

# HOME ECONOMICS GUIDE



Published by the University of Missouri-Columbia  
Extension Division  
College of Home Economics

OCT 10 1979

## Fabrics for the Home

# Constructing Draperies

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This Guide provides detailed instructions for making lined and unlined pleated draperies. Included are suggestions for cutting the fabric and hanging the final product. To determine yardage and take measurements for draperies, see Guide 2812, "Fabrics for the Home: Measuring and Figuring Drapery Yardage."

### Cutting the Fabric

When a fabric has a dominant design, decide where to place it before cutting the first panel. For floor length draperies, it is most visually pleasing to place the whole pattern in the upper portion of the drapery panel; for shorter draperies, it is more pleasing to place the pattern in the lower portion of the panel. This arrangement places the whole pattern in the direct line of vision.

Cut draperies, if possible, on the true lengthwise and crosswise grain of the fabric so that when they are hung they will fall in even, graceful folds. Check to see that fabrics are printed and finished on the straight of the grain. See Illustration 1. Otherwise there must be a compromise on design or grain lines that are not true and the result will be distracting to the eye. Permanent press finishes are applied to many off-grain fabrics. Traditional methods of pulling a thread or stretching the fabric on the diagonal will not change this fabric. See Illustration 2.

When cutting drapery lengths, be sure to start with a true crosswise grain. Most firmly woven plain weave fabrics can be torn. Snip the selvage edge and carefully tear the fabric. Linens, loosely woven, nubby fabrics, some sheers and many other fabrics do not tear satisfactorily. To straighten these, pull a crosswise thread and cut on the pulled line. If a thread cannot be pulled, fold the fabric in quarters lengthwise, lay the lengthwise edge along the length of a square table, lay a ruler across the fabric even with the table, mark and cut off the excess fabric. See Illustration 3.

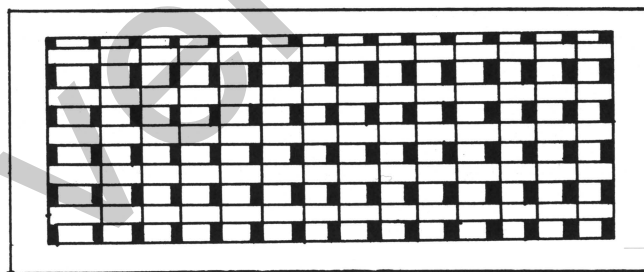


Illustration 1. Warp and filling yarns are on-grain.

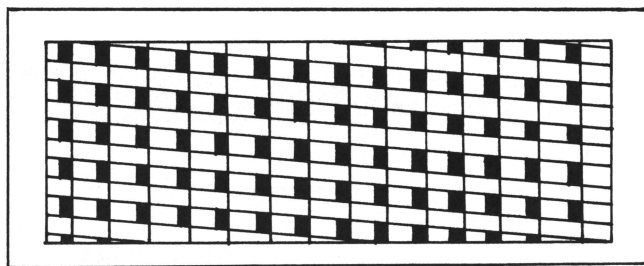


Illustration 2. Warp yarns are on-grain; but filling yarns are off-grain.

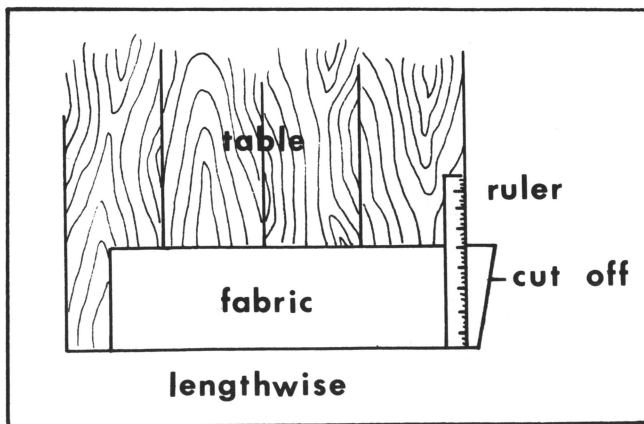


Illustration 3. A method to correct permanently set fabric.

## Construction

To assemble drapery panels, both lined and unlined, match fabric designs, pin and sew drapery lengths together. Start stitching at the top edge to keep that edge even; avoid stretching the fabric. For lined draperies, assemble lining panels in the same manner as drapery panels. Clip selvage edges diagonally at 12 to 18 inch intervals. When using a half-width length of fabric, be sure to have a right and left panel with the half width at the sides of the window. See Illustration 4.

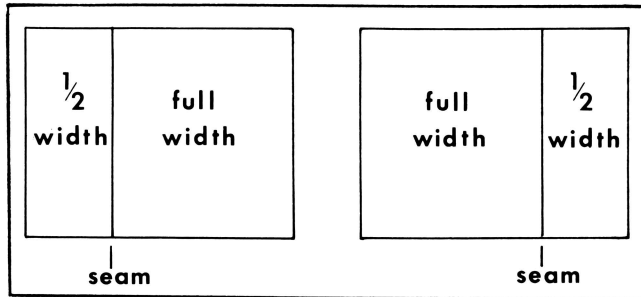


Illustration 4.

