

Environmentally Friendly Window Treatments

When homeowners across the country prepare to make improvements to their homes, many think in two particular shades of green – environmentally friendly and fiscally sound. In general window coverings are inherently green products. Having a blind or shade in your window will help block the sun's heat in the summer and reduce heat loss in the winter. This insulating effect reduces energy consumption and lowers energy bills. By blocking out the sun's UV rays, they also prevent damage to furniture, flooring, and belongings thereby protecting the sustainability of your home.

The Department of Energy reports that heating and cooling accounts for nearly 56% of the energy use in a typical U.S. home, making it the largest energy expense in most households. One of the simplest ways to reduce your heating and cooling needs and costs is by using your window treatments. In some cases, heat gain can be reduced by 45% (US Department of Energy, Consumer' Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy).

All window coverings have insulating properties. Some are better at the job than others:

- Shutters and cellular shades are great insulators.
- Solar fabrics and window film are great choices to cut your A/C requirement.
- Window film has been reported to reduce air conditioning costs by as much as 30-40%.
- Thermal lining used in panels and Roman shades increases heat retention and reduces heat loss, thereby cutting heating requirements.
- Cellular shades with recycled and recyclable content have the highest energy savings and are designed and tested to ensure a long life, reducing landfill waste from short-lived products.
- Faux wood blinds that are made from a blend of recycled hardwood and thermal polymers making them an excellent option for the green conscious customer. Many are constructed from durable, long lasting materials making them a versatile product for many living spaces.
- Look for styles of roller shades that do not contain any harmful ingredients such as PVC, CFC, formaldehyde or other organic solvents.
- Insulating roman shades also offer above average energy savings. They have excellent UV protection and can help shield your home from the cold in the winter and the heat in the summer.
- And don't forget thrift and secondhand stores for used curtains - a great eco-friendly choice.

Today's tip: What could be worse, then, than having a home that reeks of fumes off-gassed from new vinyl blinds and petroleum based fabric curtains? Wouldn't curtains made from sustainable textiles and environmentally friendly hard window treatments be a better choice? Switching to eco-savvy alternatives makes for a healthier home and a happier planet. Check out the green window products that are available in Salem at Window Expressions on Rte 111. This family run, friendly local business has many styles and price points to choose from. Give New England Interior Design Studio a call and let us help you make your choices.

New England Interior Design Studio, LLC

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