

**contact angle**

When a liquid does not spread on a *substrate* (usually a solid), a contact angle ( $\theta$ ) is formed which is defined as the angle between two of the interfaces at the three-phase line of contact. It must always be stated which interfaces are used to define  $\theta$ .

It is often necessary to distinguish between the ‘advancing contact angle’ ( $\theta_a$ ), the ‘receding contact angle’ ( $\theta_r$ ) and the ‘equilibrium contact angle’ ( $\theta_e$ ). When  $\theta_r \neq \theta_a$  the system is said to exhibit contact angle *hysteresis*.

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