Chapter 7

Making Easy No-Sew and Low-Sew Window Treatments

. . . .

In This Chapter

▶ Using clips, safety pins, and hot glue for easy treatments

▶ Making easy window treatments — swags and more

▶ Creating a simple valance

▶ Trying Ultrasuede treatments that are sure to please

▶ Experimenting with frayed edges

▶ Cleaning up with car wash curtains

▶ Sticking with no-sew shades

. . . .

So you don't sew and don't want to figure out how, eh? That's okay. Who says you have to operate a sewing machine to add a bit of panache to your window frames? Not us. Quick, easy-to-make window treatments are the name of the game when Mark designs rooms on the TLC television program, *While You Were Out*. Just because something packs tons of style doesn't mean it has to be difficult to make.

In this chapter, we show you how to make easy no-sew and low-sew window treatments. What do you require to make all these projects? No need to buy a sewing machine. All you need are a good pair of shears, some great fabric, a needle and thread, a glue gun, some useful accessories, and just a little bit of imagination.

Skip Sewing: What Rings, Pins, and a Little Glue Can Do

One of the best things about window treatments that don't require any, or very little, sewing — we call 'em low-sew draperies and curtains — is you

can frequently change them because they're so quick, easy, and inexpensive to make. For example, are you tired of those red velvet swags hanging in your living room? No problem! Pull them down in two minutes and replace them with a pastel-striped valance and a set of sheer curtains. When you've only invested a few hours and a few bucks in window treatments, you won't feel so married to them, and that freedom can liberate your designing impulses.

A few of these projects do require very minimal sewing. In that case, you can sew them by hand. If you're a needlephobe, don't even bother with the needle and thread. Instead you can just glue your project together with a hot glue gun. Clips and clip rings, mini-clip rings, and safety pins (more on this topic in the "Safety pins" section below, and also check out Chapter 5 for more discussion) make quick changes easy, and you don't even have to sew a *rod sleeve* (that little pocket of fabric at the top of a treatment where you push the rod through).

Rings with clips

Rings with clips are an amazingly chic and ultra-easy way to hang curtains, draperies, and valances without all the fuss of sewing. They slip right over a rod and slide back and forth easily, attaching to your fabric with small clips that hang off the rings. These small to medium-size clips resemble the ones that children use to attach their mittens to their coat sleeves. Mini-clip rings are an even smaller version, appropriate for lightweight fabric treatments.

If you decide to use rings with clips, you need to match the strength and size of them to your fabric weight. Metal and wood rings are sturdier than plastic ones. You may also want to check out the tension of the clip and how much fabric you can sandwich in before purchasing. A mini-clip that can handle lace or eyelet may look adorable, but may not be able to handle a heavier-type fabric.

Clips are great to use when hanging curtains, draperies, and valences because they're so adaptable. If you get bored with one style, you only need a few bucks and a little time to change them. Furthermore, cleaning the fabric is a breeze. Separating the clips from the fabric is easy when you're ready to launder or make a seasonal window treatment change.
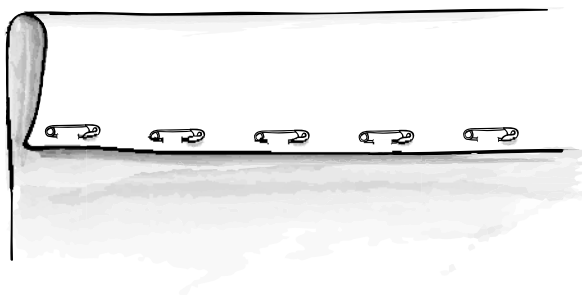
Make an effort to find curtain clips that complement your decor as well as the curtain or drapery. If your furniture finials or pulls are chrome, try to keep your clips and rings in the silver family. If the treatment fabric you choose is a modern one, look for a clean, unencumbered clip and ring style. (Check out Chapter 20 for great sources for clips.)

