
6. Constant temperature is maintained in this RBCG simulation using Langevin dynamics, as usually done in all-atom simulations. You can take a look at these parameters under \# Constant Temperature Control. The Langevin dynamics introduces viscous drag and random forces acting on each CG bead, which can be used to mimic the viscosity of the solvent and the Brownian motion due to random hits from the molecules of the solvent. A single parameter, langevinDamping, is used to account for these effects. Here, langevinDamping is set to $1 \mathrm{ps}^{-1}$.
7. We will first perform minimization before running the simulation in NPT. You can see that the simulation is designed to be minimized by 5000 steps (see system-min.conf) to eliminate the possible steric clashes, and subsequently run for $50,000,000$ steps. This corresponds to $50,000,000$ steps $\times 20 \mathrm{fs} /$ step $=100 \mathrm{~ns}$ simulation time.
8. Close the text editor displaying configuration file. Run the minimization by typing namd2 system-min.conf > system-min.log in a terminal window. This is a short run of minimization for 5000 steps that takes about 5 minutes to complete. Once this step is complete, run a short simulation for $10,000,000$ steps in NPT by typing namd2 system-npt-01.conf > system-npt-01.log

### 2.2 Simulation outputs.

On a one-processor machine, a 100 ns simulation will take about two days to complete, but actually we do not need to run the full simulation. The general trend is obvious already after about the first 10 ns , which can be achieved within an hour or two. If you do not wish to run the simulation yourself, you can use the files provided in example-output/ for the following discussion on file outputs and results.

1. Open the logfile of the simulation, system-npt-01.log, with a text editor. If you did not run the simulation, use example-output/system-npt-01.log.

The logfile of a simulation contains useful information. When your simulation crashes, checking the logfile for the error message is the first step of fixing the problem. The logfile can also give you an estimate on how long a simulation will run. Find the words "Benchmark time" in system-npt-01.log, here you can find the speed of the simulation. Now let's examine the system via VMD.
2. Close the text editor. Open VMD, and load the psf file of the system, 02-ionize.psf. If you did not run the simulation, make sure you use the provided example-output/input/02-ionize.psf.
3. Load the output dcd files, system-npt-01.dcd. If you did not run the simulation, use the one provided example-output/output/system-npt-01.dcd. In this case, you will have 1000 frames loaded in VMD, one frame for 20 picosecond of the simulation.


Figure 9: Simulation result of the lipoprotein system. Left: beginning of the simulation. Right: system after 100 ns .

Use VMD to take a look at the simulation result. Throughout the trajectory, the initial discoidal shape of the MSP1 (1-11) nanodisc is maintained well. After 100 ns of simulation time, the overall "double-belt" like configuration of
the two apo A-I strands remained intact and stable such that the protein helices remained perpendicular to the lipid tail groups. A full trajectory of 100 ns is also provided for you example-output/output/system-full5000.dcd. The protein strands in this configuration had neither a gap nor an overlap with the protein ends just touching each other. This observation correlates well with previous all-atom MD simulations and experimental results suggesting that the first 11 N -terminal residues are not needed for the formation of nanodiscs of this size and composition. A simple RBCG simulation used here demonstrates very well stability of the double-belt confguration suggesting this an equilibrium structure of the nanodisc model of HDL. For more information on assembly of the lipoprotein system, please see Shih et al., J. Str. Biol., 157:579, 2007.

To familarize yourself with the process, you may want to work through several other examples. Below, we provide three examples which follows the same procedure as explained for the lipoprotein case. However, you can simply use the ready-to-use tcl scripts instead of the GUIs.

## 3 Other examples

### 3.1 Ubiquitin



## Directory: 06-OtherExamples/Ubiquitin

In this section, you will coarse-grain and set up simulation files for ubiquitin in a water box. Provided for you is 1UBQ.pdb, downloaded from www.rcsb.org, and several build scripts.

Building the system (step 0)
The first step is to build an all-atom PDB/PSF pair for 1UBQ.pdb. Do this by typing
vmd -dispdev text -e 00-make-AA-psf.tcl > 00-make-AA-psf.log
on the command line. This will create AA-ubiquitin. pdb and AA-ubiquitin.psf
Coarse-grain your system (step 1)
The next step is to coarse-grain the protein. This is done by 01-coarse-grain.tcl.

