

Supporting Information for

# Strain-Insensitive Hierarchically Structured Stretchable Microstrip Antennas for Robust Wireless Communication

Jia Zhu<sup>1,\*</sup>, Senhao Zhang<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Ning Yi<sup>4</sup>, Chaoyun Song<sup>5</sup>, Donghai Qiu<sup>3</sup>, Zhihui Hu<sup>1</sup>, Bowen Li<sup>1</sup>, Chenghao Xing<sup>6</sup>, Hongbo Yang<sup>2,3</sup>, Qing Wang<sup>4</sup>, Huanyu Cheng<sup>1,4,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Engineering Science and Mechanics, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802, USA

<sup>2</sup>School of Biomedical Engineering (Suzhou), Division of Life Sciences and Medicine, University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei, 230022, P. R. China

<sup>3</sup>Suzhou Institute of Biomedical Engineering and Technology, Chinese Academy of Science, Suzhou, 215011, P. R. China

<sup>4</sup>Department of Materials Science and Engineering, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802, USA

<sup>5</sup>School of Engineering and Physical Sciences, Heriot-Watt University, University Park, Edinburgh EH14 4AS, Scotland, UK, United Kingdom

<sup>6</sup>Department of Electrical Engineering, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802, USA

Jia Zhu and Senhao Zhang contributed equally to this study and share the first authorship

\*Corresponding authors. E-mail: [jmz5364@psu.edu](mailto:jmz5364@psu.edu) (J. Z.), [Huanyu.Cheng@psu.edu](mailto:Huanyu.Cheng@psu.edu) (H. C.)

## S1 Transmission Line Model for Microstrip Antennas

The resonance frequency  $f$  of the microstrip patch antenna with a width and length of  $w$  and  $L$  in the patch can be designed as a function of the effective dielectric constant  $\varepsilon_{eff}$  and the effective length  $L_{eff}$  as in Eq. 1. The effective dielectric constant  $\varepsilon_{eff}$  and the effective length  $L_{eff}$  can be obtained from

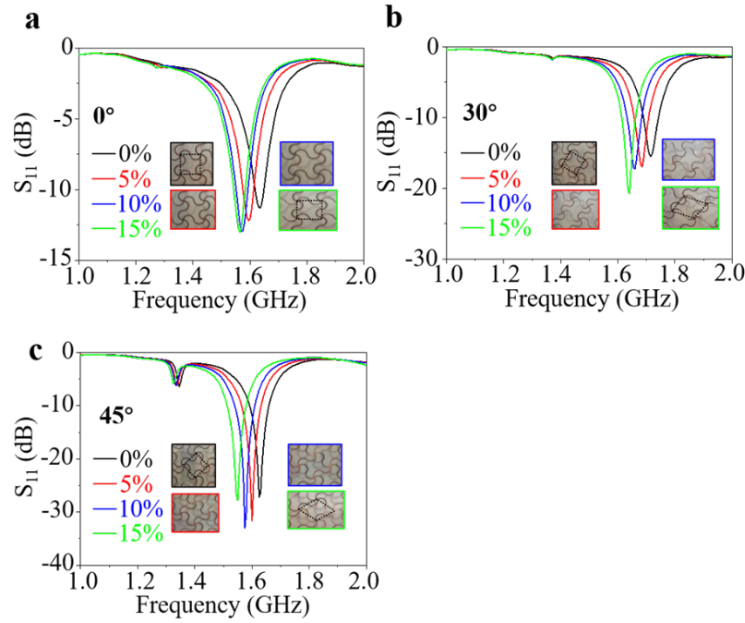
$$\varepsilon_{eff} = \frac{\varepsilon_r + 1}{2} + \frac{\varepsilon_r - 1}{2} \left( 1 + 12 \left( \frac{h}{w} \right) \right)^{-\frac{1}{2}}, \quad (S1)$$

$$\Delta L = 0.412h \frac{(\varepsilon_{eff} + 0.3) \left( \frac{w}{h} + 0.264 \right)}{(\varepsilon_{eff} - 0.258) \left( \frac{w}{h} + 0.8 \right)}, \quad (S2)$$

