



Selecting and Budgeting for Fabric and Hardware

Be prepared to give to the curtain maker of your choice a budget figure to help you select your window treatments. Without this figure, the curtain maker may propose window treatments that you may not be able to afford. This article will help you create a realistic budget. After reading it:

1. Read "Measuring for Drapes" or "Measuring for Roman Shades."
2. Read "Estimating Yardage."
3. Read "My Fees."
4. Read "Choosing a Style."
5. Do your budget.
6. Call your curtain maker.

Fabric

Custom-window treatments are a major investment; i.e., they are costly. When choosing fabrics for your window treatments, you should consider a few factors:

- ✚ **Fullness:** Allocate about 65 percent of your budget to purchase fabric. If your budget does not allow you to purchase the yardage required to achieve the **fullness** of a particular style or design, it might be best to purchase ready-made drapes or curtains. You may have to purchase several panels to make up for the lack of fullness and/or have them altered. In general, each curtain will need a minimum of two times the width of the window, a maximum of three; with the exception of pencil-pleated curtains which require a fullness of four. The lighter the fabric (such as sheer fabric), the more you will need. "Far too many people make the mistake of skimping on fabric, so the curtains end up looking like fly screens. Curtains that look skimpy even if made from expensive fabric will never look as good and generous as curtains made from cheap fabric." (*The New Curtain Book, Master Classes with Today's Designers*, Stephanie Hoppen, p. 22.)
- ✚ **Style and Fabric Pattern:** Some styles require light fabric that can fly; other styles demand fabric that hangs heavy. Some treatments require plain fabric or fabric with small-scale prints only. Other styles may be suitable for large-scale prints. The mood, degree of formality, and complexity of the design you want to achieve will dictate your fabric pattern. "For complex design, the consensus of opinion is to use either plain fabrics or tiny patterns and rely on trims, borders, and contrasting linings to emphasize the design. Conversely, if you have chosen an

elaborate fabric, such as chintz or toile de Jouy (a cotton or linen fabric printed with scenes of French pastoral life), opt for a simple design. (Stephanie Hoppen, p. 22)

- ✚ **Style and Fabric Texture:** According to Stephanie Hoppen, professional curtain makers favor plain, natural fabrics, because they retain their freshness and coordinate with any kind of look. The most quoted favorite fabric was linen, followed by silk taffeta, textured silk, ticking, and cotton damask. However there is a wide range of fabric on the market. These include: velvets and tapestry, voile, sateen, suede, lace, chintz, batik, muslim, brocade, ticking, madras cotton, and a whole lot more, including human-made fibers.
- ✚ **Linings and layers.** Today's trend is toward far greater quantities of fabric in the width, giving plenty of generosity of fullness and to work with several layers, usually two but often three. All the layers may work independently on different tracks, so you can vary the fabrics that you see by drawing one or other across the window.

Cost of Fabric

You may choose from Annick's Unique Creations' variety of sample to order your fabric. The cost of fabric and lining ranges from \$7.50 to \$54 per yard, depending upon the width of the fabric and the collection chosen. Fabric widths vary from 54 to 120 inches. The wider the fabric, the less fabric you will need, and the less money you will spend. You should budget for your window treatment using an average cost of \$15 per yard and a fabric width of 54 inches.

Hardware

Allocate 5 to 10 percent of your budget to purchase hardware. Selecting the appropriate hardware is another factor in obtaining the desired design. Basic hardware includes:

- ✚ **Poles, finials, and rings.** These are in greater demand now because of the decline in the popularity of the valance. These are appropriate for rod-pocket curtains, grommet curtains, and other pleated-heading curtains. They are also appropriate if the curtains are to be drawn back. Poles are unsuitable for shades (even though the rule is broken sometimes by creative shade makers), cornices, and valances, although you can have the best of both worlds with an attached valance. Finials and rings provide additional decoration. Poles exist in various finishes and material.



- ✚ **Flat, Traverse, Sash Rods.** **Flat rods** may be plastic or aluminum. They are designed for sheers and for lightweight curtains and valences. **Traverse rods** are suitable for most curtains and drapes. They are designed for two curtains to be drawn back to either side, but it is possible to buy one-way traverse rod to move only one panel in one direction. Highly decorative traverse rods are also available. **Sash rods** are



round with small brackets that are either separate or built into the ends. They are useful for sheer curtains. Always choose a rod that will support the weight of the curtains and drapes, and make sure that it is securely mounted. Specialty flexible rods can be purchased for bay and bow windows.

- ✦ **Hold backs.** Use them to hold back your curtains against the wall. They have a highly decorative effect.



- ✦ **Sconces.** Use sconces in place of curtain rod brackets to add a decorative flair to your window treatments.



- ✦ **Swing arm (crane) curtain rods.** They are great for French doors, hallways, and any window where you want the curtain rod to swing back of the way.



- ✦ **Spring tension rods.** Use them for light curtains.