Accuracy in measuring and following directions saves time and effort. At the top of the drapery panel, turn down a 1 inch fold toward the wrong side of the fabric and press with a steam iron. Use this pressed line as a stitching guide. Press 1½ inch or 2 inch side hems (a 2 inch side hem is best if fabric is sufficient) on lengthwise edge of panels. See Illustration 5.

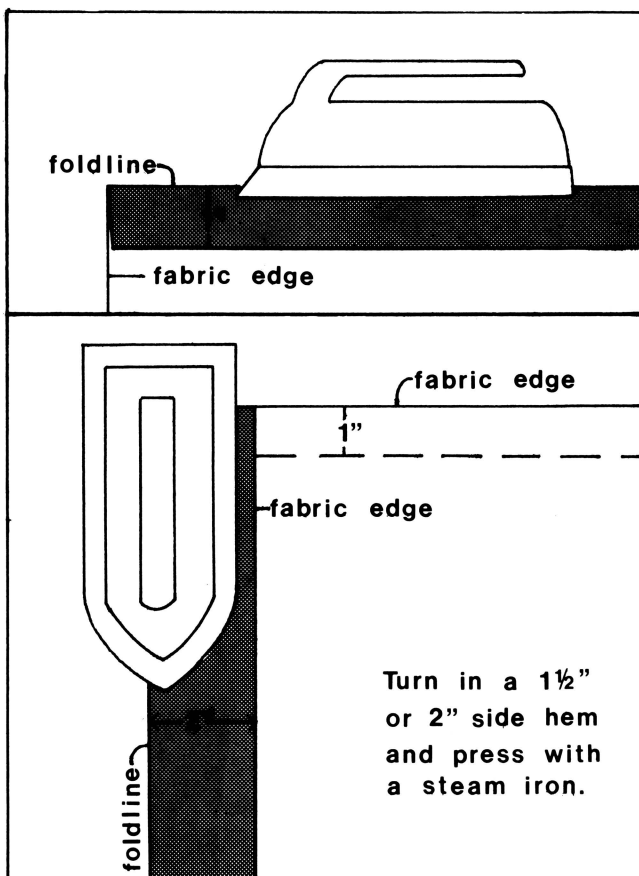


Illustration 5.

Fold the end of the buckram twice, 2½ inches each time, to reinforce top drapery corners. See Illustration 6.

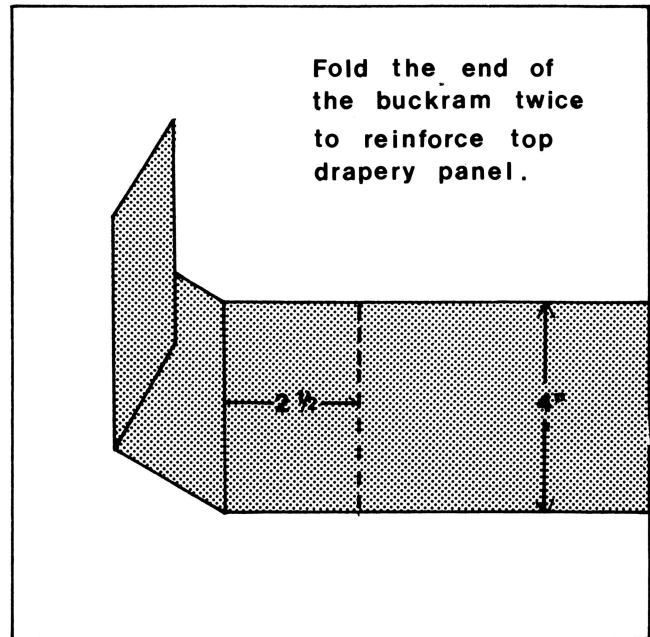


Illustration 6.

To attach the buckram, place it on the wrong side of the drapery panel with the folded end of the buckram flush with the side hem fold line. With the buckram extending above the top edge of drapery, place the lower edge of the buckram on the 1 inch fold line. Pin in place, being careful not to stretch the fabric. Using the buckram as a guide, machine stitch (6 to 8 stitches per inch) it to the drapery panel ½ inch from this edge, being careful not to stretch the fabric. See Illustration 7.

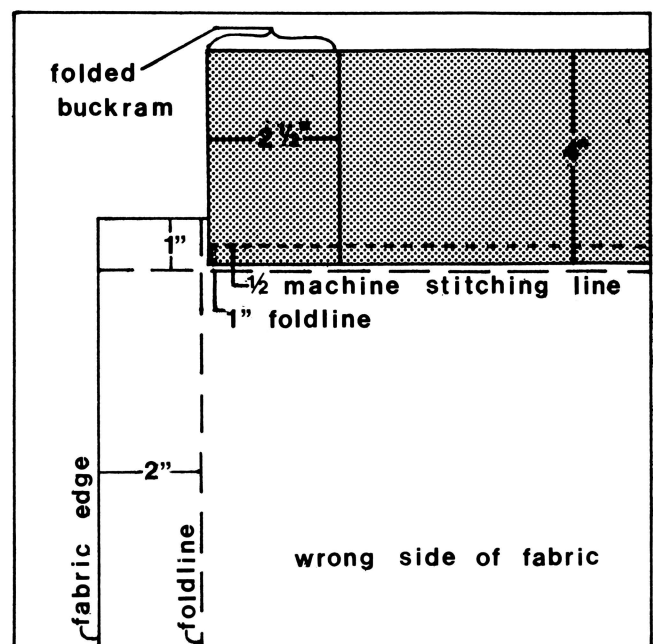


Illustration 7.

