

1

Buy your curtains. You'll want to decide what style of curtain is right for you, if you have not yet purchased your curtains and curtain rods. There are a number of styles, each giving your room a different flavor and functioning in a slightly different way. Some of your options include:

- Drapes are typically made from heavy material and are pleated, which requires a traverse rod. To hang, you must place drapery pins in the pleat, and then hang them on the rod. A cord allows you to pull the drapes open and closed.
- Panel curtains, eyelet curtains and tab top curtains are meant to hang from a plain round rod. They may have a pocket along the top to push the rod through, or the rod may be threaded through eyelets or tabs. Panel curtains may end at the top or bottom of the windowsill, extend to the floor, or be even longer—a style known as puddling.
- Cafe curtains cover only the bottom half of a window, to let light into the room while affording some privacy. They are popular on kitchen windows and are typically hung on rods installed inside the window frame on tension rods.
- Door panels have pockets on the top and bottom and require 2 curtain rods, which you install on a door or simply attach with magnets. Door panels are often used on french doors and sidelights.

2

Decide where you want the bottom of your curtain to fall. When buying curtains, keep in mind that their length should cover the entire window (unless they are cafe curtains). If you buy tab top curtains, make sure the curtain length doesn't include the length of the tabs.

- Floor length curtains end 1/2 inch (1.25 cm) from the floor unless you live in a humid environment, in which case they should end 1 inch (2.5 cm) from the floor, because they will stretch more on humid days. If you plan to puddle your curtains, you only need to ensure you have plenty of material left over for the puddle.
- Curtains that hang below the sill should extend 4 inches (10 cm) below the sill, long enough to cover the edge of the casing below the window.
- Sill-length curtains should skim the sill.

3

Consider how far you want to be able to draw back the curtains. If you'd like to pull them completely away from the window, buy a longer rod or a rod that has a return (a 90-degree turn on each end that allows you to push the curtain around the turn or rest against the wall). The length of the return should depend on the type and width of the curtain.

4

Choose whether to install the rod on the casing or the wall outside the casing. Installing in the casing will always leave at least part of the window obscured, while installing outside the casing allows you to pull the curtains back completely. Which you choose will partially be determined by the style and look you want, but you may also have to account for the material of the wall or casing. If you have plastic window casing, the curtain rods will need to be installed on the wall. If you have plaster, cob, or stone walls, then the casing may be easier.

- Bear in mind that the curtain will only draw back as far as the brackets holding the curtain rod, whether or not you have a return, and the style of the curtain will determine how much they can be compressed. The amount you can compress a curtain is called the stack back.
- You may want to keep part of the window covered even when the curtains are open, or you may prefer to completely expose the window to let as much light into the room as possible.