

CHOOSING BLINDS

How to choose the right blinds
for your new home.

Russells

The curtain & blind specialists



Contents

Different types of blinds.....	5
Custom or ready-made blinds?	7
Selecting the right fabric type for Roman blinds	10
What should Venetian blinds be made of?	11
Which type of blinds for what rooms of the home?	14
Things that impact the style of your blinds	16
Choosing blinds for a grey room	17
Budgeting for custom-made blinds	19



How to choose the right blinds for your new home.

Whether you're building new and need blinds to fit your new space, or you've just bought a home and they could do with refreshing, it's a big decision and investment so you want to get it just right.

Things to factor in include the purpose of the room, the size of the windows, how much light the room gets, what type of blind you prefer the look of, what colours will look good and whether you should you buy ready-made or custom-made. This guide is designed to answer many of those questions so that when it comes time to start your blind buying journey, you're aware of the many different options you have.

Different types of blinds

Venetian blinds

Venetian blinds have horizontal slats and are often made of metal such as aluminium, wood or plastic. Venetian blinds are operated by a cord and give you the option to draw them completely open to the top of the window, or you can leave them down but tilt the slats open up to 180 degrees to allow light through.

Vertical blinds

Vertical blinds are made up of flat slats which, when drawn, can be tilted to allow light to filter through. They are fast and easy to operate, drawing to the side rather than lifting or lowering. A good choice for doors and windows that also slide open from side to side or angled windows. Vertical blinds are most commonly made of stiff fabric.

Roman blinds

When open, Roman blinds fold and stack neatly at the top. When closed they lie smooth and flat. Good for blocking out the sun (when properly lined). Roman blinds are made of fabric and are therefore not suitable for bathrooms.

Austrian blinds

Also made of fabric, Austrian blinds are very close to being a curtain except they are draw upwards, not to the side. They have cords that run vertically down the back of the fabric so that the bottom of the blind has a scalloped look.

Bamboo or Pinoleum blinds

A very natural look, these blinds are made up of “tiwgs” laid horizontally and tightly joined together with string or thread. When drawn upwards they can either roll or fold and stack similar to Roman blinds.

Wooden shutters

Wooden shutters are a classic piece of design and provide invaluable light and heat control. Due to the rigid nature of the timber, wooden shutters do not open completely to reveal the entire window but instead operate on a hinge system to open and close the slats.

Roller blinds

Offering a minimalist look, there are block out roller blinds for full privacy and improved energy efficiency. Sunscreen roller blinds are lighter and protect your furnishings from UV rays, heat and glare, whilst filtering natural light into a room.

Honeycomb

Honeycomb blinds are good for improving energy efficiency with pockets of trapped air within them. They are a functional, sleek option that draw upwards, similar to a Venetian blind.



Custom or ready-made blinds?

Among the first questions to address is whether you would prefer to buy ready-made blinds or have them custom made.

Why buy ready-made?

Whether online or from a store, ready-made blinds are often favoured as a fast and cost effective option.

What to look out for:

- You may need to dedicate some time to shopping around to find blinds that are just the right colour, pattern and size for your home.
- Measure carefully before buying; do it more than once to double check your accuracy. Measuring for blinds differs depending on what kind of blinds you want so be sure to research the best method. You'll also need to consider whether you want the blind to be mounted inside or outside the window frame as this will affect your measurements.
- There's the possibility of finding inconsistencies in something mass-produced.
- You may also need to budget for professional installation if you're not confident in your own skills.
- Ready-made blinds are almost always not made in New Zealand. They are mass

produced in a limited number of sizes. These can be quite common sizes so you may get lucky and find something that fits your window. However, most people find the blinds are either slightly too wide and overlap the frame, or not wide enough, letting through light. In the case of Venetian blinds, if they are too long, the slats bunch up at the end making them look rather unattractive.

- Cheaper readymade blinds may seem like a good deal initially, but long-term (and blinds are a long-term household item) the inferior quality ends up costing you. Considering this is a household feature you are likely to use daily, the cord or chain mechanisms used to draw the blinds up and down tend to wear quickly, stop functioning properly and even break. The slats of Venetian blinds in particular are known to bend out of shape. Not only does this look bad, it stops them functioning well, and affects the others.
- In the case of roller blinds, cheap ready-made versions are prone to fraying because of substandard cutting techniques.



- And because parts are difficult to source, and ready-made suppliers offer no after sales service, you will most likely end up having to replace the entire blind.
- Be wary of online providers who claim to provide custom-made blinds at very cheap prices. They ask for your window measurements not so they can make your blinds from scratch, but so they can simply cut down the already produced blinds.

Why choose custom-made?

- You'll get exactly what you want. A good blind company will send a consultant to meet with you at your home and bring a wide variety of actual fabric samples so you can see how different colours, patterns and textures look in your space.
- You'll get experienced advice about which type of blind is best for a room. For instance, if blocking light is the main priority, blinds with slats may not be the best option.

- Your blinds will be professionally measured and expertly made with special attention to detail.
- Many specialist companies offer a product warranty.
- There may the possibility of a finance option to help make it affordable.
- Professional installation is often included as part of the service.

What to look out for:

- There is time involved in having blinds custom-made. From consultation to having the finished product installed, it could take 3 to 4 weeks if not longer.
- The initial cost of having custom-made blinds would likely be a more expensive option over ready-made. However, over time this cost is likely to be justified by the quality of the product.



Selecting the right fabric type for Roman blinds

It's easy to make a choice based on textures, colours and patterns, but perhaps the first thing you should decide is which type of fabric you want. Each has its own benefits and best uses based on its weight, texture, light blocking or exposing qualities, durability and sun-fade resistance.

