

Making your own curtains

In some ways curtains are some of the easiest projects to complete successfully. After all they are rectangles with straight lines! For example, small kitchen or bathroom window curtains don't necessarily need to be lined (although we do recommend it to protect the fabric) and an informal header such as a pencil pleat can work well.

Pencil pleats are the simplest style for the home sewer. A gather tape is sewn flat to the top of the curtain and then the strings in the tape are pulled to gather the tape and the curtain into the desired pleats. The more sophisticated style of pinch pleats can also be achieved with a bit more thought and skill. A buckram tape is inserted between the lining and the fabric. This is then pinched into double or triple pleats at regular intervals along the width of the curtain and secured with stitching. A calculation must be done to ascertain how many pleats will bring the curtain to the desired width.

Measuring for Curtains – A Rough Guide For Estimating Fabric Amounts

The standard fullness for pencil or pinch pleat curtains is two and a half times. You could use slightly less for pencil pleats.

The track or pole will be positioned at least 4"/10cm above the window and extend between 6"/15cm and 20"/50cm either side. Measure the total width of the track or pole and add 6"/15cm for an overlap where the curtains close.

Measure the length. Decide where you want the curtains to finish. Half an inch from the floor is standard for full length curtains. Add hem and header allowance of 12"/30cm

Multiply the pole/track length by the fullness – 2.5 then divide this by the width of the fabric roll 54"/140cm. Round the answer up or down to tell you how many widths (drops) you will use in your curtains. If the answer is two each curtain will use one width of fabric. If the answer is three one width will be split so that each curtain uses one and a half widths.

Multiply the number of widths by the length including the hem and header allowance. This tell you how much fabric you will need if you are using plain fabric. (If you are using patterned fabric and you want to match the pattern from one width to the next the vertical length of the pattern repeat must be added.)

Example

The width of the pole is 230 cm and the length of the curtains when they are finished is 240 cm.

$$230\text{cm} \times 2.5 = 575\text{cm} \text{ divided by } 140 \text{ cm} = 4.1$$

Round down to 4 widths

$$\text{Finished length } 240\text{cm} + 30\text{cm (hem)} = 270\text{cm}$$

$$270\text{cm} \times 4 \text{ widths} = 1080\text{cm}$$

Answer 10.8 metres of fabric are required

This pair of curtains will have two widths of fabric in each curtain.

Making Your Own Roman Blind

The traditional method of making a roman blind used a piece of 2 x 1 wood as long as the width of the blind, doweling rods the same length, narrow cords, small rings to thread the cords through, fabric and lining. We sell the cord and the rings in the shop.

Since the introduction of safety laws in 2010 pre made kits are used that use safety chain that breaks in emergencies. These kits are available to order through the shop. They are custom made to your measurements and take about two weeks to supply.

There are plenty of free You Tube tutorials available that show how to make roman blinds.