

Window Treatments Session

Ask Yourself the Following:

- Is there a view?
- Are there neighbors?
- Does it need privacy?
- Does it need decoration?
- Does it need both?

Fabric Tips:

- How does it hang?
- How will it sit on the floor?
- Ask for samples if ordering online.
- If you use silk, you **MUST** use lining!
- Velvet quality can make a difference.

Quick Tip Reminders:

- Neutral window treatments complement the main focal points.
- Create stationary panels, and mount them using boards.
- Use window treatments to change the visual appearance of your room.
- Dress your walls, not your windows!



Window Treatment Guide

When does function come before style?

Stationary Panels

If you want treatments that provide privacy or total darkness, you need lined curtains. If you're OK with light filtering through or if your curtains are simply decorative, unlined will work. Lining is more expensive but has other advantages: It can shield fabric from sun damage, making curtains last longer. A lining also adds heft, which protects against drafts and helps fabric fall more luxuriously. For maximum durability, light blockage, body, and insulation, you can get curtains with an interlining, too—a layer of flannel-like fabric sewn between the lining and the “face” fabric. This is a common option for custom-made curtains but not widely available in less expensive ready-made panels.

Texture

The touch and heft of a fabric is what really matters to me. How will it hang? How will it pleat? Will it look stiff or will it lay gracefully along side my windows? Texture is a wonderful element to add to any room décor. I find Window Treatments to be an excellent way to do this. For example, you can add softness with billowy sheers, a crisp casual look with lightweight cotton fabrics, a heavier look in larger rooms with panels made of silk, chenille or velvet. You can introduce organic textures with woven wood valances and nubby linen or raw silk window treatments. You can even keep a cool clean vibe in a contemporary home with roller screen shades, reed infused acrylic window inserts, frosted and reeded glass as well as sleek linen panels. You can even add grace and a touch of luxury with wool blends that fall gracefully to the floor.

Color

Color is an important aspect to consider... Ask yourself, Is it about the Window Treatments or something else? If the answer is the WT... Color pops can be fun and vibrant and make a room come alive. If the answer is something else in the room... the architecture, the furniture pieces or upholstery on the furniture... maybe a treasured piece of art, then opt for colors that support the focal point rather than the WT themselves. Remember, good design is all about balance. If every part of your design has a lead role... all parties will be competing. This will leave you frustrated with your choices as you will not achieve the harmony and peace you are looking for. For blending, pick curtains that are the same tone as the wall but a few shades darker, or choose a non-dominant subtle color. On the other hand, a bold color will work like an exclamation point adding drama to your space.

Prints and Patterns

Just keep in mind the goal is balance. Access what you are working with and cannot change ... or don't want to change at this time. If you have patterned fabric on your upholstered pieces or bedding or even a very elaborate rug, opt for solid curtains. Conversely... If you have solid-color furniture or bedding, consider patterned curtains. A large, graphic print in a color that relates to the existing decor is daring but can be spectacular. Currently, my favorite print is stripes, often used in the horizontal direction as opposed to running vertically. It's unexpected and can add to the sense the room is wider than it is... Much like horizontal striped pants on a woman. Only this is a good thing.

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Radiators:

There are times when floor length curtains are not possible. For example: A radiator or a deep sill is in the way. This is a subject I know little about as we don't have them in So Cal. However, for my European friends and friends in older homes in the Midwest and East Coast, I have done some google searching. It seems Radiators that are steam driven are not a fire hazard but ones with heat coils could be. Be careful before placing fabric WT in front of the type that coil burning hot! My best advice would be to paint radiators to match your wall color and do you best to make them go away visually.

How Long Should Curtains Be?

Floor-length is always my preference. As a professional designer, I often have custom window treatments made for the entire project. In my own home, this is not the case. I have used ready-made panels which are available in lengths from 63 to 144 inches. Measure from the floor to where you'll hang the rod, then round up to the longer size. You can always have a seamstress hem them if needed. When your Window Treatments make contact with the floor, you get a custom look... I call it Getting the biggest bang for your buck! When your Window Treatments fall an inch or more off the floor it can seem nerdy and awkward. If your ceilings are 10' high or less... hang your panels as high as possible... close to the ceiling. I have found ceilings over 10' require an individual assessment.

If your Window Treatments are Workable Drapery...

Meaning, they open and close on a pulley system for privacy, it makes sense you'll be opening and closing the curtains a lot then the fabric should just touch the floor or hover half an inch above. This look is classic and tailored and allows for easy open and close.

1. If you must have short curtains...

Café curtains are short panels that cover only the lower portion of a window and hit the sill, which work well in spots like the kitchen and bathroom, where long drapes aren't practical. Just be sure to let them hit the sill and not fall short.

2. Breaking Slightly at the Floor

Stationary panels that extend onto the floor by ½ to 1 full inch are my style of choice these days. It's a similar theory to the length of dress slacks. Having a slight break is good. I like my panels to touch the floor but not look like someone's pants are too long and they're stepping on them.

