



WINDOW DRESSING: Clockwise from top left, Roman blinds have a softer look than roller blinds when drawn; eyelets stack back most effectively; swags and tails can be overpowering in rooms with low ceilings; add bright splashes of colour in a children's room with these Luxaflex roller blinds (www.luxaflex.co.uk)

SEEING THE LIGHT

Interiors

Window treatments can make or break your interior scheme – no matter what room you are decorating. **Jamie Hemsall** reports.

NO matter the month, how you dress your windows has not only visual, but also practical impact on your room. Each season offers its own challenges – from the fading properties of sunlight to bitter winter chills. So choosing the right solutions can be a minefield.

Start by thinking who will use them. Are we talking considerate adults or boisterous children? The former lends itself to richer fabrics and more elaborate designs. The latter means more hardwearing practicality with easy ways to close.

A big consideration in summer is whether your window treatment needs to stop light. Some find summer

light seepage leads to poor sleep. If this is the case, consider thicker fabrics or a blackout lining. Roman and roller blinds can suffer from light spill around the edges, so curtains are often the best option where space allows.

In winter considerations change to keeping warmth in. Up to 20 per cent of home heat can be lost through windows and doors, but the inclusion of interlining can really help reduce this. Interlining has the added benefit of adding body to your drape – so you get fuel economy and fancier looks in one solution.

The other major consideration is the need for privacy. If this is not

an issue, you could opt for dress curtains that frame the window without the ability to close. Blinds present a practical and stylish solution and are particularly useful where you are limited for space around the window. Roller blinds are the simplest construction and can be a solo window dressing or used in conjunction with dress curtains for a simple to use and cost effective solution.

Roman blinds provide a similar effect to a roller blind when closed, but a softer look when drawn. Venetian blinds have had a renaissance in popularity, particularly when using tape rather than cord. Finishes range from metal and plain wood, to contemporary silvers and spray-painted woods. They allow light and views to be directed into a room, but are less light fast than most options.

If you have the space for curtains always opt for full length if possible as these frame a window better and



IN THE FRAME: Pick the right style to match your room.

BLINDS CORDS MUST BE 'CHILD-SAFE'

NEW standards introduced earlier this year ensure all new blind installations have to be 'child-safe' by law (even where children are not present). A new window blind with an operating cord/chain that could form a loop must be kept out of the reach of babies and young children.

The standards introduced limitations on cord and chain lengths, cord/chain safety devices and specific legal installation requirements. Visit www.makeitsafe.org.uk for full guidelines
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add height to a room. The style should be chosen carefully to fit the look and size of your room.

Swags and tails add opulence to fabric, but can be overpowering in rooms with low ceilings. A shaped pelmet with pinch-pleat top curtains creates a more pleasing solution if ceiling height is a challenge. Exposed poles are a traditional way to hang curtains, but ensure your headings are rigid or curtains can look sloppy and unfinished.

To add structure, consider stylish exposed tracks with drawstrings to ease opening. Headings are a very personal choice, but always consider how much you want a curtain to draw back from the window and how much space it will need. Pencil pleat curtains are more voluminous, whilst eyelets stack back most effectively.

Only after these decisions should you be looking at pattern books.