

Description of the Audience for This Assignment

These instructions are geared toward an average person who has basic sewing skills and an interest in home decorating. By basic sewing skills, I mean that readers should already know how to use a sewing machine as well as basic sewing items like pins, needles, and scissors. They need not be an expert decorator or seamstress, however. They should also be able to use the other items listed in the "Equipment and Supplies" section of the instructions.

"How To Make and Install A Simple Window Curtain" could be sold or given away at fabric and craft stores, as an incentive to sell window treatment supplies and fabric.

How to Make and Install a Simple Window Curtain

If you have basic sewing knowledge and access to a sewing machine, you can make a simple curtain in a short amount of time. Curtains make a big difference in the "look" of a room, adding color and style to your decor. Once the curtain is made, it's easy to hang it just where you want it. With these simple step-by-step instructions, you can: (1) measure your window and purchase the appropriate type and amount of fabric; (2) sew a simple curtain; and (3) install the curtain on your window.

Equipment and Supplies

As in any project, it helps to know what equipment and supplies you are going to need before you get started. To make the curtain, you will need the following some equipment and supplies.

First, you'll need the following tools:

- tape measure
- paper and pencil
- calculator
- work table
- iron and ironing board

Also, you'll need these sewing items:

- sewing machine in good working order
- scissors
- pins
- material
- thread
- fabric marker

To install a curtain inside the window frame, all you will need is a spring-tension curtain rod. To hang the curtain on the wall outside of the window frame, you will need these items:

- tape measure
- pencil
- cafe-style curtain rod and its brackets
- screw driver
- screws or molly bolts
- drill
- level

Preparing to Sew the Curtain

You're probably ready to start sewing right away, but there are some preliminary things you need to do first.

Note: Since the size of the window determines the amount of material you will need, measure the window before you buy the material.

Before you can sit down at your sewing machine and begin to sew, you must:

1. Decide what type of curtain rod you want to use.
2. Measure the window.
3. Purchase the curtain fabric and rod.
4. Cut the curtain piece out of the fabric.

Deciding what type of curtain rod to use. A simple curtain can be hung with a cafe-style curtain rod or a spring-tension rod. Mounting a spring-tension rod does not require any hardware and installs the curtain inside the window frame. A cafe-style curtain rod must be hung with brackets that are affixed to the wall-side of the window frame and hangs the curtain outside of the window frame, against the wall. So, before you go any further, decide where on the window you want the curtain to hang and what kind of curtain rod you'll need to do that.

Measuring the window. The measurements you take here will determine the success or failure of your curtain making project. Remember the old saying: measure twice, cut once! Refer to the diagram below as you measure your window in the following manner:

1. Get your pencil, paper, and measuring tape.
2. Decide how long or short you want the curtain to be.
3. Measure the width of the window. For a curtain that will fit inside the window frame, measure from the inside of one corner to the inside of the other corner. For a curtain that fits outside the window frame, measure between the points outside the window frame where you want the curtain.
4. Write down your measurement in inches.
5. Measure the desired length of your curtain against the window.
6. Write down your measurement in inches.

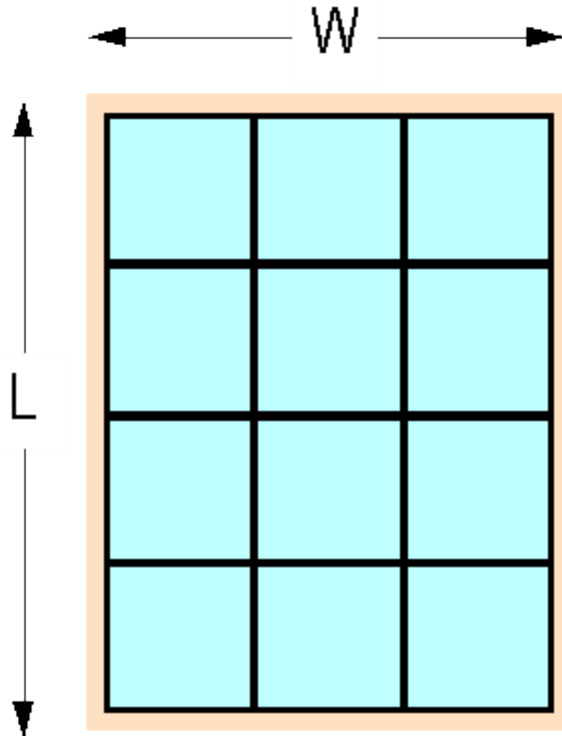


Figure 1. Measuring the window

Purchasing the fabric and curtain rod. Now it's time to go to the fabric store and purchase your curtain rod and material. Since you will probably have your curtain for a long time, make sure you purchase a color and design pattern of material that you really like.

