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“18 Top Design Tips – Liven Up Your Living Space”

Written by Cynthia Jaramillo



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Minimal Window Treatments

Window treatments are all about making the most of natural light. No more heavy draperies, valances or layers of fabrics – minimal is in. Using exclusively side drapery panels is very trendy right now. In addition to the illusion of height, you can play with the rod placement, as well as choosing patterns that have vertical directions (stripes or elongated vertical shapes). Keep rod diameters smaller and more minimized so as not to overpower the windows and panels. Go ahead and use a bit of contrast for visual interest and texture – such as pairing a soft, delicate, creamy fabric with an aged, black wrought iron rod. The most popular fabrics being used are: **100 PERCENT LINEN** It comes in varying weights and translucencies, allowing light to pass through diffusely at whatever level you design. If you are looking for more than single-color linens, there are a wide variety of patterns available for patterned linens, from woven colorful stripes to embroidered, organic shapes. Linens give a nice, casual and relaxed feel to a room. **100 PERCENT COTTON** The organic cottons are gorgeously soft to the touch. There are many quality cottons and cotton voiles available in many patterns, from contemporary to traditional and with varying translucencies. **100 PERCENT WOOL** I have one fabric that is a wool ivory sheer and drapes so beautifully – and has a great sophistication – while still allowing the light to flow gently through. People should really use wool more often. It is inherently flame-resistant, mothproof, a very green fabric, and just an all-around great, natural fabric. It is available in so much more than just a “heavy” fabric – it can be so light and sheer. **100 PERCENT PLA** This is a new, ecological fabric derived from 100 percent corn – yes, corn. Amazingly, they have produced some very pretty, sheer fabrics from this. They tend to have a silky feel and slight sheen and are great for the “wispy” look while offering durability.

To achieve early morning darkness, try lined Roman shades in any of the above fabrics. They can pull up close to the top frame of your window when light is desired, but when closed to the top frame of your window when light is desired, but when closed, offer you the privacy needed. Cellular shades also achieve this flexibility; they can tuck discreetly into the window frame, being very low-profile with a cordless lift (great for safety if you have kids, too). You may easily pair cellular shades with soft side drapery panels for the minimal look we are talking about. Lots of great features include: superior insulating from outside heat/cold, clean look with no cords or seams, you can choose your opacity – from reduced glare to complete room-darkening – and various pleat sizes and lot lots of colors are available. Hint, if you want them to be “invisible” while in the raised position, match them to your trim/wall color so they fade into the window setting relatively unnoticed. Natural, woven blinds are still very “in vogue”, and I like them because even when lined, they can still offer a play of light/shadows in a space. Once the function has been addressed, have fun with the “form” part, exploring all the possibilities to create a space that reflects the desired effect of the room (and your personality and style). Window treatments definitely play a major part in adding comfort, whimsy, color, texture, scales and proportion, and add so much to the overall feeling in a room. – Kimberly Doucette, IIDA, ASID, principal/designer, Environmental Interiors Design Studio, LLC