

10 Tips for Well-Dressed Windows

- 1. Light Control, Insulation, Privacy, or Style** is usually the primary concern when planning a window treatment. Knowing what is needed will be the first step in determining just how to dress your window. Function should be your first consideration, meaning what do you need the window treatment to accomplish for you first?
- 2. Start with a good foundation.** Choose a blind, shade, sheer, or shutter, to provide the most basic window treatment to solving your window treatment function. Blinds and shades will provide privacy. Both horizontal and vertical blinds will allow you to adjust the sunlight and while providing privacy at the same time.

If light control is the issue, you can choose an opaque, or room darkening shade. Heavy shades that block the sun's cellular shades work great for blocking out light.

Energy efficient treatments can lower your energy bill by blocking the loss of heat in winter and cooling in summer. If your room gets extremely hot in the summer or drafty in the winter you may consider honeycomb shades that offer a high R-value for good insulation. It will make your room more comfortable and save you money on your energy bill.

- 3. What is your decorating plan?** Is this window a focal point or an enhancement to the architecture of the room? Window treatments can coordinate with your furnishings, create a focal point, or make a dramatic decorative statement.

Make your window a focal point

Many rooms have an architectural element that will be a natural focal point, such as a great fireplace. But if you need to introduce a focal point for design, a custom window treatment created specifically for your home is a great way to set your mood and style.

Make your window a backdrop

Beautifully dressed windows can create a wonderful background for the favorite elements of your home. Simple lines and soft drapes can help dictate the feel of the room, by enhancing design decisions you have already made.

Scale and Proportion

Not every window stands up to the grandeur of your room. Yet with some creative window treatments you can turn even a small window into something special by adding curved valances or flowing drapes that hang from the ceiling to the floor. The important element is in matching the scale of your windows to the scale of your room and furniture.

- 4. Ready-made or custom?** There is usually a considerable difference in price between a drapery bought off the shelf vs. a custom designed and made treatment. Both offer advantages.

Ready made drapery comes in standard sizes and lengths. Many new homes have nine or ten foot high ceilings—there are limited choices for ready-made draperies that will be long enough for this size window.

Consider the current quality of the furniture and accessories in your room. Your window treatments need to be of that same quality, or else they might actually “lessen” the feeling of the room.

Custom window treatments are typically made with a higher quality of fabric and lining than ready made, and better yet, often include interlining. Interlining adds more insulation but especially adds a luxurious look and feel of the drapery.

Usually much more attention is paid to the details in custom treatments like pattern matching, size and spacing of pleats, and deep hems. There are almost unlimited styles and fabrics to choose from so you’ll get the perfect fabric to complement your décor and the best treatment to fit your windows.

- 5. Measure twice, cut once.** No matter how beautiful your treatment, if not properly measured, will not fit and will not bring you the result you seek! If you measure, be sure to use a metal tape or ruler. Know which window dimensions are required for your treatment. If in doubt, have a professional measure.
- 6. It’s a material thing.** Buy fabric where you can be assured of quality and can reorder if needed. You do not need to spend a small fortune on fabric to have beautiful window treatments. By using professional techniques and a quality lining, even a moderately priced fabric can look fabulous.
- 7. Invest in good linings.** Protect your fabulous fabric from the damage of sun at the same time bring greater insulation to your windows by using high quality lining. A good lining makes just about any fabric hang beautifully by adding body and weight to the treatment. The price of quality vs. economy lining is usually just a few dollars per yard and is well worth the difference.

This is usually another big difference between well made custom and a drapery off the shelf. A stock drapery tends to have lightweight lining and therefore will not drape as beautifully or insulate as efficiently as a quality lined treatment.
- 8. Dress your windows with style.** No longer merely functional, drapery hardware is to be looked at and admired. Creative decorative rods, rings, and finials come in wood, glass, metal, or ceramic materials and are like jewelry for your windows. Many are hand finished and will complement your lighting and other accessories in the room.
- 9. Trims are tops**--every beautiful outfit deserves attractive accessories to finish the look, and the same is true for window treatments. Trims are an easy way to customize your window treatment to add personality, glamour, or luxury to the overall look.
- 10. Install your treatment properly.** It isn’t finished product until it is hanging on the window. A good installer can make your treatment look even better and will have the knowledge to properly install your hardware-avoiding problems and making your life so much easier!

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