

Draperies Made Easy



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Drapery can define your home decor as much as the furniture or flooring you choose. Windows establish the way you gaze at the world outside, and drapery affects how you experience the room by establishing a mood with color, framing windows to anchor the views, adding insulation value and reducing noise levels.

New drapes allow you to have a fresh look in your home, control the amount of light in your rooms, defusing glare or creating privacy..

My Love of Drapery

I think my love of drapery evolved from my love of fabric, which was evident even in my early childhood. My love of fabric was enhanced through my fashion design training and experience, as well as my extensive sewing experience.

Actually, sewing drapery from scratch for most of our own homes over the years – with no pattern – gave me not only a better understanding of drapery design, but also how drapery design has to take into consideration the fabric and fabrication process.

Ultimate Personalization

Drapery provides so many options for personalizing a room, or your entire home. There are so many styles, fabrics and embellishments that can be utilized with drapery. It is the one aspect of a room's décor that allows the most creativity – enabling you to truly personalize or even add a theme to the room.



Icing on the Cake

I like to think of drapery as the icing on the cake, when it comes to decorating a room or home. Drapery, when properly designed – constructed – installed, can transform a room like hardly any other aspect or component of the room.

Save The Drapes For Last

Drapery should be one of the LAST pieces of the puzzle decided upon when it comes to redecorating your room(s). This is because there is so much flexibility when it comes to drapery. Drapery is also one of the easiest items to change down the road – much easier than flooring and even furniture – no need to rip things up or cause turmoil in your home in order to change drapery.

Just like icing on the cake is the last step – so should drapery.

Costly Mistakes = Experience

Just because you can draw it on a piece of paper does not mean it can be made, or made with a particular fabric type. Believe me, I made plenty of costly mistakes in my early years of designing and sewing my own drapery. Now my clients benefit from my years of trial and error. My hands-on drapery design and sewing experiences also gave me the knowledge to communicate properly with the workrooms.

Now days, our drapery jobs run very smoothly. Combining our experience with that of a talented team of installers, the widest selection of fabrics around, and the best workroom in Southern Arizona equals great drapery for our wonderful clients. The workrooms, as in most professions, have their own jargon related to drapery and sewing. Terms like jabots, lambrequins and buckram can be confusing to someone not experienced in drapery or sewing. Confusion that could lead to costly mistakes.

DO-IT-YOURSELF DRAPERY

Drapery can certainly be a do-it-yourself project – I did for many years before becoming an interior designer. There are some skills and knowledge that will make the task easier:

- **Good sense of style, color, scale and proportion**
 - So you choose the best color or fabric pattern to achieve your desired look and feel
Keep in mind to have not used the print elsewhere in the room. My recommendation is to balance your drapery print with others in the room – on upholstery, pillows or perhaps in a rug.
 - So the drapery should be of proper scale and proportion to the window/door and the room as a whole. The wrong scale or proportion in your drapery will make it look out of place. You want your drapery to look like it belongs in the room, not like it was thrown up as an afterthought.
- **Strong knowledge of drapery construction and sewing techniques**
 - Knowing what fabrics types work best for what drapery styles is critical so you don't buy a fabric and then find out it won't work for the drapery style you selected
 - Knowing how you or the workroom (company that specializes in sewing drapery, bedding, accent pillows, etc.) will construct the draperies
- **Understanding different fabric types is important for the finished look, quality and durability**
 - How they hang: will the chosen fabric work with the style you chose
 - What are the sewing limitations: you don't want to get that call from the workroom, like I have, that the fabric selected can't be sewn in the style selected What are the stretch characteristics of the fabric? You don't want to start with your drapes 1/2" off the floor and then have a 3" puddle two years later because the fabric stretched.
 - Another issue that can arise is if the face fabric and lining are not the same fabric blend. If not the same blend, they can either stretch or shrink to different lengths. This can even happen during dry cleaning.

3rd Time a Charm

We were recently selected after two other designers had failed to deliver the valances the client wanted. Both previous designers had selected upholstery fabric for a style that required a loosely woven fabric, allowing it to drape properly.

