Definition 1 A **screw thread**, is a helical ridge wrapped around (the inside or outside of a) cylinder or cone in the form of a helix, with the former being called a **straight thread** (**external thread** or **internal thread**) and the latter called a **tapered thread**.

A straight thread is characterized by its

1. **major diameter**, i.e. the largest diameter of the thread,

2. **minor diameter**, i.e. the largest diameter of the thread,

3. **angle**, i.e. the angle of the side of the ridge that makes up the thread,

4. **pitch**, i.e. the distance from one crest of the ridge to the next, and by

5. the number of **starts**, i.e. the number of ridges wrapped around the cylinder.

The **lead** of a thread is just its pitch times the starts.