## Lined Draperies

For lining panels turn down a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch fold at the top and press toward the wrong side. To attach lining to the top edge of drapery, place lining on drapery material with the right side of the drapery next to right side of the lining with buckram still extended. If there are lengthwise seams be sure to align them. The top raw edge of the lining and the top raw edge of the drapery should be even. Carefully pin lining to drapery and buckram to avoid stretching. Machine stitch lining to drapery and buckram, stitching in the  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch fold line of the lining, starting and ending 3 inches from each end of the buckram. See Illustrations 8 and 9.

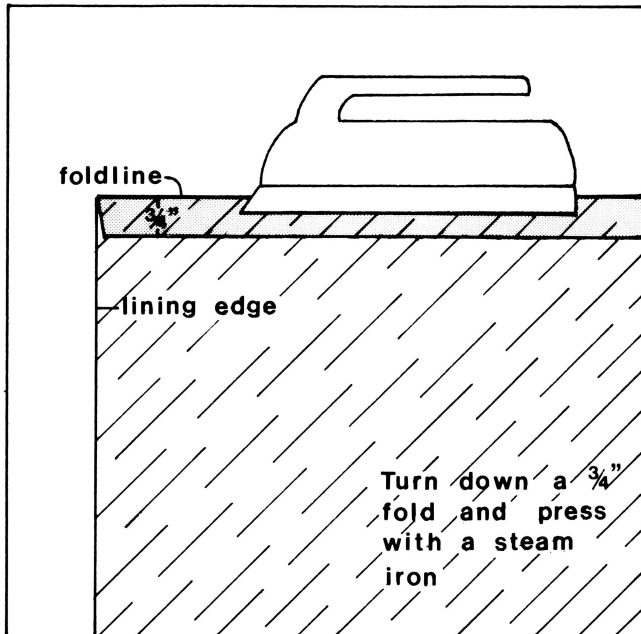


Illustration 8.

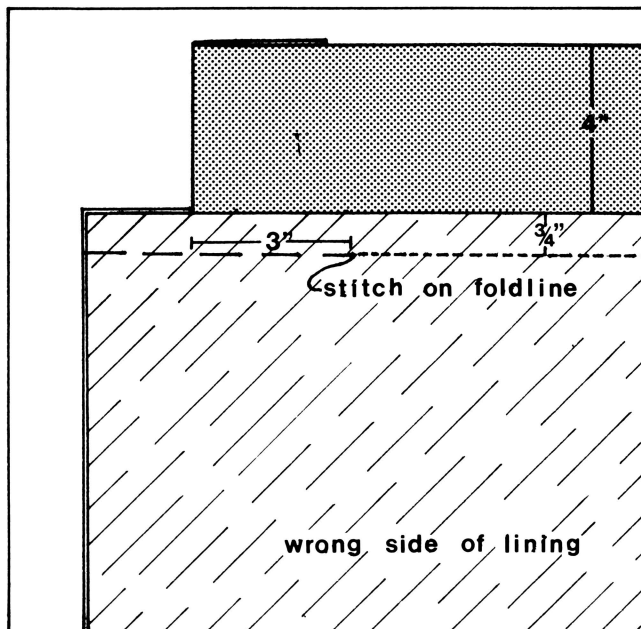
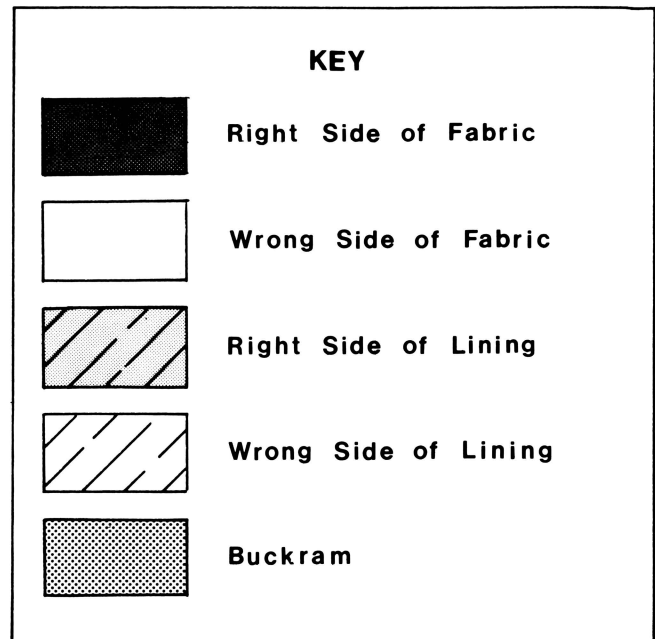


Illustration 9.