7 STEPS TO GREAT DRAPERY

Assuming all other aspects of the room have already been established (wall colors and finishes, flooring, furniture, lighting, accessories, windows/doors , etc.), there are **7 Key Steps** necessary to properly design, construct and install drapery. There are, as you'll see, many additional aspects within each step that must be considered to achieve your drapery vision with a quality product.

Step 1- Evaluate the room

The first step in a quality drapery job is a thorough evaluation of the room(s) where the drapery will be installed.

1. Which of these functional aspects will the drapery be used for (can be any one or all)
 - a. Cosmetic enhancement only?
 - i. Certain types of drapery are used to enhance the look of your windows and room only and do not move or operate.
 - ii. Or maybe you just want to frame the view or bring color to the room.
 - b. Sun control
 - i. This will be a major determinant in what type of drapery would be best and what type of fabric and lining are needed to achieve your desired level of outdoor light control. Is there a rug or upholstery in front of the window? If so, should you interline too?
 - ii. Drapery can provide an easy method for you to control the amount of sunlight allowed in the room – if properly designed and constructed.
 - iii. There are different levels of linings that can be utilized to control light
 1. But, not all linings can be used with every type of fabric. It is important to use the correct lining with the fabric chosen, or problems will occur. Again shrinkage or growing can occur.
 - iv. Conversely, if light control is of utmost importance, in a bedroom for instance, then you'll want to use the highest level of black-out lining, which will eliminate some fabric types for the front of the drapery. Some fabrics will need both inter-lining as well as black out lining. Some may even need a special lining called bump.
 - c. Privacy
 - i. Privacy can be enhanced in a number of different ways with drapery, including different types of shears. Shears allow most light into the room while still providing some privacy, so you're not *totally* exposed to the world.
 - d. Conceal something (e.g. control panel, electrical panel, etc.)
 - e. Thermal improvement – draperies can actually add improved thermal performance (reduced heating & cooling costs) with the right style and fabrics

2. Will there be other type(s) of window treatments on the same window (e.g. shades, blinds, shutters, cornices)?
 - a. It is critical that drapery be coordinated properly with other types of window treatments. Improper coordination could cause aesthetic, or operational issues, and ultimately cost you a lot more than doing it right the first time

3. Determine the color family(s) to be used: it takes a well trained eye to determine the best colors to achieve your desired look
 - a. Primary Color Palette: this could be a color family to compliment, contrast or enhance some other color or aspect of the room (e.g. flooring, upholstery, leather, paint color, etc.)
 - b. Secondary Color Palette: is there a color in the upholstery, carpet, area rug, throw pillows etc. that you want to “bring out”. The properly selected drapery fabric can make an unnoticed color “pop” in your sofa, area rug, or accent pillows



Step 2 – Determine the Style & Design

This is where the most time, effort, and FUN will be. This step is where you get to create that special look you’ve always dreamed of, or try to take the look you saw in a magazine and apply it to your room.

No Two Designs Alike

Designing your own personalized drapery will help ensure you don’t walk into a neighbors house and find *your* drapery. I design from scratch all drapery for my clients. I pride myself in that no two drapery designs are exactly alike. It wouldn’t be right for you to go to an interior designer for personalized drapery and then find out you in essence got “store bought” drapery because yours is the same as someone else’s.

Drapery Can Be Elaborate

Drapery styles have a huge range, from simple to very elaborate. This is where the real creativity comes into play, because there are so many options and choices. Your choice of style can become more formal with a silk, or perhaps it can be an elaborate style that becomes more casual by using an open weave fabric

Room Style

Generally, the drapery style is influenced greatly by the overall style of the room and its finishes and furnishings. You wouldn’t want to put ‘Southwest’ style drapery in a ‘Contemporary’ room/home, ‘Traditional’ style drapery in an ‘Old World’ room/home. Your drapery should reflect the overall feel and theme of your room and/or home.

