We propose a method to estimate $N_e$, the entanglement length, that incorporates both local and global topological characteristics of chains in a melt under equilibrium conditions. This estimate uses the writhe of the chains, the writhe of the primitive paths and the number of kinks in the chains in a melt. An advantage of this method is that it works for both linear and ring chains, works under all periodic boundary conditions, does not require knowing the contour length of the primitive paths and it does not rely on a smooth set of data. We apply this method to linear finitely extendable non-linear elastic chains and we observe that our estimates are consistent with those from other studies. (Received February 23, 2015)