Turn the drapery panel so the wrong sides of the fabric are together and press top edge carefully. After pressing, the top edge of the lining should be  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch lower than the top edge of the drapery. In this position, fold drapery side hems the way they were pressed; measure  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch down from the top and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the selvage edge of side of hem, place an X at the intersection of these measurements. See Illustration 10.

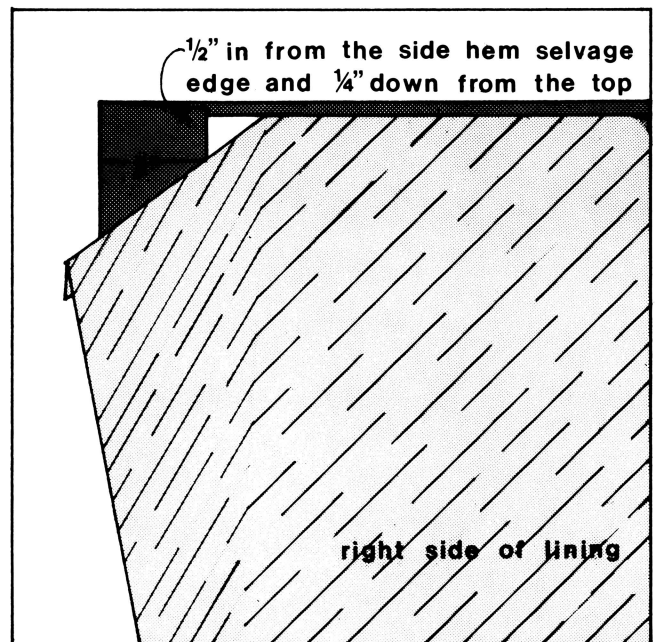


Illustration 10.

Bring lining fold across side hems,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from top edge of drapery, make an X on the lining that coincides with the X on drapery side hems. See Illustration 11.

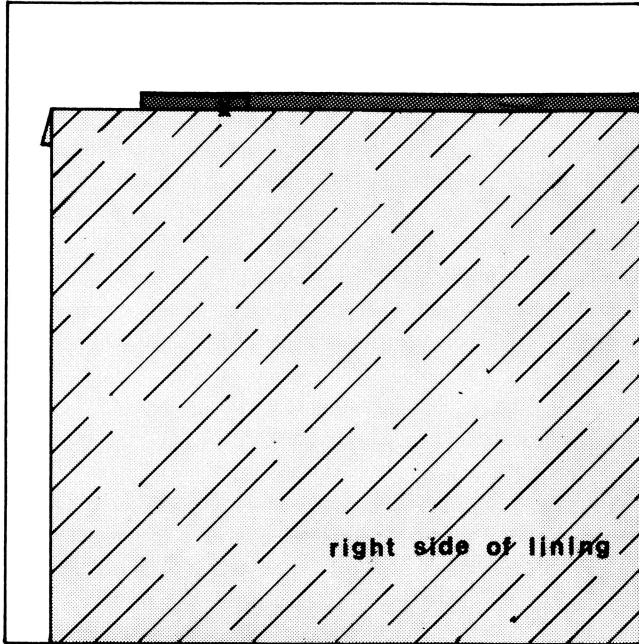


Illustration 11.

To determine the side edge of the lining, measure  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch seam allowance from the X toward the raw edge of lining and mark. Pull thread, cut fabric away on the straight of grain. See Illustration 12.

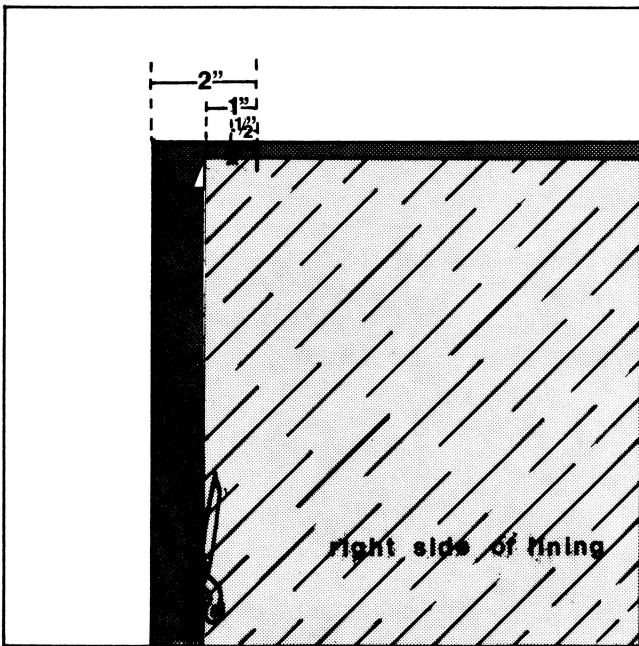


Illustration 12.

Reverse lining and drapery fabrics, putting right sides of fabric together. Match X's, pin and machine stitch side hems from top down with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch seam allowance leaving open 17 inches from lower edge of hems. Turn whole panel right sides out. Press. To finish top 3 inch corners, taper and ease top edge of side hem and lining to the

drapery. Finish with small hand stitches. See Illustration 13.

