

**THE HISTORY OF REFLEX HAMMERS**

*Douglas J. Lanska*

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Following the simultaneous description of muscle stretch reflexes by Heinrich Erb and Carl Westphal in 1875, neurologists used direct finger taps or chest percussion hammers to elicit these phenomena. Because of inadequacies of chest percussion hammers for eliciting muscle stretch reflexes, a variety of hammers were developed specifically for this purpose. In 1888, J. Madison Taylor, working for S. Weir Mitchell at the Philadelphia Orthopedic Hospital, designed the first such "reflex hammer." Taylor's hammer had a triangular rubber head and a short, flattened metal handle. Krauss (1894), Berliner (1910), Troemner (1910), Babinski (1912), and Wintle (1925) also designed popular reflex hammers. Many of these hammers and several others are still in use.

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## The history of reflex hammers

Douglas J. Lanska

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