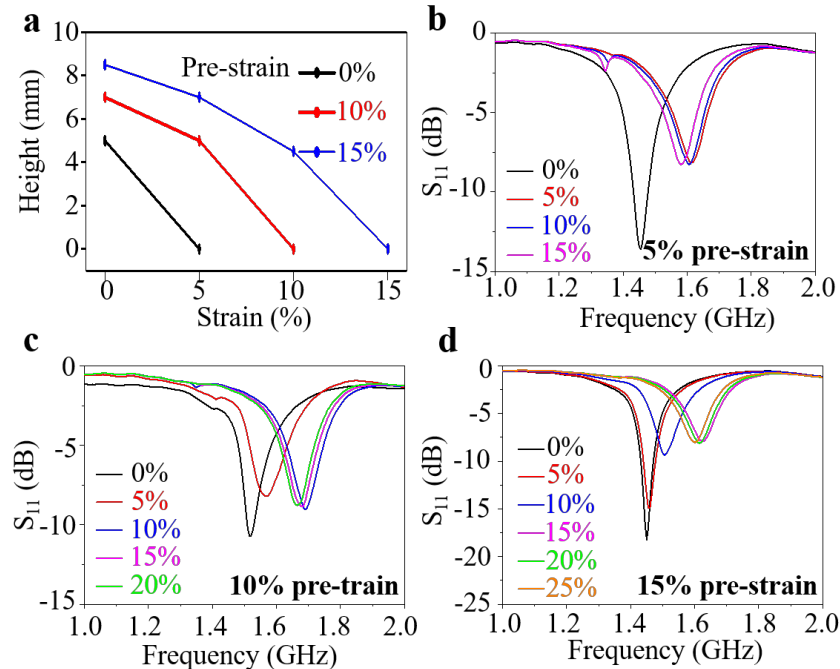
$$L_{eff} = L + 2\Delta L, \quad (S3)$$

where  $\varepsilon_r$  and  $h$  are the relative dielectric constant and dielectric layer thickness, respectively. The effective length  $L_{eff}$  is large than the physical length  $L$  of microstrip patch antennas due to the fringing effect.

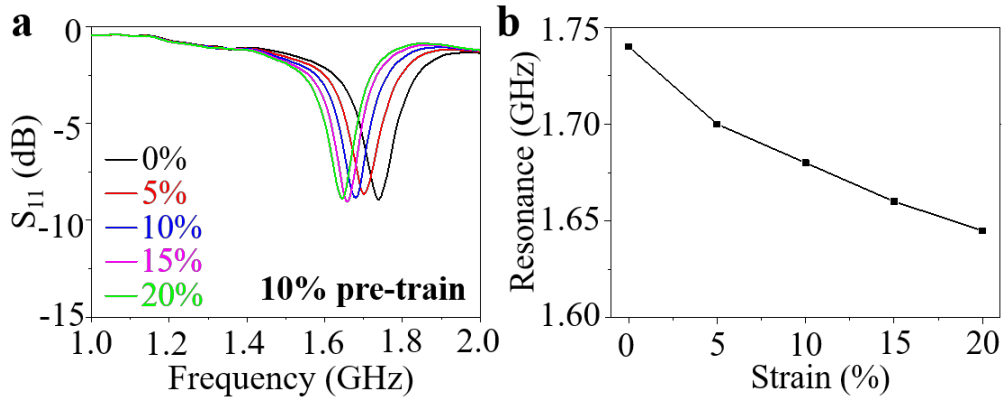
S2 Supplementary Figures



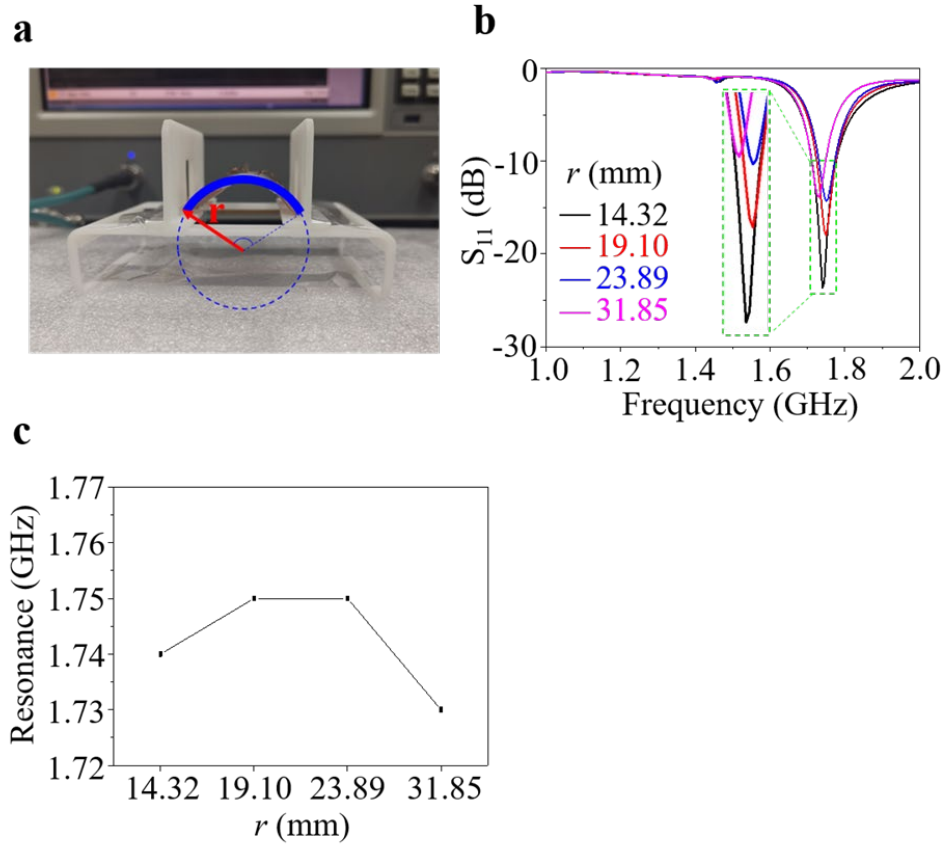
**Fig. S1** Measured  $S_{11}$  curves of the meshed microstrip antenna with different orientations ( $0^\circ$ ,  $30^\circ$ , and  $45^\circ$ ) upon stretching. The unit cell of the mesh is orientated along the (a)  $0^\circ$ , (b)  $30^\circ$ , and (c)  $45^\circ$ . The optical images in the inset show the deformed meshed structure upon stretching.