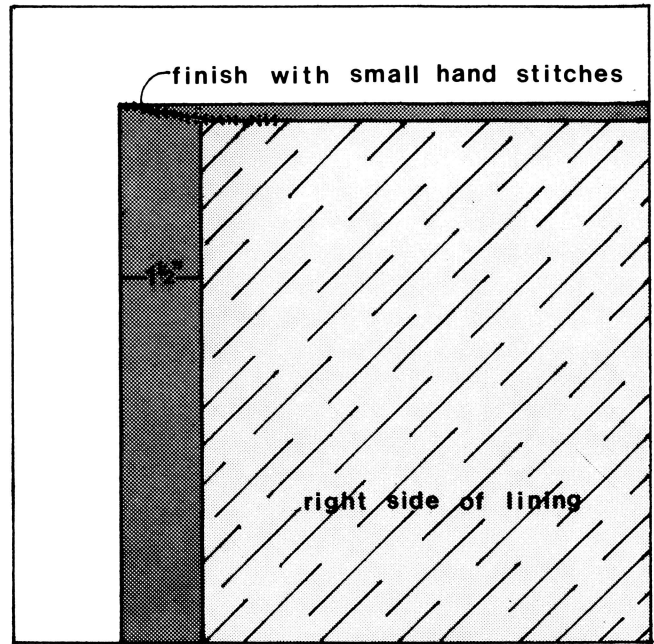


Illustration 13.

### Hemming Techniques

Place panel flat on table or floor and measure from top for exact length. Mark the lower drapery edge with pins. Press along pin line. If the fabric for hem measures more than 10 inches, trim to 10 inches. With side hem extended, press to form a double hem. To make sure the draperies are even, fold in half lengthwise; if necessary adjust so panel sides are the same length. Secure hem by hand or blind stitch by machine. To finish, the side hem at the lower edge should be turned under at an angle. If a weight is used, put it in place before finishing the hem. See Illustration 14.

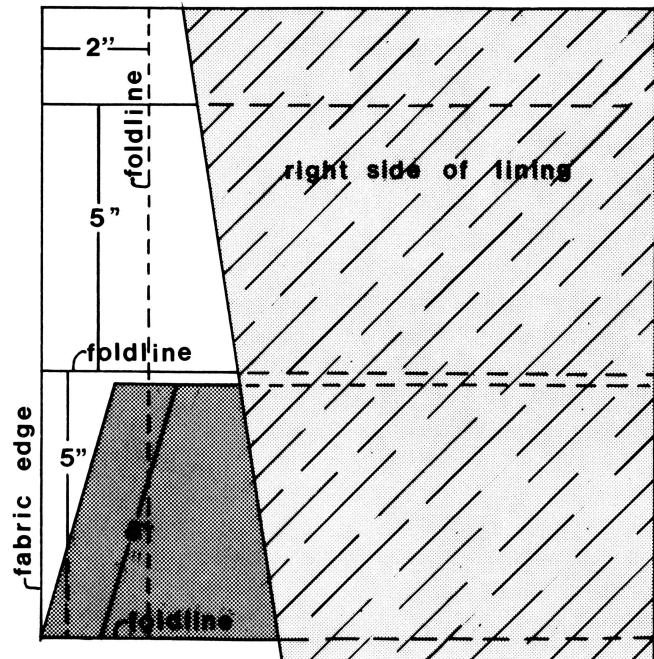


Illustration 14.

Lower edge of lining hem should be 1 inch shorter than the drapery. Press lining to form a 4 inch double hem. Finish hem by hand or machine. Hand sew lower edge of lining to side hem if necessary. See Illustration 15.

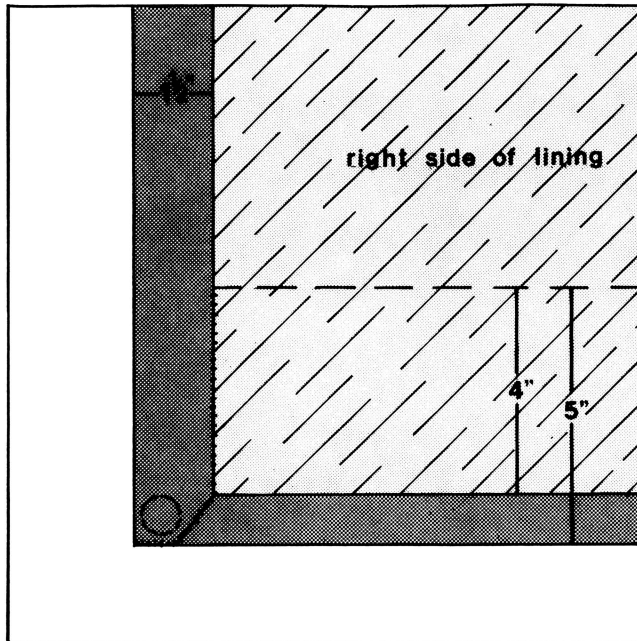


Illustration 15.