Cotton

Cotton is versatile and offers a crisp, clean feel that suits traditional or modern styles. As it can be a very light fabric, cotton blinds do need to be properly lined so they hang and fall as desired.

Silk

Silk is luxurious but best chosen for its aesthetic appeal rather than functionality. Silk is dryclean only and very susceptible to sun damage. Opt for a silk-look polyester fabric for more durability.

Polyester

A very common choice; polyester is durable, affordable, easy to care for and doesn't really wrinkle, stretch or shrink. Choose polyester for bedroom and living areas, but avoid it in the kitchen as it's flammable, doesn't allow good airflow and absorbs odours.

Acrylic

With a similar texture to wool, acrylic is a lightweight fabric that drapes beautifully and provides great insulation. Acrylic blinds attract and disperse moisture effortlessly, they're hypoallergenic and resistant to mould and mildew.

Rayon

Rayon is able to be woven with natural fibres to achieve a variety of textures. It is soft, strong and breathable.

Tips when choosing a fabric type:

- Hold the sample up to a window to see how it filters light.
- If you're leaning towards a large pattern, think about how it will look when the blind is drawn up.

What should Venetian blinds be made of?

Venetian blinds are most commonly made of aluminum, wood or faux wood (PVC). Wood offers a natural warm look and feel, they're light and easy to handle. Their insulating properties are rather good and they also aid in noise reduction. They can be natural wood finish or painted and look good in just about any room of the house.

Choose aluminium Venetian blinds for a contemporary look. And PVC wood-look blinds if you want them in the bathroom; real wood will warp due to the moisture in the room.





Which type of blinds for what rooms of the home?

Bathroom

Due to the moisture present in the bathroom avoid blinds with wooden slats. PVC Venetians are a good option because you can leave them down but allow light in by tilting the slats. Roller blinds are mould and mildew resistant so definitely an option to consider. And another idea to bear in mind for the bathroom is a blind that rolls upwards towards the ceiling. This offers privacy when the bathroom is in use while letting in a lot of natural light.

Bedrooms

Blocking out light is likely to be a high priority for bedroom blinds so blackout roller blinds should be top of the consideration list. Vertical blinds allow you to easily control light and adjust for privacy. Roman or Austrian blinds are also a nice option for the bedroom as they are made of fabric and can offer a romantic, soft look and feel.

Kitchen

Blinds in the kitchen need to be flame retardant and not susceptible to absorbing moisture and odours. Roller blinds and Venetian blinds (not wood though, PVC is best) tick all these boxes, are easy to operate and allow you to control the amount of light coming through the window.

Lounge and living rooms

These rooms often get a lot of light so a sunscreen roller blind is a great option. Venetian or vertical blinds are also a popular choice. Both allow you to control light and in the case of a sliding glass door, vertical blinds are the most practical option.



Things that impact the style of your blinds

Fabric type

The type of fabric you choose will affect how your blinds fall and how much light they let in. Some fabrics are better for different rooms too. See the section on page 10 for a quick guide on fabric types.

Colours and pattern

The best idea is to get fabric samples so you can hold them up next to the wall in order to see how they work in your space. Maybe go for a darker colour for high traffic areas so as it doesn't get too noticeably dirty. Rooms that get a lot of light probably need a lighter colour as a darker one will fade. And think about pattern repeat; if you choose a large pattern, ensure it's for a large window for good effect and isn't lost when the blind is drawn up.

Where they hang

Consider if you want your blinds to be mounted outside the window frame or inside it. If you have decorative window surrounds, show them off by mounting on the inside.

Lining choices

Enhance the effectiveness of your blinds by utilising lining. Lining can dramatically improve heating efficiency, block out light and help to reduce noise.

Thermal lining maximises heating efficiency. It can also be utilised to reduce outside noise and unwanted light.

Blockout lining reduces natural light and UV rays, providing an ideal solution for darkening a bedroom or media room. They also offer excellent sound insulation and thermal properties.

Interlining is the layer of fabric between the main fabric and lining. To increase the insulating properties of your blinds a light to medium weight interlining can be added. Interlining is ideal for increasing thermal performance and reducing noise.



Choosing blinds for a grey room

Grey is a popular neutral tone for modern interiors. Here are some tips for blinds when decorating a grey room.

Embrace the undertone

Identify the underlying hue of the grey and complement it with matching blinds. Grey usually has two main undertones: warm - which range from reds to purples, and cool - which has a blue base.

Soft and subtle

Keep it neutral by combining white with soft grey, an interior scheme that is easy to update. This simple look complements natural materials, or you could add coloured accessories to easily change the look and feel on a limited budget.

Let it sparkle

Create a cool luxurious feeling with soft greys, metallic and vintage tones. A satin-look fabric in a similar shade creates an elegant look.

Use layers and accessories to add warmth and interest to the room; such as blush and jewel coloured accent fabrics for cushions and throws, layering in vintage vases and accessories.



Budgeting for custom-made blinds

The following is an estimation only and based on a \$39.95 per metre fabric with a \$9.95 per metre polyester block out lining. These prices are provided by Russells Curtains and Blinds and are correct as of March 2017.

- 3 bedroom house with approx. 10 average sized windows - from \$2,550
- 4 Bedroom house with approx. 12 average sized windows, including two living areas – from \$3,150

How to fit them within your budget?

If you don't have enough to do the whole job at once, consider splitting the job into bits and having the most lived in rooms completed first.

During the consultation process, get advice from the consultant about what options are available within your budget ranges.

For rooms that are only used occasionally, you could just hang sheers or even a beaded door curtain until you have the budget to complete the project.

And if you're building new, for rooms that do not need to have light blocked (such as the bathroom or laundry) consider frosted glass for the whole or part of the window.



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