Safety pins

If all you want to do is make a rod sleeve at the top of your fabric so you can slide a curtain rod through it, medium to large safety pins are another way to avoid sewing. You only have to measure your fabric evenly across the top width, fold the top of the fabric down, pin it across the "line" where you would normally sew (see Figure 7-1), and slide your rod through. Be sure to attach the safety pins to the back of the treatment so they don't show. (This treatment is perfect for a beach or country house, when hauling a sewing machine up a mountain or over a causeway isn't convenient!)

Figure 7-1: Using safety pins to create a top sleeve.

Hot glue

Hot glue from a glue gun is great for adhering fabric to fabric. It sounds cheap and awful — ugh, gunky glue under a cute curtain fabric! — but the fact remains that hot glue and fabric are a match made in heaven. Because fabric is so porous, the glue bonds perfectly, and if you're really careful with your application (not too much, not too little, look out for bumps), and you restrict the use of hot glue to underside areas that people can't see, you can create a great hem or a smooth rod sleeve in a jiffy. And unless you have a particularly nosy significant other, friend, or in-law, nobody will ever know.

Draping Windows: Easy-To-Create Looks

A *swag* is a purely decorative window-top treatment that features flowing or silky-looking fabric. The traditional swag shape is a *scallop* (a curved ornamental edge resembling a rounded shell), but the scarf swag look is a less formal window-top treatment. You can make it from one length of fabric, and it's usually kept in place with a simple decorative rod or special swag holders.

The big challenge with creating swags is getting your drapery right. Don't worry. We guide you through the best way to get the look you love. We also look at fabric considerations, folding and pinning swag fabric, and more. After you get the hang of it, it's easy!
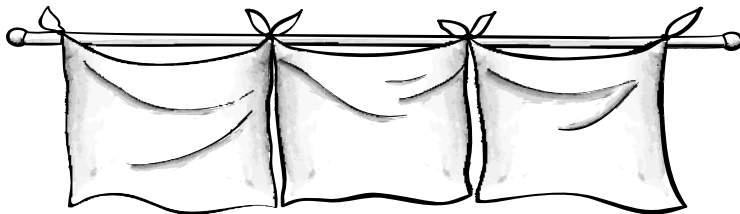
Swagging scarves and throws

Ready-made scarves and throws come in all kinds of wonderful fabrics, from cotton or blended chenille, to wool-blend fabric, to silk charmeuse or silk-synthetic blend fabric. You can use any of them to create an easy window treatment. Scarves are ideal for treatments because they tend to come in silky fabrics that drape well.

But the big bonus in using throws or scarves is they're hemmed, finished, and ready to be fashioned into a simple valance or swag. Here are a few ideas:

✔ You can drape long scarves across a rod at the top of your window to give it a romantic look (take a look at "Creating the swag" later in this chapter for an example).

✔ You can place a series of simple square scarves (see Figure 7-2), either matching or not, across the top of your window to give the look of a valance. You can knot them in place, or use rings with clips to secure them.

✔ You can use throws made of chenille, wool, and other fabric types for a gorgeous and easy way to create a window treatment that keeps the light out. These throws often have fringed edges that look great when hanging from a rod. You can also use a crocheted throw for a crafty or homespun feeling, or any special blanket you want to show off. Just be sure that your rod and brackets are sufficiently sturdy to handle your throw's weight.

With clips and some creative draping and folding, you can create a fantastic and expensive-looking window treatment; check out Figure 7-3. By draping the top edge of the throw over and toward the front and attaching rings at the crease, the two rows of fringe become decorative elements in the curtain.

