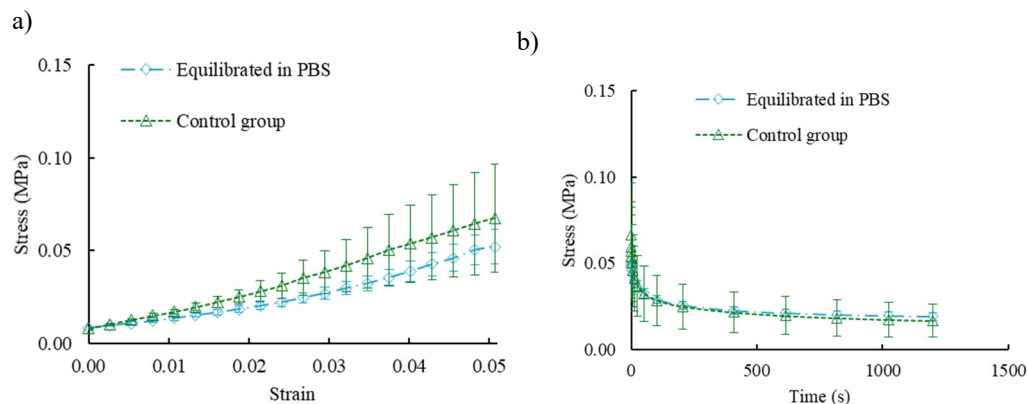


The specimens in the present study went through a number of dehydration in the desiccator and rehydration in PBS before being mechanically tested. In order to determine the possible effect of this long-term treatment process on the mechanical properties of the samples, we tested five posterior samples that were equilibrated in PBS only for 5 hours after dissection using the exact same testing protocol. Figure S1 compares the stress-strain and stress-relaxation response of these samples with those found for the samples in the control group. No significant difference was observed between the maximum stress and equilibrium stress ( $P > 0.15$ ), which suggests that the long treatment period should not have had any significant effect on the mechanical response of the specimens.



**Figure S1.** a) Stress-strain and b) stress-time curves comparing the response of posterior samples from the control group with the strips tested after being equilibrated in PBS for only 5 hours after dissection.