To run this script, type

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 01-coarse-grain.tcl > 01-coarse-grain.log.
```

Open the script file with your text editor of choice and inspect its contents. This and all other scripts provided are commented so that you can understand what each part of the script does.

## Create a PSF file (step 2)

Now you will create a preliminary psf file for your coarse-grained system. Do this with
vmd -dispdev text -e 02a-make-initial-CG-psf.tcl > 02a-make-initial-CG-psf.log
You should now have the files cg-ubiquitin.pdb, cg-ubiquitin.rcg, cg-ubiquitin-init.pdb, and cg-ubiquitin-init.psf.
The next step is to correct the coarse-grained psf file so that the bead types reflect the secondary structure of the protein. To do this, run

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 02b-correct-CG-psf.tcl > 02b-correct-CG-psf.log
```


## Solvate (step 3)

Now that we have constructed the PDB/PSF pair for the protein, we can construct a water box around it. To do this, we will use the solvate procedure, using the MARTINI cg-waterbox. Open 03-solvate.tcl with a text editor for an example of how to do this. Run solvate with

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 03a-solvate.tcl > 03a-solvate.log.
```

Next we will run a script to remove any waters too close to the protein that solvate might have missed, just as we would do for an all-atom system.

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 03b-remove-waters.tcl > 03b-remove-waters.log.
```


## Ionize (step 4)

Last, we will neutralize the system using a modified version of the autoionize procedure (provided in cgionize.tcl). Copy the martini-ions.top file to the current directory. Run

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 04-ionize.tcl > 04-ionize.log.
```

You should now have the files ionized.pdb and ionized.psf in your directory.

## Set up the simulation files (step 5)

Some configuration files have been provided for you: ubiquitin-min.conf, ubiquitin-01.conf, and ubiquitin-02.conf. A short minimization is done in ubiquitin-min.conf. Equilibration is started in ubiquitin-01.conf, and
continued in ubiquitin-02.conf. It will often be necessary to run with a shorter timestep in the first stages of a simulation until the system stablilizes. This is why the timestep is set to 10 fs in ubiquitin-01.conf and then increased to 40 fs in ubiquitin-02.conf. As a general point of advice, if you find that your simulation crashes frequently with the "atoms moving too fast" error, temporarily decreasing the timestep may solve the problem.

## Run the simulation (step 6)

This system is small enough to run on your desktop/laptop, so try running the simulations and open the trajectory in VMD.

### 3.2 Lipid Bilayer



Directory: 06-OtherExamples/POPC
In this section, you will coarse-grain and set up simulation files for a system containing a membrane patch.

You are provided with a small all-atom POPC membrane patch, and several build scripts.

Coarse-grain your system (step 1)
The first step is to coarse-grain the lipid patch and build a coarse-grained PDB/PSF pair. Do this by running

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 01-coarse-grain.tcl > 01-coarse-grain.log,
```

and open the script in a text file to see how this is being done.

## Create a PSF file (step 2)

Create a coarse-grained PDB/PDF pair for your system using

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 02-make-CG-psf.tcl > 02-make-CG-psf.log,
```

Unlike in the ubiquitin example, the psf file requires no further correction because this system contains no protein segments.

## Solvate (step 3)

Now we will add a water box, again using solvate with the provided MARTINI files. Do this by running
vmd -dispdev text -e 03a-solvate.tcl > 03a-solvate.log.
Next we will run a script to remove any waters that may have ended up in the hydrophobic region on the outside of the membrane patch, again just as we would do for an all-atom system.

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 03b-remove-waters.tcl > 03b-remove-waters.log.
```


## Ionize (step 4)

Finally, we will neutralize the system, again using the modified version of autoionize. Make sure, you copy the martini-ions.top to the current directory. And, run

