



Window Treatments

I have recently received a lot of questions about window treatments. Although I usually refer clients to a specialist, I thought I'd take this opportunity to cover some basic points.

When considering window treatments, first ask yourself: why do I want them? Do I need them for privacy and insulation, or to add color, texture or style to the space? Is there a view outside that I want to maintain, or to hide? Do I want them to compliment my windows, or obscure them?

If you have neighbors, window coverings can provide you with privacy. It's important to feel comfortable and protected from the outside world, especially in personal spaces like the bedroom and bathroom.

Blinds are a functional option. Current choices include pleated blinds that can be pulled up from the bottom or down from the top, so you can of access the light or view while still maintaining some privacy. Pleated shades also provide insulation, which will help with temperature control. They come in a variety of colors, weights, and types, and virtually disappear when opened.

Shutters are popular window treatments, and can add a feeling of architectural detail to your windows, as well as to your home. Shutters may be made of wood or a man-made material, and are often white or off-white. I have seen shutters that slide open on a sliding glass door, fold open like an accordion, or swing open like a door. Overall, shutters are more of a permanent feature, and will block more of the outdoors.

Cornice boxes are constructed pieces that cover the top of the window. Rustic cornice boxes can be exposed wood, while elaborate boxes may covered with ornate fabrics and accented with trim or tassels. Edges may be straight, scalloped or rounded. Cornice boxes may be used in conjunction with panel draperies.

Panel curtains are very popular right now, and are often hung from decorative metal or wood rods. Curtain rods can be hung high, near the ceiling, to make a room appear taller, or extend outside the window, to make it appear wider. Panels come in varying lengths, and can graze the window sill, hang just below it, fall to the baseboard, or puddle on the floor for a luxurious effect. Panes can be simply decorative, or pulled closed for privacy.

Valances are window treatments that only cover the top of the window, and are generally about 15 inches in length. These are ideal for windows that don't have sufficient wall space on the side for panels; that frame a nice view; or simply need a warm touch of color or texture. Valance fabric can be tailored flat or gathered for a fuller effect.

Roman shades are decorative shades that can be gathered up in loose pleats by a cord attached to the back. These give a tailored, yet soft look to a window, and offers variation in coverage and light control.

Whether purchased retail, ordered from a catalog or professionally made, window treatments can be the finishing touch to a well-appointed room.

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