## Unlined Draperies

### Headings

For *medium/heavy weight fabrics*, press side edge under  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and then press under  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or 2 inches to form side hem. At the top of the drapery panel, turn down a 1 inch fold to the wrong side of the fabric and press with a steam iron. This pressed line is a stitching guide for the buckram heading. Fold the end of the buckram twice,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches each time, to reinforce top drapery corners. With the side hems extended, place the buckram on the wrong side of the drapery panel with the folded end of the buckram flush with the side hem fold line. Place the lower edge of the buckram on the 1 inch fold line as shown in Illustration 7. Use the buckram as a guide and machine stitch the drapery panel  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from edge. With side hems still extended, fold buckram down once, and machine stitch loose edge of buckram to drapery panel  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from edge to help eliminate fabric slipping; then fold again so the fabric covers the buckram.

For *sheer draperies*, remove selvage edges and seam panels together using French seams. Press 1 or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch double side hems. Fold the end of the buckram twice,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches each time, to reinforce top drapery corners. With side hems extended, place buckram edge even with the top edge of the wrong side of the drapery panel, so the folded end of the buckram is flush with the side hem fold line. Machine stitch  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch along both edges of buckram. With side hems still extended, fold fabric to the wrong side over the buckram and press; then fold fabric over the buckram again and pin in place. See Illustration 16.

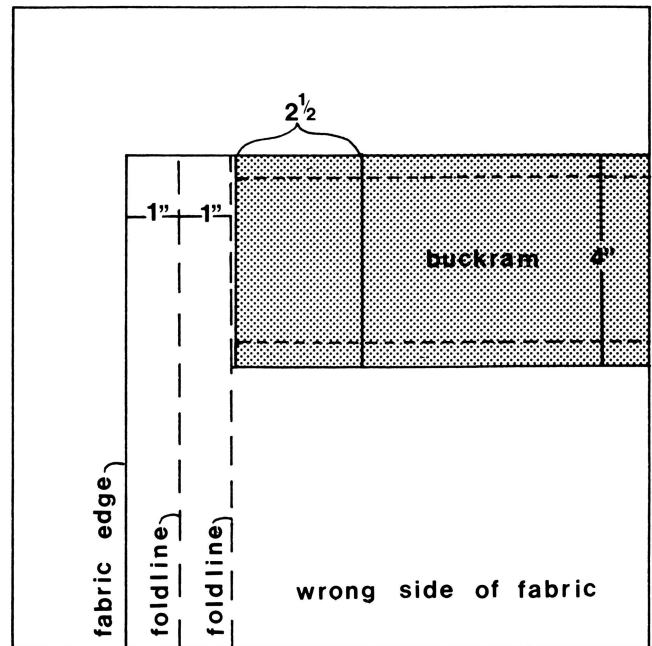


Illustration 16.

### Side Hems

Press and pin side hems in place, then machine or hand stitch. Avoid stretching. To finish top edge of side hem, turn down at an angle and sew by hand. Finish hemming before pleating. See hemming instructions for lined draperies. See Illustrations 17 and 18.

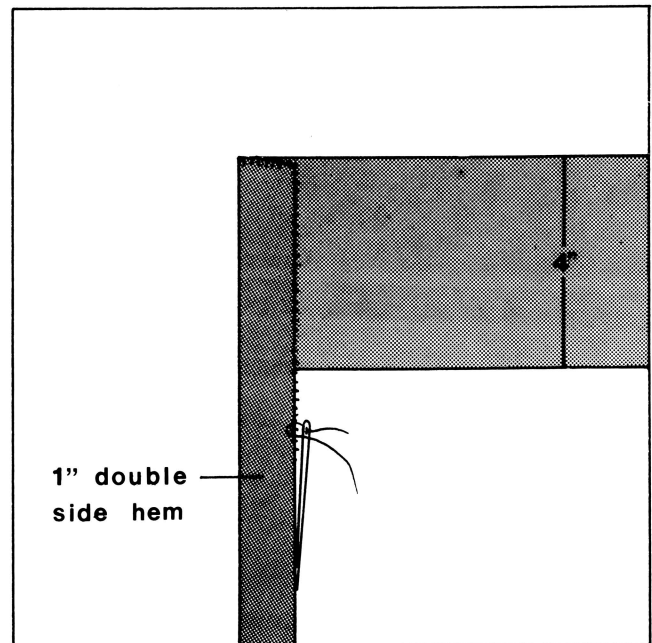


Illustration 17. Finishing techniques for drapery heading.

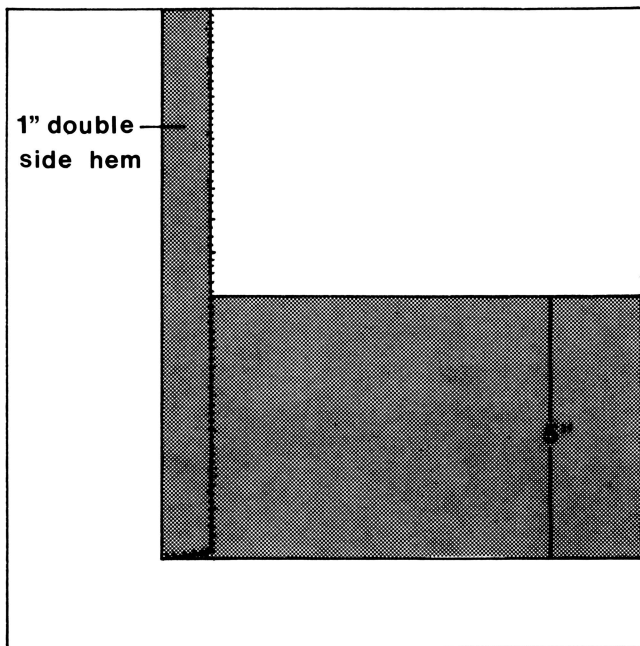


Illustration 18. Finishing techniques for drapery hem.

