

## Curains? Blinds? Panels? Take Your Pick!

Why dress a window? You may want a good night's sleep in a dark room. If you are south facing you might want to cut out bright sunlight which dazzles you in the living room. You may want privacy from overlooking neighbours or the street. Or maybe you just want to soften the appearance of your room. Whatever the reason there will be a window dressing perfect for your needs and for the style of your interior. First things first, how do you get a good night's sleep? If it's a pitch black room you're after there are a couple of tricks that work. Firstly, get black-out lining for your curtains or Roman blinds. The lining is thick, laminated with vinyl and is really effective at blocking out daylight. It's used to line relatively thick fabrics rather than sheer or net curtains. A pelmet will also cut out light that would otherwise creep out over the top of the curtain. If you don't fancy curtains or Roman blinds then Roller blinds can be made from blackout material and even blackout blinds for velux windows cut out light completely. If daylight is something that you like to wake up to then your fabric and style options are broader. You could go for a lighter, more floaty fabric that can be paired with a much lighter weight lining. Or a blind that lets the sunlight highlight patterns and texture. Wherever you hang curtains and whatever fabric they are made from you need to decide what sort of pleating to have at the top. The two main types are pencil pleats (uniformally gathered) and pinch or French pleats (the fabric is gathered at intervals). Pencil pleats use the most fabric and look best when they are full. Pinch pleats are better if you're after a sleek, more elegant look. A more informal choice is tab or tie tops. These use less fabric than pencil or pinch pleats, but they are also more difficult to pull, so are best hung where they won't be opened every day. Blinds can be Roller (they roll up onto a bar) which need stiffened material, to give them some structure or Roman (they fold onto themselves as they are pulled up). Blinds can look crisp and modern and are good if you have a small room which you don't want to clutter. Unlike curtains blinds can be pulled down to cover only the top half of the window. A clever trick is to fit Rollers onto the bottom of a window with hooks half way up. That way the Roller can be rolled up to cover the bottom half of the window - useful in bathrooms or bedrooms where you want privacy but sunlight too! Another plus for blinds is they don't cover radiators, so they let heat circulate easily in the room. If you want curtains to cut out sunlight or to give you a bit of privacy then sheers and voiles are worth a look. These can be lined (with another thin fabric) or unlined and are great at diffusing sunlight and cutting out glare. Voiles can come in all sorts of colours and patterns to suit the style of your room, so you can have something more exciting than Granny's old net curtains! The current buzzword in window dressing is sliding panels. These can look fantastic in a modern home. Panels are usually around 80cm wide. They are flat pieces of fabric attached to a sliding track with a thin bar also attached to the bottom of the panel to keep it straight and neat. If you have 3 or 4 panels to cover a wide window they could be identical, or in different colours and patterns to create a really dramatic interior feature. Window dressings are an important part of interior design and can really bring together your scheme. With an unlimited supply of fabrics and styles available the possibilities are endless.

## About the Author

Expert home improver India Cooper explores all the options for dressing your windows to create the optimal ambience. To find out more please visit <http://www.ratedpeople.com/find/windows>

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