Design Considerations

We always take the following factors into consideration when designing personalized drapery for our clients:

1. Fabric Type vs. Style

- The selected fabric may not fit or work with the desired style
 - Example: Upholstery fabric is great for cornice above drapery, but not for a swag

2. Fabric Repeat

- You want to make sure the fabric repeat is properly aligned within the design
- You need to take in consideration both horizontal and vertical repeats
- The Fabric Repeat will also partially determine how much fabric will be needed for your specific design

3. Fabric Hang

- Certain types of fabrics ‘hang’ different than other fabric types
 - Example: If your design has pleats, certain fabric types don’t do pleats very well
- Be sure to select fabrics that provide the proper hang that results in the look you desire

4. If drapery will be operating, will there be grommets, rings, or shirred on a rod.

5. If rings are used, will there be a center support?

- If so do you need bypass rings vs. solid rings.

6. Scale of hardware to scale of room. We also recommend different sizes of pleats as well as styles. If ceilings are over 9’ we usually double the length of the pleat. We have pleat guides available for clients viewing and selecting.

7. Drapery Hardware

- Drapery hardware is a wide-ranging category of items that includes rods, hooks, brackets, poles, motorization, finials, sconces and more.
- See Appendix A for a more detailed discussion on drapery hardware.

8. Operating drapery?

- If your drapery design calls for operating panels, make sure you have the proper rod, wand and operating system that achieves the desired look

9. Use a electrician for hard wiring drapery if using a motorized option

10. Valance or Not?

- Will your design include a valance to conceal some of the head works?

TIP: If your design includes a valance, you may be able to get by with ...a shirred on a rod drapery, which has no rings or grommets.

11. Other top treatments, to be used over drapes, as well as other options like shades, blinds, shutters include cornices, lambrequins, as well as valances.

12. We sometimes update existing draperies with their own scarf attached. It can be of a contrasting fabric or self-fabric.

13. We even have seasonal ways to allow clients to change their draperies with minimal increase in pricing.

Hardware Scale Rule of Thumb

Ceiling at 8-9 ft, you can use a 1½” to 2” rod diameter. If 10’ up, we recommend 2” to 3” rod diameter. Some vendors are now offering 4” rod.

Step 3 - Measure

Even if your drapery selection is one of the most basic types, correct measurements are vital for a good end-result. I adhere to the age-old carpenter's rule: **Measure Twice – Cut Once**. Once I know the overall width, height and style (see step 2) of the drapery I can apply some specialized drapery factors to determine quantity of fabric to order, taking into consideration the repeat of the particular fabric selected.



Some of the things that need to be factored-in with the measurements are

1. How far outside of window or door will the drapery extend – horizontally and vertically. Making the drapery larger than the window can actually make the window or door appear larger, depending on the drapery style selected
2. We must make sure to take into consideration the style, size and quantity of any pleats in the drapery
3. The repeat of the fabric selected must also be factored in, or the right panel might look different than the left panel, for instance – **a Big No-No**

Step 4 – Order fabric and components

How much of each fabric to order can be tricky. You must take into account things like:

1. Fabric Waste from cutting
 - My Rule of Thumb for beginners is to order twice as much fabric as you think you'll need...because you'll probably need it
 - Each die lot of fabric can be different and if you have to order more fabric later there is a good chance it will come from a different die lot and the color may be slightly (but noticeably) different. Get a CFA (cutting for approval) if you need to order additional fabric at a later date, to ensure dye lots are close enough.
2. Fabric repeat (how often the pattern repeats in the bolt of fabric) Both horizontally and vertically
3. Pleat quantity, style and size (if applicable)
4. Will there be accent pillows made from the same fabric
 - Good use of excess fabric to coordinate upholstery with your drapes
5. Rod style & size Wood, resin, or iron
6. Finial type – make sure it is compatible with the rod selected
7. Rings, grommets or hooks, depending on the design and operation
8. Embellishments – fringe, tassels, banding etc.
9. Drapery Rule 3:6:9 – has the rule been used?
10. Motorization desired? (like over a tub)

FABRIC TIP

Sometimes it is cheaper to buy an entire bolt of fabric than just the amount you need, as the price per yard for a bolt is often considerably less than the per yard price for less than a bolt.

