

# Practical Guide to Making Curtains 2!

Cutting out, Sewing seams & hems & Making straight or shaped valances

## Making up:

### Cutting out your fabric:

Always lay fabric flat for cutting and use sharp scissors. Measure the first length very carefully and if your material is patterned be careful to match subsequent lengths. Form a straight line across the fabric to the selvedge. Measure each fabric length and mark the cutting point, then check that is correct, always double check measurements before cutting the fabric.

### Making seams:

There are several different types of seams you can use, the right choice takes into account the weight and thickness of the fabric. Always make sure that you allow enough fabric for your seam allowances, especially if the fabric is likely to fray. Selvedges should either be cut off or snipped diagonally to avoid puckering of the seams.

**Flat fell seam** - If the curtains are not going to be lined then Flat fell seams should be used. Place the right sides of the fabric together and stitch along the seamline. Trim one edge to within 3mm of the sewing line, and press raw edges together so that the wider edge lies on top. Turn this edge under the narrower and stitch close to the folded edge - then iron. See figure 1.

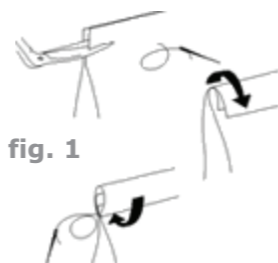


fig. 1

**French seam** - Used when joining widths of net. Place the wrong sides of fabric together with the edges even. Stitch along seam line then trim to within 3mm of the sewing line. Press seam open and turn fabric so that the right sides are together enclosing the raw edges. Machine along seam line. See figure 2.



fig. 2

## Helpful Tips:

**Reducing Bulk** - Before turning out a seamed corner, trim away the seam allowances, so that they are less bulky and sit flat. Be careful not to cut too close to the stitched line, otherwise frayed edges will pop out on the right side. If the seam is still bulky because the fabric is too thick, snip away more from the seam allowance on each side of the corner in a diagonal line. Use a pointed object such as a pair of scissors to carefully push out the corner on the right side. Be careful not to push through the seam.

## Hemming your curtains:

Once you have sewn all the widths together it's time to hem your curtains. In order to create a flat hem, you must make sure that the fabric lengths are cut straight. As long as you have a straight edge, it is simple to fold over the required amount and press it in place with a steam iron.

**Side hems** - Firstly sew the side hems. Allow 4cm for each hem. If you don't have a special attachment for your machine for blind stitching then hand sew side hems. Now you are ready to attach the heading of your choice.

**Bottom hems** - If possible allow your curtains to hang for one to two days as some fabrics drop or stretch. Bottom hems should be sewn by hand. If you are using Rufflette curtain weighting tape or Penny weights (see practical guide to making curtains 1) remember to insert along the bottom of the hem and tack at each end to secure.

## Making Valances:

### Straight Valances:

First estimate the amount of fabric required to make your valances. Decide on the depth and add 15-20cm (depending on chosen heading) to allow for hems and heading. Next measure the valance rail, but remember, because the valance returns to the wall on each side the valance rail will be longer than the curtain rail.

Now estimate the total amount of fabric you require as you would with curtains.

#### Making up

1. Sew your fabric widths together using an open seam for lined valances or a flat fell seam for unlined.
2. Hem the sides of the fabric using a 4cm double turning.
3. Attach the heading tape of your choice
4. Turn up a double hem at the base of the valance and hem stitch.
5. Following the instructions for your tape gather the heading and insert curtain hooks. Your valance is now ready to hang.

### Shaped Valances:

When estimating the amount of fabric required for a shaped valance, you should first of all decide on your shape. Then measure the longest drop. This measurement will be used in your calculations. Calculate as with straight valance.

1. Before cutting out your chosen design or shape sew the fabric widths together as with straight valance.
2. Before cutting out it is a good idea to make a paper template first. Remember fullness is dependant upon the heading tape. Allowance for hems and heading should be included in your template.
3. Make the valance following the instructions for a straight valance. If making a frill, the bottom edge of the valance will require snipping to take into account curves in the design shape.

## Contact us:

If you experience any problems while using these instructions or making your curtains do not hesitate to contact our Customer Services Dept. (via any of the methods below) who will be happy to help you out.

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