



The Right Angles for a Comfortable Windsor

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There are no set values for the critical angles in a Windsor chair. Rake, splay, cant, and slouch can all be adjusted through a range of angles, depending on the style and function of the chair. All of the angles are interrelated, and even on the same chair the rake and splay will

differ between the front legs and the back legs. The front legs of a Windsor provide side-to-side stability, so they have a greater splay angle than the back legs. The back legs provide resistance to the backward momentum of the sitter, so they have a greater rake angle than the front legs. Dining and desk chairs are more upright, living-room chairs are more relaxed. So on a dining chair,

both the cant angle and the slouch angle will be smaller; on the living-room chair, where the sitter will be sitting back farther, the cant and slouch angles are greater. Slouch and cant angles tend to be greater on armchairs than on side chairs. As you'll see on the drawings below, most of these angles I measure in degrees, but the cant angle I find simpler to measure in inches.

Vital Windsor angles

If you want to design a Windsor—or tweak a traditional Windsor design—it's very helpful to have the angles worked out at the start.

Splay—angle of the leg (off vertical) when seen from front or rear

Front leg splay angle, 10° to 15°

Rear leg splay angle, 8° to 12°

Cant—angle of the seat (off horizontal) when seen from the side

Cant angle, 1 in. to 1½ in.

*Side chair cant angle, ½ in. to ¾ in.

Front legs rake angle, 10° to 13°

Slouch—angle of the center spindle (off vertical) when seen from the side

Slouch angle, 10° to 13°

*Side chair slouch angle, 6° to 9°

Rear legs rake angle, 19° to 22°

Rake—angle of the leg (off vertical) when seen from the side