Step 5 – Construct (Sew)



Whether you sew your drapery yourself, or pay a local workroom to do all the time consuming work of cutting the fabric and sewing as designed, this is where the *rubber hits the road*. The best design in the world can be for nothing if the construction process is poor.

If you've got plenty of time and don't mind wasting valuable fabric, by all means I encourage you to sew your own draperies. I learned from years of trial and error, made lots of mistakes and had to rip apart drapes more than once to start over.

If you decide to hire a local workroom, based on my experience, there are MAJOR differences from one workroom to another...**NOT ALL WORKROOMS ARE CREATED EQUAL**. I learned this from many hard and expensive experiences.

Workrooms



A workroom is a sewing business that specializes in sewing drapery, upholstery cushions for things like sofas and chairs, as well as decorative pillows, bedding, table cloths and other similar items.

These workrooms are specially equipped to handle these types of sewing jobs. They have industrial strength sewing machines – machines that can handle not only the heavier fabrics that are sometimes used in drapery – but special machines that can also handle the delicate fabrics, like for shears and lining. Most residential sewing machines are not properly equipped to handle the wide array of fabrics that are used with drapery.

I've used nearly every workroom in the Tucson area and have narrowed it down to just one or two workrooms that really know their stuff. The workrooms we use work only with professional interior designers.

Sewing Tips

1. Have a large worktable adjacent to your sewing and/or serging machines so you can lay out the drapery fabric properly. Without an adequate work surface, your drapery could end up looking bad – that's what happened to me when I started sewing drapes.
2. I recommend a sewing machine for color fabrics and whites, in order that no bobbin dust transfers under the stitching and you can't get it out

TIP: 7 Keys to Selecting a Quality Work Room

Here are some things to investigate before you hire a workroom to sew your drapery:

1. How long have they been in business?
2. What is their reputation in the industry?
3. Where will your One-Time job be in priority vs. their regular high-volume design clients?
4. Can they provide examples and references of work they've done for other homeowners?
5. Can they provide fabrics and trims not available in local stores to a homeowners ?
6. How much deposit is required to begin?
7. What options do I have, if I don't like the final product?

Step 6 – Install

You can design and construct the most beautiful drapery possible, but if your drapery is not properly installed, it can look cheap and shoddy.

Drapery installation is not as easy as you might think. Some of the factors that must be taken into consideration regarding installation include:

1. Is there adequate structure in the wall where you want TO mount your drapery?
 - Some drapery fabrics and designs can be very heavy
 - Be sure the support brackets are anchored into the wall studs, not just the drywall
2. Are there adequate places to secure support brackets?
3. Have you taken into consideration the door handle depths?
4. Have you used the 3:6:9 rule properly?
5. Do you have controls for moving the drapery in correct location?
6. Do you need motorization, either hardwired or battery operated?
7. How far off the floor is proper distance in order to shut properly?

PRO TIP

I recommend putting the rod in the wooden header above the window or door. This provides a secure location for the rod. Allowing the strength of the wood to hold the screws in correctly, and keep the rod from pulling out of the drywall later. Consider a center support on any rod over 4 feet.

PRO TIP

Be sure to fill the drywall holes from the old drapery, and touch-up the paint BEFORE starting the installation of the new draper.

Step 7 – Deluxe

Your draperies could very well be wrinkled or otherwise unfinished depending on how they were packaged or stored after construction. Store bought drapery is notorious for having severe wrinkling and packaging marks since they are often shipped across country or even across the oceans from cheap third-world fabrication sites.

A quality job should include a final deluxe process that eliminates any tale-tell signs of storage or shipment, and ensures your drapes hang and appear as designed. There is no reason you should ‘live with’ wrinkles or fold marks until the fabric ‘hangs out’ – that is not a quality drapery job.

Our proven drapery process includes a final DELUXE process, should your drapery job require it, which is unusual for our drapery jobs. We have developed – in conjunction with our local experienced professional workroom – handling methods that prevent wrinkling and fold marks.

On the rare occasion that our drapery does need a little touch-up, we use a professional steamer to smooth out any wrinkles.



Step 7a – Sit Back & Enjoy



Now that you have completed your drapery project you can just sit back, relax and enjoy the new look those drapes bring to your room or home. The compliments will be flowing freely when your friends and relatives see your new drapes, and how they make your home look so much better.