Notes:

1. Some types of fabrics do not make good curtains. I recommend that you purchase drapery fabric for your curtain. Although it costs a little more than regular fabric, the investment in a material that will hang correctly and look good is well worth the extra expense. Drapery fabric also comes in widths wide enough to allow for making curtains out of one piece of fabric, without having to seam the curtain.
2. Consider purchasing a little more material than you will actually need. This gives you some leeway in working with the material, in case you make a mistake in cutting out the curtain or want extra material to make matching accessories.

To determine how much material you need:

1. Get your pencil, paper, and calculator.
2. Multiply the width of the window (w) times 3 ($w \times 3$). Write down your measurement.
3. Add 8 inches to the length (L) of the finished curtain to allow enough material to make the casing and hem ($L+8$). Write down your measurement.

4. Convert your measurements to yards by dividing each by 36 inches per yard. For example: $(L+8)/36$ = the length of the curtain in yards (L'), and $(W \times 3)/36$ the width of the of curtain in yards (W'). Write down your measurements.
5. Go to the fabric store and purchase at least W' yards of material, making sure the material is at least L' yards wide.
6. Purchase a cafe-style curtain rod for a outer window frame curtain, or a spring-tension rod for an inner window frame curtain, making sure the rod is longer than the width of your window (W).

Cutting out the curtain pieces. Most likely, the material you purchased is larger than the piece you need to make the curtain. Although you can purchase a curtain pattern, a simple design such as the one these instructions describe doesn't require a pattern. Again, let me remind you to measure twice, cut once! Follow these steps to cut out your curtain:

1. Lay the material out on your work table, wrong side up, making sure to smooth out all of the wrinkles.
2. Measure the width of the curtain with your tape measure (W'), marking the edge of that width with pins or a fabric marker.
3. Measure the length of the curtain piece (L'), also marking the edge with pins or a marker.
4. Check your measurements.
5. Cut out the curtain piece along the pins and/or markings.

Sewing the Curtain

After all that preparation, it's finally time to start sewing. Remember that the wrong side of a fabric is that side which you don't want to show. The fabric design and pattern are not as attractive on the wrong side, as well. There are three steps involved in sewing your curtain: (1) setting up your equipment, (2) making the curtain casing, and (3) hemming the curtain.

Setting up your equipment. It's important to have everything ready to go before you start to sew. To get ready, do the following:

- Choose a time to sew when you can work without interruptions.
- Set up your iron and ironing board, setting the iron at the proper setting for your curtain fabric.
- Set up your sewing machine on your work table and thread it with your chosen thread.

Warning: Be careful not to burn your fingers with the hot iron while ironing the fabric.

Sewing the casing. The casing will form the part of the curtain that fits over the rod. To make the casing:

1. Turn down the top edge of the fabric 1 inch along its entire length, wrong side to wrong side, pressing the fabric with the iron as you go, until the fabric stays down by itself.

2. Turn down the same edge another 2 inches, with the right side of the previous turned-down edge against the wrong side of the fabric, again pressing the fabric with the iron as you go, until the fabric stays folded by itself.
3. Pin along lower folded edge.
4. Sew along pinned edge.

