

100 Calorie Decorating

No-sew projects: How to make curtains for any size window

When it comes to home decorating, choosing a window treatment that expresses your decorating taste makes a strong statement in any room. At one time, people tended to purchase pre-made curtains and draperies or have them custom made by a decorator. These days, a dash of creativity and a few items already in the home can allow you to create window treatments for any size window, and for little or no money.

One of the most inexpensive ways to create your own no-sew window treatment is by using bed sheets. The use of flat finished sheets has several advantages. Bed sheets are available in several widths, allowing you to determine how which size sheets to use based on the dimensions of your window. They also come in a variety of colorfast solids and patterns. Because you can purchase pillowcases to match, it is easy to create throw pillows that match your window treatment. A third advantage is that finished sheets come with hems already in place, so there is no need to sew the bottoms or the tops. Most sheets have ample room on the top to slide through a curtain rod.

Two or more bed sheets may be used to create an interesting treatment for your window, simply by threading the rod through the top hem of the sheets. The panels can hang straight down, puddling on the floor if the sheets are slightly longer than the vertical dimensions. However, if puddling is not the look you want, consider making bishop's sleeves by using an old napkin ring, or even a shower curtain ring. Simply gather the bottom of the panel together and thread it through the ring. Position the ring about three quarters of the length of the panel. Then use a nail or hook at the base of the window casing and hang the ring on it, and fluff out the material. If the window you are covering goes all the way to the baseboard, then position the nail or hook a couple of feet above the baseboard.

By using a double curtain rod and several sheets, an elegant and romantic gathered look can be achieved. Use a sufficient number of sheets on each rod to go from one side to the other, allowing plenty of material to gather tightly. About three quarters of the way down each gathering of material, pull it to the opposite side and use a tassel to hold it in place. The result is a fully gathered double panel look, given a touch of elegance by the tassels.

Lengths of material can also make for a handsome window treatment. Your local fabric shop or department store will have bolts of material that will come in a number of textures, colors, and patterns. To determine the overall length of the piece of cloth you need, measure from the top of the window casing to whatever length you want the curtain to hang. By doubling that measurement, you will account for both sides of the window. Next, measure the width of the window and add another half of that amount. Total the two measurements. Before beginning to hang the material, use basting tape to hem the edges.

Screw in oversized hooks at either side of the top of the window casing. Fold the material into lengthwise pleats, taking care to fold them wide enough to comfortably lie in the crook of the hooks. Next, place the fabric first in one hook, then the other. Carefully space the material so that the desired length down each side of the window is achieved. The extra material between the two hooks will provide a nice swag across the window. The swag can be left to gracefully angle across the top and bottom of the area. For a different effect, use a few tacks on the underside of the top pleat to affix the material parallel with the top bar of the window casing. The addition of tassels or silk flowers to the hooks will add a finishing touch.

Rectangular finished tablecloths can also be used to create a striking window treatment. By splitting one tablecloth lengthwise, two panels can be created to frame the sides of the window casing. Use basting tape to finish the cut sides. A second cloth can be doubled and placed over the curtain rod to create a valance across the top. Secure on the underside with tacks for a tighter look. To provide visual interest, consider using a solid tablecloth for the panels and a patterned one for the valance.

Dressing a window can be done using with relatively little expense, and often using items that are already in the home. Look around your house or apartment. You may already have everything you need to make your windows attractive and inviting.