Betty Jones

YOUR OTHER OPTION...If you're open to it

Your other option to create beautiful drapery for your home – and for **probably less than you could on your own** – is to hire us to help you. Hopefully you could tell from this guide, personalized drapery is not only one of our specialties – **it is a major passion of ours.**

If you would like to schedule a **NO-OBLIGATION Design Assessment**, please call us to make an appointment...

520-825-8256

We welcome you to stop by our showroom during normal business hours.

If you want to speak with one of our professional interior designers, it is best to call to make an appointment, as our designers are often all out seeing clients.



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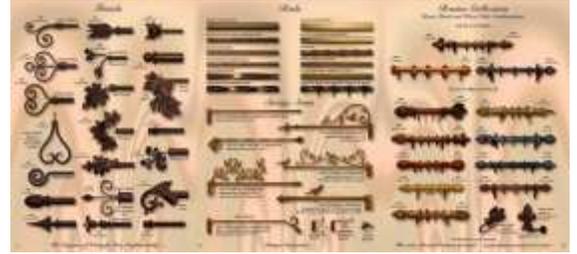
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APPENDIX A

Drapery Hardware

When adding new drapes to your home, you'll want to be sure and take some time to consider what type of hardware will be used to display them.



Thanks to a wide range of available options, you can choose anywhere from simple, functional items to more elaborate, detailed pieces designed to complement and enhance your window treatments. You'll find rods, finials, brackets, rings and more in a number of different styles, ranging from contemporary to traditional.

Drapery hardware can be constructed from a diverse range of materials, including wood, resins, glass and metal, and are available in a variety of colors. As you shop for the right drapery hardware for your installation, consider the following questions and find your ideal balance between functionality and flair:

- Which hardware items are primarily functional?
- Which items are used for decorative purposes?
- What type of rod is best suited to your installation?
- What materials can different types of hardware be made from?
- Are there any special features that are important to you?

Function, Style and Accessories

The vast array of available drapery hardware can be a little overwhelming, so it's important to narrow your search. Determine beforehand what kind of theme or overall look you're trying to achieve. Some drapery hardware is well suited for contemporary designs while other types will be more at home amongst traditional or rustic décor.

Hardware can be hidden from view to provide a greater focus on drapery or placed ostentatiously out in the open to serve as a counterpoint. Curtain rods are the single largest piece of hardware and the rod you choose will help determine subsequent purchases of finials, rackets, rings, tiebacks, wands and more.

Functional vs. Decorative: While some drapery components provide an equal mix of practicality and style, there are several pieces of hardware that primarily exhibit one quality or the other.

Functional hardware is comprised of necessary, no-frills pieces needed for hanging and operating window treatments.

Decorative pieces, on the other hand, are designed to be seen and appreciated. They can be used as subtle accents or as a dominate element in the rooms overall décor.

Regardless of whether they are solely functional or serve a decorative purpose as well, all window treatments will require a rod, brackets and some sort of end caps or finials. If you have a grommeted style drape you will not need rings in your hardware purchase.

- Functional hardware is often concealed by fabrics and fixtures
- Functional pieces include white metal curtain rods, curtain hooks, traverse rods and more
- Decorative pieces dress up and add style to basic window treatment elements
- Decorative hardware examples include , sconces, tiebacks, finials, rings, wands and more

Rods: Rods, also called poles, are the largest piece of hardware you'll need to install and the central piece around which other hardware components are selected.



They serve as the main support for your window treatment.

Drapery may be attached to rings or sliders that allow them to move back and forth along the rod or shirred in place on windows where you don't want the drapery to open.

There are many different styles available, ranging from slender concealed rods to thicker, more prominent decorative rods. Thicker rods tend to create more of a visual effect.

If you have a tall wall and a comparatively short window, hang the rod closer to the ceiling to create the illusion of taller windows. Rods that are wider than windows can be

used in a similar manner to expand the appearance of width.

Consult the chart below to learn more about some of the more commonly used rods.

