YOUR HOME
JUNE 2009
TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

Treat Windows Right

Windows are one of your home's best features, and the right treatments can really make them stand out. With so many varieties and styles available — from sheer, embroidered curtains to shutters and woven wood shades — finding one that suits your home and fits your budget may be a challenge. Experts offer these tips for finding the right treatment for your home.

Set a budget. Treatments can be pricey, so be realistic about what you can afford. Visit retail stores and Web sites to check costs of fabric, blinds, shutters and ready-made draperies. If you know how to sew, you can create your own treatments to save money.

Set priorities. Experts suggest dressing the windows in the living room and bedrooms first since those are the most-used rooms. Then set a schedule for the remaining rooms.

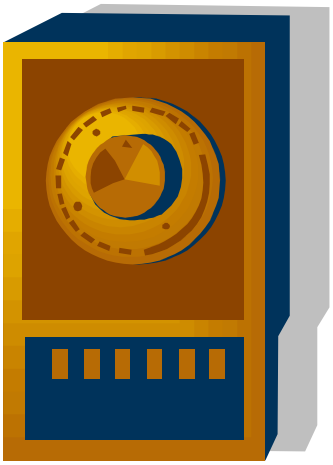
Consider your lifestyle. How you live will determine what treatments are needed in certain areas. For example, if you cook a lot, avoid delicate fabrics in the kitchen where they might get splattered. For high traffic areas, choose more durable, washable materials, such as cotton, nylon or acrylic.

Think about function. Do you want your window treatments to control sunlight or noise, provide privacy or insulate against heat or cold? For example, to control light, vertical blinds and shutters are a versatile choice since you can tilt slats or louvers to let in the right amount of light.

Find your style. If you are not sure what your style is, get ideas from books and magazines. Or browse the *Encyclopedia of Window Fashions*, which has hundreds of examples and charts.

Before installing, measure the window area more than once. Draperies should be hung at least four inches above the window frame and should overlap the frame two to four inches on either side of the window. Using decorative hardware can add personality to a room.

Is It Time to Upgrade Your HVAC?



Is your home too hot or too cold during the year? Is your boiler constantly breaking down, or are the systems too noisy? Certain telltale signs indicate when it's time to replace heating and cooling equipment, or upgrade the entire system. The experts at EnergyStar.gov suggest calling a professional if the following conditions occur:

- The heat pump or air conditioner is more than 10 years old.
- The furnace or boiler is more than 15 years old.
- Your cooling and heating equipment needs frequent repairs, and your energy bills are high.
- Some rooms in your house are too hot or too cold due to duct problems, inadequate insulation or improper equipment operation.
- You don't have a programmable thermostat, and no one is home for long periods of time during the day.
- Your home has humidity problems; the air is too dry in the winter or too humid during the summer.
- Your home has excessive dust.
- The heating and cooling systems are noisy.

Addressing HVAC problems sooner rather than later can save time, money and hassle in the long run.

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U.S. households spend an average of $100 per year to power electronic devices when they are in "power mode."

Source: www.energy.gov