

5.1: Wave Speed

There are two different speeds involved with describing a wave. In previous chapters we saw that the individual points on a wave oscillate (up and down for transverse waves, back and forth for longitudinal waves) with simple harmonic motion, just like masses on springs. But the up and down speed of a point on a transverse wave doesn't tell us how fast the wave moves from one place to the next. The wave speed, v , is how fast the wave travels and is determined by the properties of the medium.

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