[Drapery Rod Summary](#)

Rod Type	Description	Points to Consider
Decorative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available in an array of designs and diameters • Highly visible, affects the appearance of a window treatment and room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be made from brass, wrought iron, verdigris, brushed nickel, pewter, wood and more • May be adjustable or fixed in length • May be functional or stationary rods • Wood may be plain or fluted and stained, painted or unfinished
Concealed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often comes in the form of an adjustable, metal lock-seam rod • Designed to be covered by the drapery or drapes and remain unseen • Other types include sash, tension and wide-pocket rods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often white in color, with some metallic finishes available • Double and triple rods can be used for layered treatments • Sash rods are used with sashes or hourglass drapery on French doors or casement windows • Tension rods use a spring mechanism to keep the ends in place and are best for use with lighter drapes and drapery • Wide-pocket rods are ideal for creating a shirred valance
Traverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used with draperies that are opened and closed with a wand or cord • Drapery hooks are inserted into sliding holders, or carriers • Rod is visible when drapes are open unless a top treatment is installed • Two-way rods are the most commonly used type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way traverse rods allow drapes to move away from the middle to each end • One-way rods allow panels to move in only one direction • One-way rods are often used on sliding patio doors or in corners • Decorative traverse rods are used with rings and can be seen even when drapes are closed
Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally feature a narrow diameter and are round or fluted with subtle finials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often brass, but also available in a range of colored finishes • May or may not have rings • Ideal for use with tie-tab or hand-drawn drapery

Brackets and rings: Once you've selected your drapery and your rod, it's time to fill out the rest of the picture with brackets and rings.



Brackets are used to support the rod. Some utilitarian brackets are simple pieces designed solely to secure the rod to the wall while other, more elaborate brackets feature ornate designs. Your drapery style may require a bracket that holds 1 to 3 rods at a time, in order to layer a drape, sheer and valance also.

Finials and end caps offer a tremendous array of styles for maximum decorative versatility. Finials are designed to provide an elegant flourish for all types of treatments. They may be made from various metals, wood, ceramic, glass, molded resin, rattan and more.



Sconces are decorative brackets through which fabric may be threaded. Choose finials and brackets made from different materials as the curtain rod to create visual contrast.

- Finials and end caps are usually the most visible type of drapery hardware
- End caps offer a simple look and don't call attention to themselves
- Finial shapes include spears, arrows, balls, leaves, stars, flowers, scrolls and more
- Brackets made from the same materials as finials complement each other
- Sconce designs include animals, grape clusters, flowers, leaves and more

Accessories: Many hardware accessories are designed to provide stylish accents that complete the look of your window treatments.



Tiebacks are used to hold draperies off to the sides of a window and can be simple fabric strips or elaborate bows.

Holdbacks offer the same functionality as tiebacks, but consist of rigid, decorative materials that are secured to a wall and provide a holder for keeping drapes and drapery in an open position.

Rings, clips, hooks and pulls connect drapes and drapery to the rod and may be either hidden or visible. Styles range from simple, unadorned wrought iron rings to clips with decorative leaves, stars and more.



Drapery jewelry can take a number of different forms, such as covered buttons.

- Holdbacks come in a wide range of styles that can be matched to your environment
- Decorative cords and tassels are often used to spruce up standard pull cords
- Hidden rings are simple, functional elements that do not serve a decorative purpose

Hinged Rods: For a completely different look, install a hinged rod. These units allow you to swing drapery back and forth, covering the window when you want it covered and keeping the curtain in another spot when you don't. These provide a great option to add drapery panels over shutters. Make sure you install it in an area where the curtain provides some decorative value when not covering the window.

Pole Sets: For one-stop shopping, look for a pole set. These kits contain all the pieces needed for your assembly, including an adjustable-length pole, finials and decorative brackets. Ensure that the pole set package has enough rings. You may need to purchase additional rings separately, depending on your design.



Motorized Rods: If you're looking for a truly modern window treatment, install a motorized rod, which will allow you to open and close the drapery at the flip of a switch or the touch of a button.



Motorized control enables you to open and close your drapery just like changing the channel on your TV with your remote. The ultimate in drapery control.