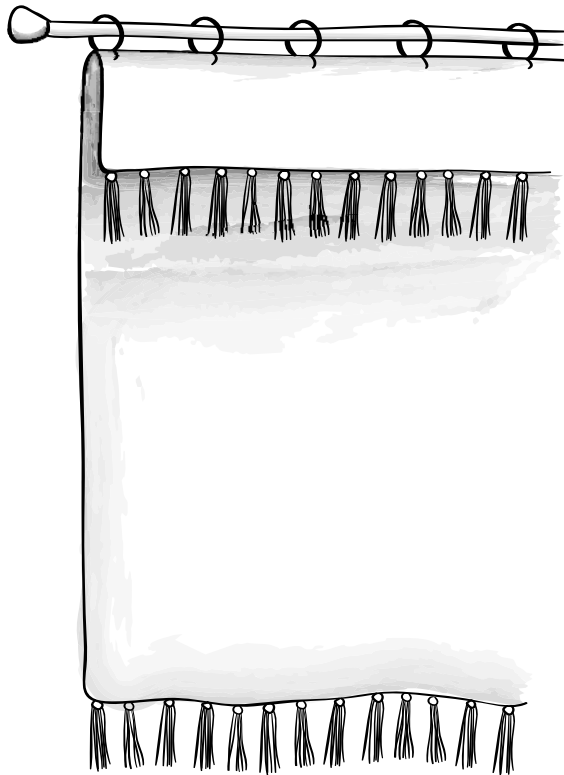**Figure 7-2:** An easy valance with square scarves.

Figure 7-3:
An easy
drapery
using a
fringed
throw.

Swag baby — with a simple drape

Choosing a swag treatment gives you design freedom with tons of choices.
You can make your swag drape symmetrically (with equal fabric on either
side or your window) or asymmetrically; have the side fabric extend down a
foot, 2 feet, or longer; and you choose how large or small you want your swag
"loops and swirls" to be. For a room that needs some privacy, team your
swag with coordinating draperies.

Considering fabric

When thinking about making swags, the key word is "silken." Any fabric that
makes you think of a soft and silky blouse or dress is what you're looking for,
so you can achieve the draping. We recommend a polyester charmeuse for a
lightweight swag treatment. Mediumweight polyester crepe fabrics are also
a good choice.

As for using prints versus solids, we prefer solids or one-color Jacquards (a type of figured, woven fabric; see Chapter 2 for more about Jacquards), or the simplest, tiniest print. Larger or one-way prints can be hard to use for swags because the fabric drapes across the window in several directions (see Chapter 2 for our discussion on one-way prints). You may want to consider picking a neutral accent color, or a solid color that echoes another color that is already prominent in your decor.

Figuring out your fabric needs

The formula we use to figure the yardage needed for a swag is

- ✔ For the width, allow a two-times measurement of your window, measured from trim to trim. Our window measured 30 inches wide, so our total width was 60 inches.

- ✔ For length (in this project the length is the two areas of the swag that hang down right and left, called the *cascades*), plan to add a measurement that reflects the look you like best. For example, if you want the fabric to hang down so it reaches the midway point of the total length, add half your total window length to each side. Our window measured 60 inches long, so we allowed 30 inches for each cascade. We added 60 inches to our width of 60 inches for a total measurement of 120 inches.

When you have the width and lengths added together convert your inches to yards. To do this, simply divide your total by 36. For example, 120 divided by 36 = 3.3 yards, which you round up to 4 yards of 45-inch wide fabric (you can always use the extra fabric to make a bow or rosette; see Chapter 8 for more).

To figure out how much fabric you need for other fabric widths, see the Yardage Conversion Table in the Cheat Sheet in the front of the book.

Getting your gear together

To get started, you need the following:

- ✔ A few yards of fabric, preferably something that is silky, light- to mediumweight, and that drapes beautifully

- ✔ A decorative curtain rod (the swag wraps around it, so it needs a rod that matches your decor)

- ✔ A box of straight pins (see Chapter 5 for the specifics on straight pins)

- ✔ Needle and thread for hand tacking (or use a sewing machine, if you prefer)

- ✔ A wrist pincushion

- ✔ A piece of tailor's chalk

Draping the swag

The key to getting your swag to look great is to work on the rod:

WARNING!

