9.3.3 5/16 rule ring finger span distance chart

5/16 rule ring finger span distance chart

> 9.3.3 reference

The **5/16 rule** is a widely used pro shop guideline for determining the ring finger span relative to the middle finger span. Because most bowlers' ring fingers are shorter than their middle fingers, the ring finger hole is positioned closer to the thumb hole than the middle finger hole — and the 5/16 rule provides a standard offset for deriving the ring finger span from the middle finger span without measuring both fingers independently every time. This page explains the rule, when to apply it, and provides a reference chart of ring finger span distances derived from common middle finger spans.

□□ What the 5/16 Rule States

The 5/16 rule states that the ring finger span should be **5/16" shorter than the middle finger span** for a standard fingertip fit on a typical adult hand. This offset accounts for the natural length difference between the middle and ring fingers and produces a grip where both fingers seat at approximately the same relative joint position in their respective holes.

- □ The rule applies to **fingertip grip** as the primary use case — both fingers should seat at the first knuckle.
- □ It is a **starting point**, not an absolute. Bowlers with an unusual difference between their middle and ring finger lengths may need a different offset.
- □ The same rule is applied independently of span type — whether Full Span, Cut to Cut, or Oval is used, the 5/16 offset applies to whichever span measurement convention the

shop uses.
- □ Spectre Cloud's auto-suggestion system may apply this rule automatically when generating span suggestions from finger measurements — the chart below provides a manual reference for cross-checking those suggestions.

⚠ **Verify with Spectre team:** Confirm whether Spectre Cloud's span auto-suggestion applies the 5/16 rule as described, or whether it uses a different offset formula derived from the joint measurements entered on the spec sheet. Update the introduction above if the app uses a different standard.

□□ 5/16 Rule Reference Chart

Find the middle finger span in the left column. The ring finger span derived from the 5/16 rule appears in the right column. All values are in inches expressed as fractions.

Middle finger span	Ring finger span (5/16 rule)	Difference
3 1/4"	2 15/16"	5/16"
3 5/16"	3"	5/16"
3 3/8"	3 1/16"	5/16"
3 7/16"	3 1/8"	5/16"
3 1/2"	3 3/16"	5/16"
3 9/16"	3 1/4"	5/16"
3 5/8"	3 5/16"	5/16"
3 11/16"	3 3/8"	5/16"
3 3/4"	3 7/16"	5/16"
3 13/16"	3 1/2"	5/16"
3 7/8"	3 9/16"	5/16"
3 15/16"	3 5/8"	5/16"
4"	3 11/16"	5/16"
4 1/16"	3 3/4"	5/16"
4 1/8"	3 13/16"	5/16"
4 3/16"	3 7/8"	5/16"
4 1/4"	3 15/16"	5/16"
4 5/16"	4"	5/16"
4 3/8"	4 1/16"	5/16"
4 7/16"	4 1/8"	5/16"
4 1/2"	4 3/16"	5/16"

Middle finger span	Ring finger span (5/16 rule)	Difference
`4 9/16"`	`4 1/4"`	`5/16"`
`4 5/8"`	`4 5/16"`	`5/16"`
`4 11/16"`	`4 3/8"`	`5/16"`
`4 3/4"`	`4 7/16"`	`5/16"`

⚖ When to Apply the 5/16 Rule and When to Deviate

The 5/16 rule is an industry standard starting point — reliable for the majority of adult hands in the typical span range. The following circumstances call for deviation:

Measure both fingers independently when

- 🔍 The bowler's ring finger appears significantly longer or shorter than their middle finger relative to the typical adult proportion — visible at a glance during measurement.
- 🩹 The bowler has an injury, medical condition, or surgical history affecting one finger but not the other.
- 📋 A previous spec sheet for this bowler records a ring finger span that deviates from the 5/16 rule by more than `1/16"` — follow the established fit rather than the formula.
- 🌱 The bowler is a junior with hands that are still developing — proportions change more rapidly than in adults and the 5/16 assumption is less reliable.
- 🔩 The bowler reports discomfort specifically in the ring finger hole of previous drillings despite correct hole sizing.

Apply the 5/16 rule as the default when

- ✅ Both fingers appear proportionately typical for the bowler's hand size.
- 🆕 The bowler is new with no previous spec sheets and no reported issues with either finger.
- ⚡ You are working in a high-volume session and need a reliable starting point quickly — the rule produces a correct or near-correct span for the majority of adult hands.
- 🤖 The auto-suggestion for the ring finger span matches the 5/16 rule output — convergence between the formula and the suggestion adds confidence.

□□ Using This Chart With Spectre Cloud

After measuring the middle finger span and entering it on the spec sheet, use this chart to derive the expected ring finger span before entering it. Compare against Spectre Cloud's auto-suggestion for the ring finger:

- □ **Chart and suggestion agree** — enter the value with confidence.
- □ **Chart and suggestion differ by `1/16"`** — minor variance. Confirm the middle finger span was entered correctly and choose the value that best reflects the physical measurement.
- □ **Chart and suggestion differ by `1/8"` or more** — investigate before entering. Check whether the joint measurements used by the suggestion algorithm differ meaningfully from what the 5/16 rule assumes, or whether a measurement entry error has skewed the suggestion.

□□ Conventional Grip — Does the 5/16 Rule Apply?

The 5/16 rule is most reliably applied to fingertip grips where both fingers seat at the first knuckle. For conventional grips, both fingers seat at the second knuckle and the relative span difference between middle and ring fingers at the second knuckle is typically smaller than the 5/16 standard — the fingers are more equal in length at the second knuckle than at the first.

- □ For conventional grips, measure both fingers to the second knuckle independently rather than applying the 5/16 rule — the offset is less predictable at the conventional seating depth.
- □ If a conventional bowler is transitioning to fingertip, re-measure both fingers to the first knuckle — do not apply a 5/16 offset to a second-knuckle measurement.
- □ For semi-fingertip grips, treat the 5/16 rule as a rough guide only and confirm with independent measurement.

□□ Quick Formula for Values Not in the Chart

If the middle finger span falls between entries in the chart or outside the range shown, the ring finger span is always:

Ring finger span = Middle finger span − 5/16"

In decimal terms: **Middle finger span − 0.3125"**

Apply the result and round to the nearest `1/16"` increment consistent with your shop's measurement precision.

Related Sections

- 9.3.1 — Pitch suggestion chart (flexibility vs. forward pitch)
- 9.3.2 — CLT chart (lateral tilt angle vs. lateral pitch)
- 6.1.3 — Step 3: Set grip type and enter finger measurements
- 9.1.4 — Using Auto-Suggestions effectively for faster fitting sessions
- 9.2.4 — How do I switch a bowler from fingertip to conventional mid-session
- 5.5.2 — Using the oval cut chart to determine cuts manually

 Tip: Print this chart and laminate it alongside the pitch and CLT reference charts at the fitting counter. A three-chart reference covering forward pitch, lateral pitch, and ring finger span gives any driller — experienced or new — a complete quick-reference toolkit for the most common manual calculations in a fitting session. The charts do not replace measurement or judgement, but they cut the mental arithmetic out of a routine fitting and let you focus on the bowler rather than the numbers.

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