Hemming the sides and bottom of the curtain. If you want your curtain to have a finished, professional look, you must hem the sides and bottom. Follow these steps to hem the sides of the curtain:

1. Fold the edges of the fabric in 1 inch along each side, wrong side to wrong side, pressing the fabric with the iron as you go, until the fabric stays down by itself.
2. Turn each side edge in another 2 inches, with the right side of the previous turned-in edge against the wrong side of the fabric, again pressing the fabric with the iron as you go, until the fabric stays folded by itself.
3. Pin along folded edges.
4. Sew along pinned edges

Now, follow these steps to hem the bottom of the curtain:

1. Fold the bottom edge of the fabric up 1 inch, wrong side to wrong side, pressing the fabric with the iron as you go, until the fabric stays down by itself.
2. Turn the bottom edge up another 4 inches, with the right side of the previous turned-in edge against the wrong side of the fabric, again pressing the fabric with the iron as you go, until the fabric stays folded by itself.
3. Pin along folded edges.
4. Sew along pinned edges

Take a look at your beautiful new curtain. The only thing left to do now is to hang it up.

Installing the Curtain Rod and Hanging the Curtain

The way you install the curtain rod will greatly affect the look of your new curtain. After all the effort you put into making the curtain, you don't want it to hang crooked or fall down.

Note: If you're mounting the curtain rod outside the window frame on a part of the wall that is not backed by a wooden stud, I strongly recommend that you use molly bolts instead of screws to affix the brackets. This will prevent the curtain rod brackets from pulling out of the wall.

Using molly bolts. A molly bolt is a type of fastener used to hang an object on wallboard (sheetrock) that has open space behind it. A molly bolt consists of 3 pieces: a screw, a washer, and a metal or plastic sleeve that fits over the screw. The sleeve is open at both ends, slightly larger than the screw, and has a flat, nail-like head. The middle part of the sleeve is not solid, but made of 4 wavy metal strips that are continuous with the solid ends of the sleeve. The inside of the sleeve is threaded to fit the screw, and the washer fits between the screwhead and the metal sleeve. The sleeve is inserted into a properly-sized hole in the wall. As the screw is screwed into

the sleeve, the metal strips of the sleeve expand behind the wallboard, shortening and thickening the sleeve to provide a large area of contact between the sleeve and wall holding the screw firmly in place.

Note: Make sure you really want that molly bolt where you're putting it, because once it's in, the sleeve can't be removed without making a large hole in the wall.

To use a molly bolt:

1. Drill a hole that is slightly smaller than the metal sleeve at the desired location.
2. Insert the sleeve into the hole.
3. Place the curtain rod bracket over the hole.
4. Put the washer on the screw and screw the screw into the metal sleeve.

Installing the curtain rod. Installing a curtain rod need not be difficult or time consuming. If you choose to use a spring-tension rod, all you have to do is push the ends of the rod together until the rod is short enough to fit inside the window frame, put the rod inside the frame, then let the rod expand until it fits snugly against each side of the window. To install a cafe-style curtain rod, gather these tools:

measuring tape
curtain rod and curtain rod brackets
screw driver
level
drill
pencil
screws or molly bolts.

Now you're ready to put up the curtain rod by following these steps:

1. Hold one of the brackets against the wall where you want the edge of the curtain, and mark the holes in the bracket on the wall with a pencil.
2. Pre-drill the marked holes.
3. Insert molly bolt sleeves if you are using these instead of plain screws.
4. Place the bracket against the wall and insert the screws into the holes or molly bolt sleeves.
5. Use the screwdriver to screw the screws into the wall .
6. Measure the distance of the bracket from the edge of the frame, and then down.
7. Repeat steps 1-5, making sure to place the second bracket the same distance from the edge of the window as the first bracket.
8. Hang the rod on the brackets, using the level to test for crookedness.
9. Hang the curtain if the rod is level, or remove the second bracket and repeat step 7 if the rod is too crooked.

Hanging the curtain. Now you're ready for the last and easiest step of all, hanging your beautiful new curtain. Just follow these steps:

1. Insert the curtain rod into the casing at the top of the curtain.
2. Gather the much-wider curtain along the rod until the rod-ends are visible at either end of the curtain.
3. Hang the curtain and rod up on the window.
4. Arrange your curtain along the length of the rod so that it gathers evenly.

Now that you've finished hanging your curtain, take a moment to look around the room. You'll notice that it looks completely different. Window curtains pull the decor of a room together, softening the edges of the window and making the room a more pleasant place to be. Give yourself a big pat on the back for taking the time to make your curtain, then relax with a cup of tea while you plan your next home decorating project!