In years past, I favored a pooling effect. It was during the "Tuscan" craze of Interior design. In formal rooms, I would often leave six to twelve inches of fabric pooling on the floor...tucking the extra fabric at the bottom created a luxury, romantic look. Since the dawn of the "Transitional" look, I've backed off the over embellishments of pillows and window treatments for a cleaner less fufey style. Personally, I like it much better!

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How Wide Should Window Treatments Be?

If you're hanging stationary panels to frame a window as I do, and don't intend to shut them you can figure 2 to 2 ½ times the finished width you are going to need to create a custom luxury looking panel.

If you're hanging Working Drapes, you should consider 2 ½ to 3 times the width of your actual window as well as the wall space your treatments will stack back on when opened.

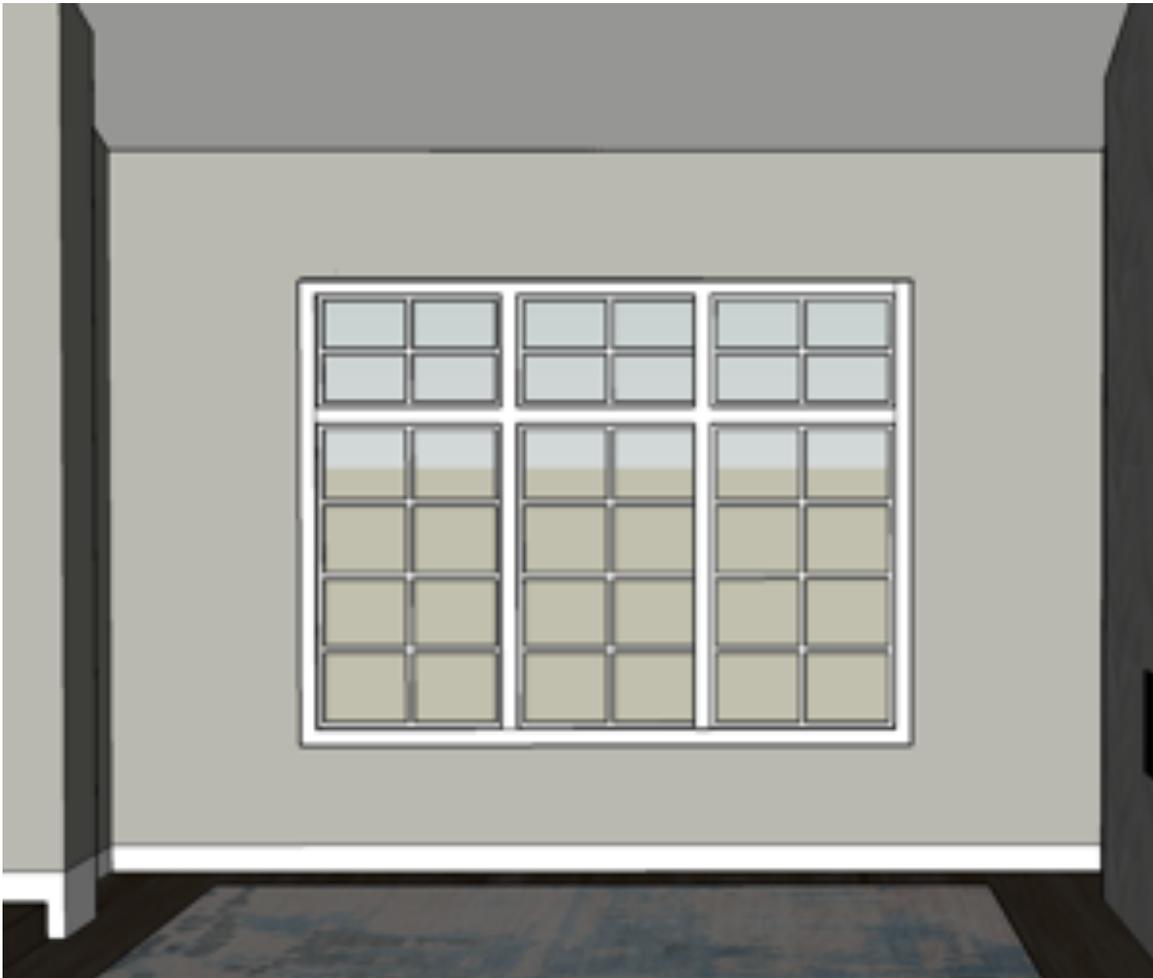
Where Should They Be Mounted In Relation to the Window?

As addressed above, For the height...I like to mount my window treatments as high up to the ceiling as possible. For the width...I typically mount them 2 ½ - 4" into the window and move out away from the window to my desired width. This is why I often say, I dress walls not windows. Often, my panels finished width is 22-26" wide per panel.