### Pinch Pleats

Measure the exact length of the rod to be covered by one drapery panel. Be sure to include the amount of overlap at the center and return at the end of the rod. Cut a piece of paper that is about 4 inches wide exactly the length of the rod plus overlap, return, and 1 to 2 inches for ease (smaller windows need less ease). On the paper, measure and mark 3 inches from one end for lap and the number of inches for return on the opposite end (this may vary from 3 to 7 inches). Then bring the marked lines together, and fold a crease. Continue to fold this paper, so that the folded parts are equal and measure between 3 and 5 inches. These folded sections represent the *spaces between the pleats*. Label the sections right side up—lap, return and number spaces (i.e., 1,2,3). Cut paper on marked and creased lines. See Illustration 19.

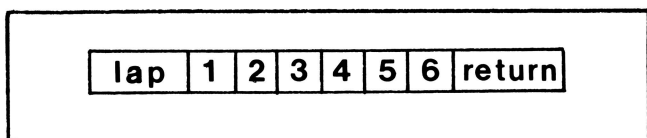


Illustration 19.

Pin return and overlap to right side of the drapery panel at the top edge. Evenly space the numbered pieces of paper on the top edge of drapery panel. If the area between the papers varies up to a fourth of an inch, it will not make a great difference. For pinch pleats, it is best to have the area between the papers be approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 6 inches. If the area is less than 3 inches, it would be best to start with a new piece of paper of the correct length, and refold so the pieces are fewer and larger. Place pins at the top edge of drapery exactly on each side of numbered pieces of paper. See Illustration 20.

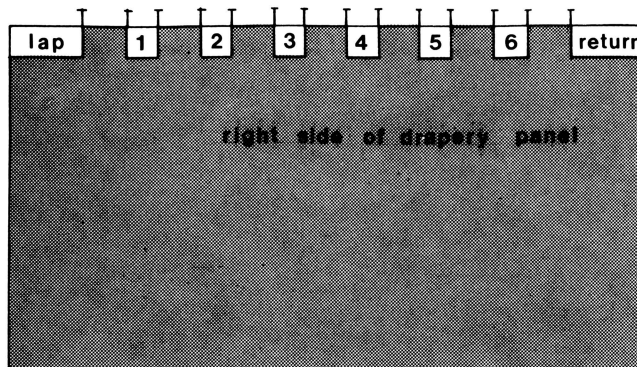


Illustration 20.

To form pinch pleats, fold fabric between pieces of paper, bringing the pins together. These pins mark the pleats and should be placed accurately and securely, keeping the top edges even. Pin all pleats in this way. See Illustration 21.

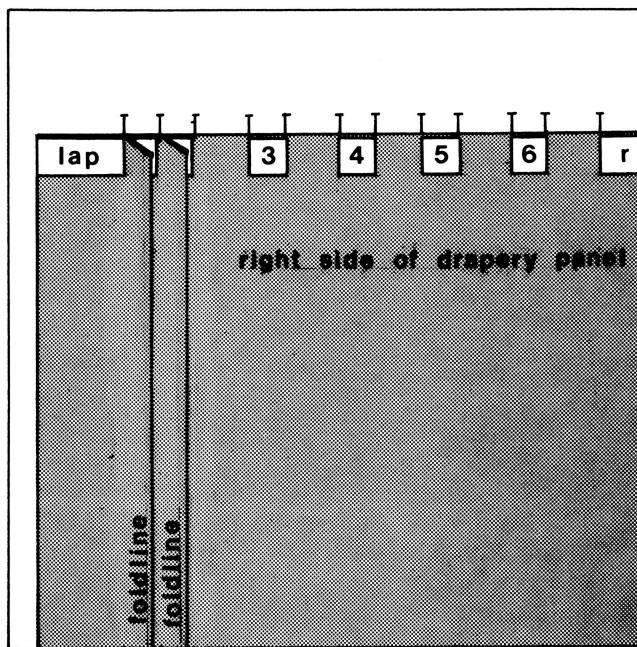


Illustration 21.

Remove the numbered papers and press crease in pleats. Machine stitch pleat from top, using 6 to 8 stitches per inch, to just below the buckram. Reverse stitching at each end. Steam press with pleat area extended. While pleat is still moist, turn pleat upright and divide into thirds. Place a pin just below the buckram to hold pleat for stitching later. After all the pleats are pressed and pinned, start stitching just below the buckram in the middle of folded pleat. Stitch across pleat to edge, reverse and stitch to center. Do not stitch beyond the vertical stitching. See Illustration 22.