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 04-ionize.tcl > 04-ionize.log.
```


## Set up the simulation files (step 5)

Again, several configuration files (popcpatch-min.conf, popcpatch-01.conf, popcpatch-02.conf) have been provided for you. Note that since this is a membrane simulation useFlexibleCell should be turned on.

## Run the simulation (step 6)

Again, the system should be small enough to run on one processor!

### 3.3 Membrane Protein



## Directory: 06-OtherExamples/M2-channel

In this section, you will coarse-grain and set up simulation files for a membrane protein system, containing both protein and lipid segments. The protein used in this section is the M2 proton channel (2RLF.pdb), which is composed of several non-covalently-bound homo-oliomers. Therefore, this example will demonstrate not only how to combine lipids and protein, but how to handle modular proteins in MARTINI. Please note that M2 was chosen as a proof-ofconcept example merely because it is small and well known; whether it can be adequately modeled in RBCG representation is another matter. In all-atom simulations, the oligomers are held together in part by hydrogen-bonding interactions, which are lost in the coarse-graining process. To compensate, you must use the extraBonds feature of NAMD to add extra constraints to keep the oligomers together.

## Create all-atom PDB and PSF files (step 0)

As in the ubiquitin case, we must first construct an all-atom PDB/PSF file pair for the protein using a PDB file downloaded from www.rcsb.org databse. The first script ( $00-$ make-AA-psf.tcl) replicates the protein from 2RLF, assembles the oligomer, and aligns it along the z-axis. To do this, simply run

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 00a-make-AA-psf.tcl > 00a-make-AA-psf.log.
```

Open the script file if you are interested in seeing how this is done.
Now, since this is a membrane simulation, the next thing to do is to combine it with the membrane. First run

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 00b-combine-with-lipids.tcl > 00b-combine-with-lipids.log.
```


## Coarse-grain your system (step 1)

Now we coarse-grain the system:

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 01-coarse-grain.tcl > 01-coarse-grain.log,
```

Create a PSF file (step 2)
Create a preliminary PSF file with:

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 02a-make-initial-CG-psf.tcl > 02a-make-initial-CG-psf.log
```

Since this system contains both lipid and protein segments, we will need to correct the psf file to account for secondary structure:

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 02b-correct-CG-psf.tcl > 02b-correct-CG-psf.log
```


## Solvate and Ionize (steps 3 and 4)

Now we solvate, remove unwanted waters, and ionize the system, just as before
(Note: Copy the martini-ions.top file to the current directory):

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 03a-solvate.tcl > 03a-solvate.log
vmd -dispdev text -e 03b-remove-waters.tcl > 03b-remove-waters.log
vmd -dispdev text -e 04-ionize.tcl > 04-ionize.log.
```


## Set up the simulation files (step 5)

Usually for a membrane protein (protein embedded in membrane), one begins the simulation with the protein held in place, to let the lipids relax around the protein. For more information, refer to the Membrane Protein tutorial. We do this with NAMD's constraints option, and create the necessary constraint file here:

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 05a-make-constraints.tcl > 05a-make-constraints.log.
```

Last, since our protein contains several non-covalently-bonded segments, we must use NAMD's extrabonds feature to keep the protein from falling apart. This script shows an example of how to construct such a file:

```
vmd -dispdev text -e 05b-make-extrabonds.tcl > 05b-make-extrabonds.log.
```

If you are aware of particular interactions between monomers, it makes sense to represent those as extraBonds. Beyond that, the choice of extraBonds is a matter of trial-and-error. You must use your own judgement as to whether or not the extraBonded structure adequately represents your oligomeric protein.

## Run the simulation (step 6)

This system is slightly larger than the first two, but should still be manageable on your desktop/laptop. So try running the simulation and open the trajectory in VMD.

This ends the RBCG tutorial. You are now ready to use RBCG!

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## Appendix

This appendix is essentially a visual representation of the information encoded in the coarse-grain .cgc files, showing how each of the amino acids as well as a POPC lipid is divided into coarsegrained beads. Excerpts from the standard CHARMM topology file are shown with the Martini bead assignments overlaid.



| RESI GLY | 0.00 |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| GROUP |  |  |  |
| ATOM N | NH1 | -0.47 | !', |
| ATOM HN | H | 0.31 | $!\mathrm{N}-\mathrm{H}$ |
| ATOM CA | CT2 | -0.02 | $!$ |
| ATOM HA1 | HB | 0.09 | $!$ |
| ATOM HAZ | HB | 0.09 | !, HA1-CA-HA2 |
| GROUP |  |  | !' |
| ATOM C | C | 0.51 | I |
| ATOM 0 | 0 | -0.51 | ! $\mathrm{C}=0$ |
| BOND N HN | N | C CA | AS $=\mathrm{P} 5$ |
| BOND C +N | CA | CA HA2 |  |
| DOUBLE 0 | C |  |  |


| RESI HSD |  | 0.00 | neutral | HIS, proton on ND1 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| GROUP |  |  |  |  |








