

How To Discover the Right Look for Your Windows

By Joe Talent

Your home may include many different types of windows offering many different types of opportunities to allow the light and views you desire at different times of the day. Following are some ideas to help control the light and give your windows a warm and comfortable look.

French Doors - Sheers on doors are popular, but many people think they're too frilly, old-fashioned, do not want to always block their view, or are afraid they'll get the fabric soiled from dirty hands.

The key is to think of the door as a window, which happens to be in a door. It is usually best to use the same products as those already on windows in that room, for consistency. A blind or shade will work just fine, and can be easily fastened at the bottom of the door. It is common to use hold down brackets at the bottom so your product won't flop around as the door opens and closes. The product can be easily removed from the bracket whenever you want to raise it.

Windows with a nice view - When you have a window with the view of a golf course, pool, mountains, etc., you should consider a product such as a shade, that pulls up as tightly as possible. Honeycomb shades are perfect.

Arches - The most popular type of window treatment is a honeycomb shade, which fans into a semi-circle. While horizontal blinds can be made to fit arches, they are generally cost prohibitive.

Bay Window - Any product will work in a bay, but if there's no sheetrock between the windows be aware of possible gaps where the products "meet".

Skylights - Consider using a highly efficient insulating honeycomb shade, which lets light in, but blocks heat and cold. The shades can move, with the help of an optional collapsible wand. Special shades can be ordered with side rails for support. Be sure to specify that your shade is for a skylight.

Second story windows - If you want a shade, consider the Top-Down/Bottom-Up feature, which allows you to cover the bottom half of your window and not block your view. For instance, if your

child is studying, he or she might not want to close off the outside view, but also feel more comfortable blocking people from seeing into the room.

Sliding Doors - Verticals are very popular for sliding doors, despite their diminishing popularity in general. They can be installed within the frame or over the glass, but don't necessarily choose a vertical if the other room products are something other than verticals. Consistency is important, too. Another possibility is a shade that is essentially sideways and runs along a track by hand. You can also use horizontal blinds, but should consider putting two-on-one head rail to make it easier to get out (you can raise one product and leave the other down).

Harsh sun - Honeycomb shades provide superior insulation. The more honeycomb cells and the larger the cell size the better the insulation. When closing blinds you'll maximize its insulation if you close the blinds with the leading edge up.

Very large windows - Whenever a window is extremely large, its weight makes it difficult to raise and puts unnecessary tension on the strings (which may cause the strings to break). You may need to consider a special control option. If the shade is very large, everyone will benefit from this option. The manufacturers may have size guidelines that tell you whether the controls are suggested. Small children and elderly people sometimes need this option even on smaller shades.

For blinds, consider dividing them up into multiple blinds on a single head rail or order multiple blinds and install them side-by-side. Usually there are multiple windows within a single opening so you should usually divide up the blinds to line up with the windows. You should order one valance to span all the head rails to make it appear to be one single product.

Hard to reach windows - Consider specifying extra long cords so you can open or close a product. Some honeycomb shades can be made with a remote control.

Front of house windows - It is common to want the front of your home to be as uniform as possible. Most people just make sure that the front products are generally white. Most honeycomb shades have white backings despite their colored inside-facing fabric. Some aluminum mini blinds can be made as "duo-tones" which are white on the back. If a stained room faces front and you're using stained shutters or wood blinds, then you'll have to decide if it's acceptable visually.

The more symmetrical your home the more likely the products should be similar. People often use one product across the front; however, many also use one for the first floor and another for the second. It's your house, so whatever you feel is appropriate should be fine.

Windows with humidity - All quality products are water resistant. Even good wood blinds are varnished and perform well under humid conditions. If your window gets direct water pressure (it's located in a shower) only a 100% vinyl product will perform well.

Bright outside light - To eliminate glare on a TV or monitor, or to prevent a bright security light from beaming in to your bedroom, use blinds with no route holes.

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