If you have detailed window frames you don't want to cover, an inside mount (hanging curtains within the frame, as you would with a tension rod) can work. I say this only as an option. Personally, I think the addition of well-appointed window treatments can make a bigger impact on a room than tons of casement wood working detail. It's a personal preference. You get to make the choice.

Let's look at this example:

A Living Room window with no treatments on it yet....



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Same window with traditionally hung treatments just above the window and to the right and left of the actual window. Pretty typical right?

If you take my theory of "Dressing Walls Not Windows" how would it change the dynamic of that same wall or that room? Let's take a look ...

Let's take it UP!



Do you see how it makes the room look instantly taller?

What if we just went wider... not taller?



Wow, the room looks wider doesn't it?

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Well, what if we did BOTH!

BEFORE

AFTER



Am I making my point?

Ok now there's that pesky space above the window to address... WWRD?



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I just added wood paneling above the casement to raise the height of the window... the painted white molding goes well with the rest of the woodwork in the home. Simple fixes like this can take your home up to the next level!

BEFORE

AFTER



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What About the Top?

The top hem of a curtain, known as the heading, can help define the overall look you are going for—casual or formal, urban or contemporary. Here are a few of my favorites.

1. For Workable Drapery, use a basic heading with rings and hooks

A traditional flat heading that attaches to the rod via rings is stitched into its top hem or, sometimes, drapery hooks (the rings attach to the hooks). With either setup, the curtains move easily.

2. For Both Workable and Stationary Drapery, use a pleated heading

There are many styles, from narrow pencil pleats to wide, flat box pleats. Because they're structured, these panels read more formal than do other types. Pleated curtains generally operate with drapery hooks and rings. If pleating a stationary panel, affix to boards and mount to walls or ceiling with L-brackets.

3. For Stationary Panels, use a rod-pocket heading

A channel along the top holds the rod and creates a casual, gathered effect. A nice choice for curtains that will stay put because moving the fabric back and forth can be difficult. This is a budget friendly option and can be home made as well.

4. For Stationary Panels, use tab-top heading

Flat loops of fabric hang on the rod. This can look relaxed with sheers or buttoned-up with stiffer fabrics. A variation on this theme is tie-tops, with bows instead of flat loops—still casual but more feminine and romantic.

5. For Stationary Panels, use a grommet style heading

Another budget friendly option. Panels have open grommet rings that lace on a rod in minutes. Works well in transitional, loft and modern style homes. Best for stationary treatments as spacing evenly looks best.

What Type of Rod Should I Use?

Decorative curtain rods can be another element of design but should relate to the style of the room. Those that are completely hidden from view can be chosen based on function alone.

Here are a few options:

1. For Workable Drapery Panels, use a track rod

This rod is usually provided by a drapery workroom and installed professionally. Drapery hooks attach to pulleys inside a track. It can be installed on a wall or the ceiling. Some tracks resemble a rod with finials, concealing all moving parts inside the pole. Curtains glide effortlessly. Often these rods are unsightly and covered by a valance. I seldom use them but I'm giving you options.

2. For Stationary Panels, use a classic rod

Custom fit to size or readymade with an adjustable pole. Usually has decorative finials or caps on the ends. The rod attaches to the wall with brackets. I suggest you consider coordinating the metal to other finishes in the room. NOTE* This is an area I see where homeowners could make a huge improvement. I often see rods that are flimsy, under scaled or too small to be used for proper window treatments. It's like having tiny bedside tables on either side of the bed. It's just a lose! Beef up your rods people... It WILL make a difference!

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3. Return Rod

An adjustable U-shaped rod that screws directly into the wall. Be sure to mount to studs to hold the weight of the window treatments. The best reason to use a U-shaped rod is the wrap around feature, making this a good solution for blocking out light making this type of rod excellent for Bedrooms.

4. Tension Rod

My least favorite but sometimes a viable option when on a tight budget. Tension rods are light weight and less sturdy and should only be used with light weight fabrics.

NOTE* Without getting too deep into what I do, I have to say I often avoid rods altogether. I have created my own way of hanging Window Treatments either from the wall or ceiling on L-Brackets. The fabric is often mounted to a board of my choosing. Watch the Window Treatment Design Session for a personal demonstration.

Do I Need Tiebacks?

I let the design of the room dictate whether or not I use tiebacks. If I want to be able to pull curtains to the side for any reason... to soften the view out the window or create a romantic look, I use Tiebacks. Mounted on the wall about two-thirds of the way down the window, I match the room and the rod for style and finish. Sometimes a simple fabric tiebacks or fancy ropes with tassels for a fancier look. Tiebacks can range from casual to crazy – elaborate... Your choice. Be creative and kitschy or understated and elegant...It's your home.

Notes

Don't Forget!

Tag your photos on social media with #DesignSessionsLive and show us what you have learned from the session! We love to see your beautiful spaces.