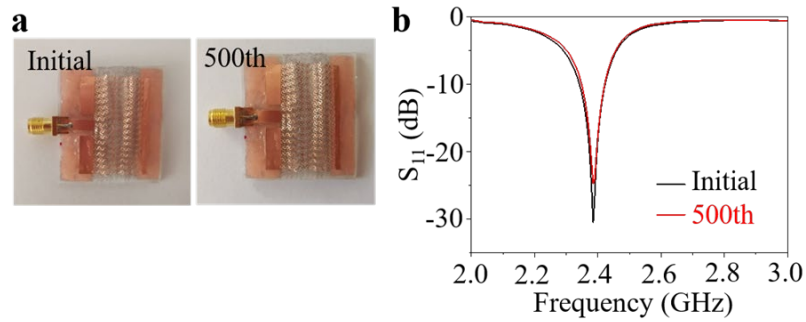
**Fig. S2** Mechanical-electromagnetic properties of the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a single arch. **a** Height of the arched patch as a function of the applied tensile strain. **b-d.** Measured  $S_{11}$  curves of the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a single arch for a pre-strain of **b** 5%, **c** 10%, and **d** 15% upon stretching



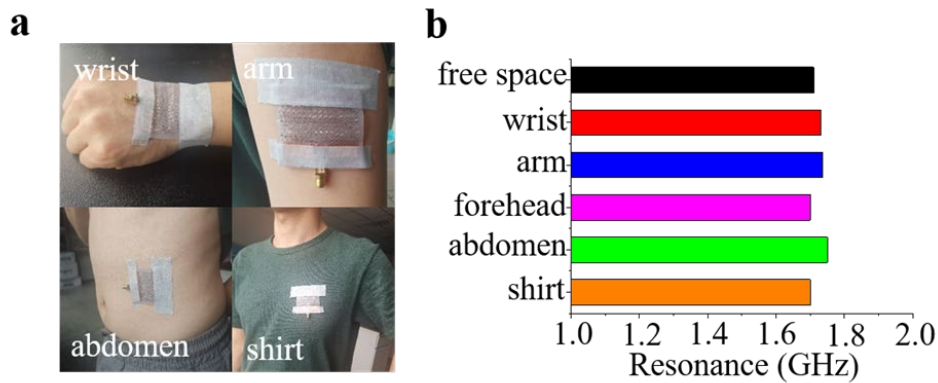
**Fig. S3** Mechanical-electromagnetic properties of stretchable microstrip antennas with a wavy patch and ground (pre-strain of 10%)



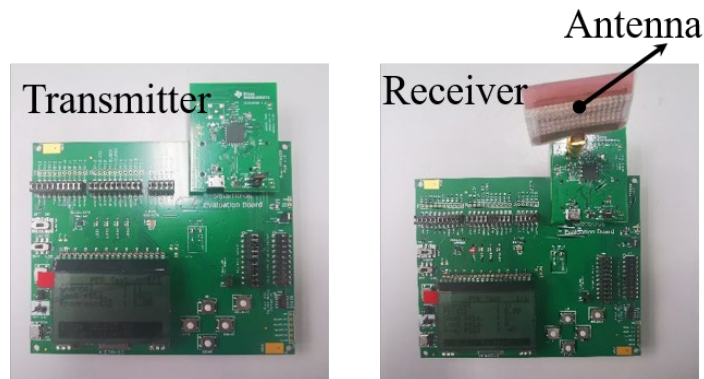
**Fig. S4** Bending performance of the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a double-arched patch for a pre-strain of 15%. **a** Experimental setup for the bending test. **b** Measured  $S_{11}$  curves of the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a double-arched patch upon bending deformation for different radii. **c**. Measured resonance frequency as a function of the bending radius from the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a double-arched patch



**Fig. S5** (a) Optical images and (b)  $S_{11}$  curves of hierarchically structured microstrip antennas with a double-arched patch before and after 500 bending cycles



**Fig. S6** On-body electromagnetic properties of the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a double-arched patch. **a.** Optical images of the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a double-arched patch attached to different parts of human bodies, including the wrist, arm, abdomen, and shirt over the chest. **b.** Measured resonance frequency of the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a double-arched patch placed at different locations



**Fig. S7** RF transmitter and receiver used to evaluate the wireless communication performance of the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna.

**Movie S1** (separate file). Demonstration of the strain sensing capability from the meshed microstrip antenna.

**Movie S2** (separate file). “Ordered unraveling” in the hierarchically structured microstrip antenna with a single-arched patch upon stretching.