

How to Make Roman Shades -

Roman shades are a simple and elegant window treatment to block the sun or prying neighbors. Nicer than plain plastic shades, but less expensive than ornate window shades, Roman shades provide the perfect start to a beginning home decorator.

Roman shades can be purchased from home improvement or department stores, or they can be custom made by an interior designer. The cheapest way to decorate your home with Roman shades is to make them yourself. Get ready to refresh your math skills!

To make Roman shades, first measure the window you'd like to put them in. Measure the height and width of the window from inside its frame. Or, if you want the shade to cover more than the window, measure the height and width of the surface the shade will cover. Your shade will probably need to be between 45 and 54 inches wide.

Before you shop for your fabric, you'll need to calculate the number of dowels and the amount of fabric you'll need. To figure out how many dowels you will need, divide the window height by six to nine inches, which will be the space between each dowel fold. You'll need to find a number that goes evenly into your window height. For example, if your window height is 64 inches, divide by six. You'll then need eight dowels for eight pleats. Each dowel needs 1.5 inches, so multiplied by eight, you'll need an extra 12 inches of fabric. You'll also need an extra six inches of fabric to mount the shade, meaning you'll need 18 extra inches for this example. Add this to your window height to get your final height. Add two inches of fabric to your window width. Now you have the size of the fabric you need. Whew!

Next, the fun part: selecting the fabric of your shade. Shades without busy patterns are the easiest to work with because you won't need to make sure the pattern blends seamlessly with each fold. If your window gets southern light, consider picking a near-shear fabric. This will produce a warm, soothing light in your room. Take a picture of your room, fabric swatches of your furniture, and a paint sample of your room when you shop. You don't want to finish making your Roman shade to discover it clashes with the rest of your room!

While you are out buying your fabric, buy the rest of your supplies:

Drapery-lining fabric. You'll need an extra 0.25 inches to cover the mounting board.

Blind cord

Window cleat

Quarter-inch diameter window dowels, 0.25 inches smaller than the window width

A wooden mounting board, 0.25 inches smaller than the window width that's 1x2 inches.

Half-inch diameter shade rings

Screw eyes

Staple gun

Chalk or air-soluble marker

Yardstick

The easiest way to make a shade uses lots of pictures and few words. Find instructions at a home improvement store or for free online to make your own Roman shade. Find patterns that make the type of Roman shade you want, whether it is flat, pleated, or with a sunburst. You'll probably need a sewing machine to make the Roman shade quickly, especially to attach the lining to the fabric. With patience you can make your own Roman shade.

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