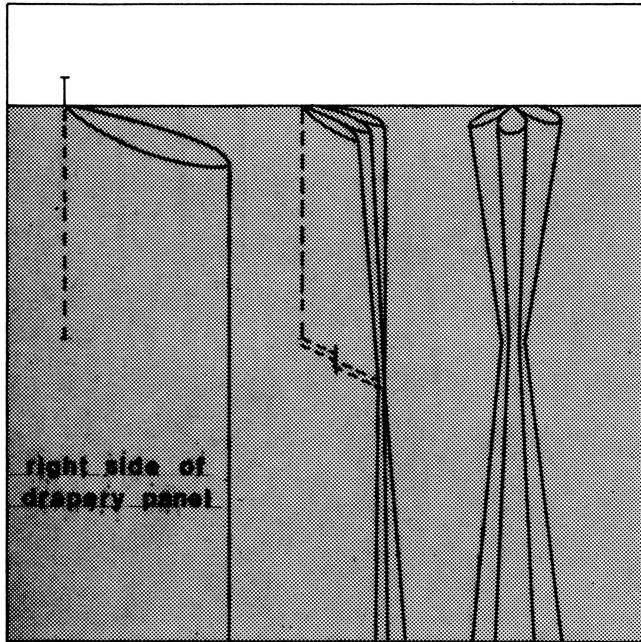


Illustration 22.

## Hanging Draperies

How and where drapery hooks or pins are placed affects the finished appearance of the draperies. Careful hook placement ensures that the draperies cover the rod evenly and when open, both the headings and hemlines are even. To ensure that hooks are evenly placed, measure and mark their location accurately.

To locate where to insert drapery hooks in the heading, place hook in rod carrier. Measure from  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch above the conventional rod to bottom bend in the drapery hook or  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch from the decorator ring to the bottom edge of the drapery hook. Transfer and mark this distance on the back of each drapery pleat. See Illustrations 23 and 24. To keep the top edge of the drapery even, mark all pleats the same. Place a hook approximately 1 inch from each side edge of drapery panel (overlap and return). Pin drapery hooks in fabric so hooks are held in creases of buckram.

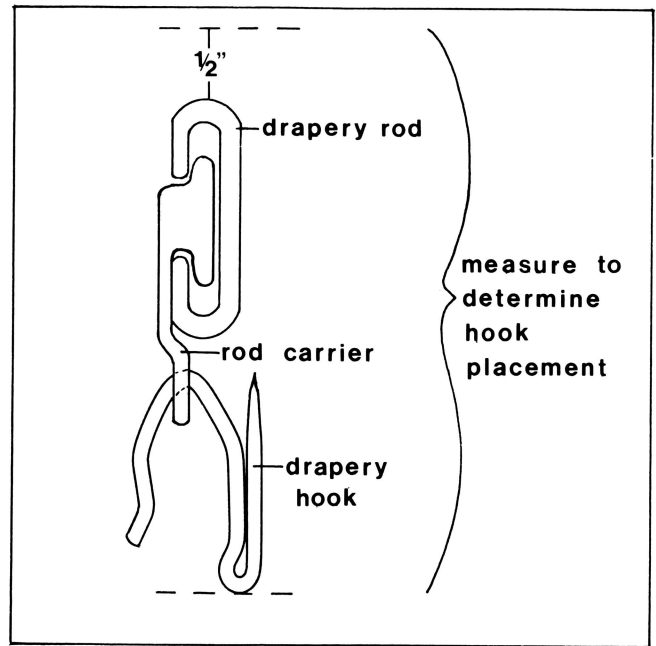


Illustration 23.

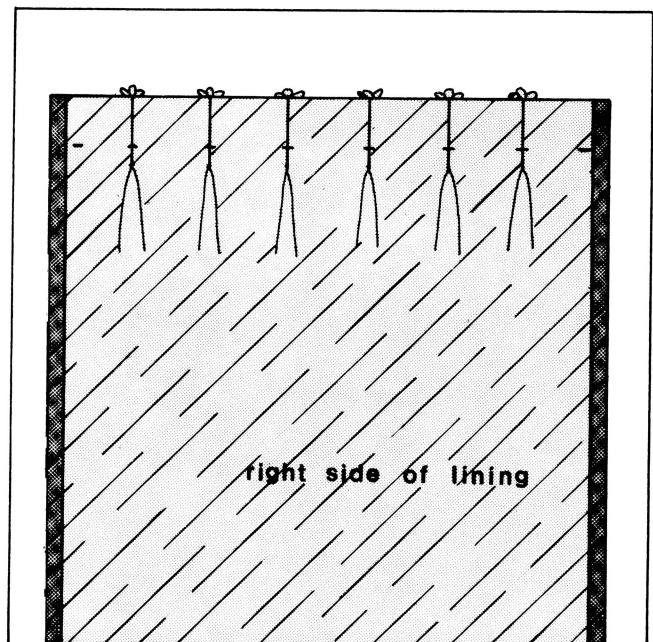


Illustration 24.

Pull draperies closed. Check to see if rod is covered and heading even. If not, remove and adjust hooks. If the drapery needs to be lowered, evenly raise the hooks; or raised, lower the hooks.

To encourage draperies to fall in even folds, open drapery and pull the spaces between the pleats forward; hand crease these folds so they are even. If the drapery resists folding, pull open and adjust. Tie a piece of fabric loosely around the draperies and leave tied for 24 hours to set pleats.

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