

# Design dilemmas: tricks for picking the right size, shape and style of window coverings

[Kathleen Flynn, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)



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*Got a design dilemma? In this new column, we'll tap local decorators, interiors experts and tastemakers for advice and solutions to pesky decorating challenges. Send your design questions to [InsideOut@nola.com](mailto:InsideOut@nola.com).*



**The Dilemma:** Picking the right size, shape and style of window coverings

**The Expert:** For 15 years, Neil Peyroux, owner of [Peyroux's Custom Curtains](#), ready-made draperies and shades, has been the man behind some of the city's best dressed windows. For this inaugural edition of our new Design Dilemmas column, we asked him to whittle down the nuances behind picture-perfect windows.

**Story by** Margaret Zainey Roux, Contributing writer

**Q:** How do I choose between curtains and shades?

**A:** There are pros and cons to using both. Curtains tend to look and feel more luxurious and work well to fill a large room. Shades are great for tight spaces, doors and windows that have furniture beneath them. Shades are generally more labor extensive and therefore more expensive. However, they use less fabric and don't require rods and rings, so there is a savings there.



**Q:** Where should I hang my curtain rod, and how should I mount my shades?

**A:** For curtains, I suggest installing rods as high as possible -- preferably to the ceiling or directly beneath the crown molding. The higher the rod, the further up your eye is drawn to visually enlarge the space.

Installing shades depends on the style and the level of functionality you desire. An outside mount shade works wonders to control light, especially if it's black-out lined. It also can make the window look larger if it's mounted above the frame. But if you've got one of those old New Orleans homes with beautiful millwork, keep (the woodwork) exposed and go with an inside mount.



**Q:** How do I choose the right hardware?

**A:** Metal rods and rings are my preference because they glide open and close easily. Antique gold and bronze finishes are very popular, but my favorite is polished gunmetal because of its ability to flip from formal to casual. I use a local artisan welder for custom designs and to keep the business in New Orleans. You can purchase rings and telescoping rods from big-box stores that are sufficient for stationary panels, but they're not ideal if you frequently open and close your curtains. Also consider the rod's diameter. It can differ with the size of the window and weight of curtain. I recommend a 3/4-inch to 1 1/4-inch diameter for the rod with center support brackets to keep it from bending.

**Q:** Should I puddle curtains, and if so how much?

**A:** At one time, large puddles were considered a sign of decadence and wealth. Obviously, times have changed. I suggest a slight break because it gives curtains a more current look and makes them easier to maintain. Silk curtains are the exception and can puddle a bit more.



**Q:** What's the most common design dilemma when it comes to window treatments, and what's your solution?

**A:** Sun damage. With temperatures like ours, people want to know how to protect their window treatments from the sun. My answer? Line them and line them well! UV-rays can destroy floors, furniture and fabrics within months so lining is essential. In many cases, I also recommend coating windows with a UV-rated film. It can cut out 90 percent of the harmful rays and thanks to today's technology you won't even notice the film is there.