1. **Drape your fabric over the curtain rod on the actual window you're dressing.**

   Make sure your ladder is secure to prevent falls. You probably didn't plan for an emergency room visit in your window treatment budget.

2. **Carefully pin the folds in place as you go across the curtain, using long straight pins until you get the look you want.**

   Don't be shy — use a ton of pins to keep it secure.

3. **Chalk a light line along the area where your fabric will hang on the rod.**

   After you have your folds in place and you've pinned them, run your chalk parallel with the rod. When you're ready to put your swag on the rod after you've stitched your folds in place, you'll have a clear idea where your fabric needs to go.

4. **When removing the swag fabric from the rod with the pins in place, slide it off carefully.**

   You'll be hand tacking the folds in place (or stitching them with your sewing machine). Don't forget to take out your pins when you're finished sewing.

TIP

If you're using a heavier fabric that keeps slipping off your rod as you're pinning, try attaching some double-stick tape to the topside of your rod, which may help keep your fabric in place.
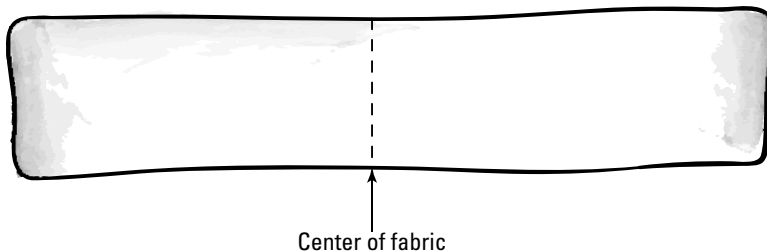
Creating the swag

Follow these easy steps to get great results when making your swag:

1. **Find the center of the fabric, measured perpendicular to the selvage edge, and mark it with straight pins in a straight line (see Figure 7-4).**

   The *selvage* is the finished-looking edge of the fabric where the fabric comes off the loom; you can find the selvage easily because it's always parallel to the lengthwise grain.

Figure 7-4:
Using pins to mark the center.

Center of fabric

2. **Toss the ends of your swag fabric over the rod or bar, so that each side has an equal amount of fabric.**

   Your pinned line needs to be in the exact center of the rod (see Figure 7-5).

3. **After you have an equal amount of fabric on either side, make folds where the fabric touches the rod.**

   The folds must mirror each other on each side and the line of pins used for marking the center need to be in a vertical line.

4. **Using your wrist pincushion and straight pins, pin your folds across the rod, being very careful not to pin it to the sheers or other drapery underneath (refer to Figure 7-5).**

   Use plenty of pins and work methodically, pinning the folds to each other to keep the folds in place. You can also add pins where no one can see them, working from the fabric's underside, which can stay in place after sewing. (Be mindful of the pins if you're sewing with a machine.)

5. **While still up on the ladder and after completing all your pinning, take your tailor's chalk and draw a straight line on the fabric parallel with the rod.**

   Doing so gives you a guide for putting the fabric back up on the rod after sewing.

6. **Remove your fabric from the rod and stitch across the folds in the area that will fall behind the rod.**

   Remove your pins as you sew.

7. **Hand tack the folds in the front so that they stay in place (see Figure 7-6).**

   To hand tack your folds, take a needle and a matching color thread and carefully stitch the folds in place by hand.

8. **Slide the rod through the stitched area and use your chalked line to center and arrange the swag fabric to your liking.**

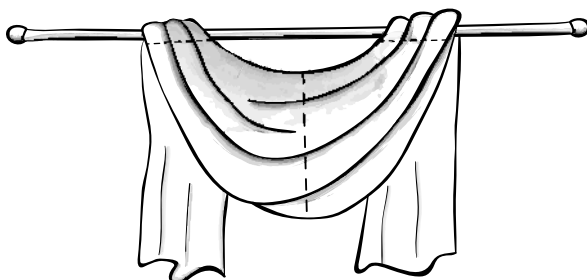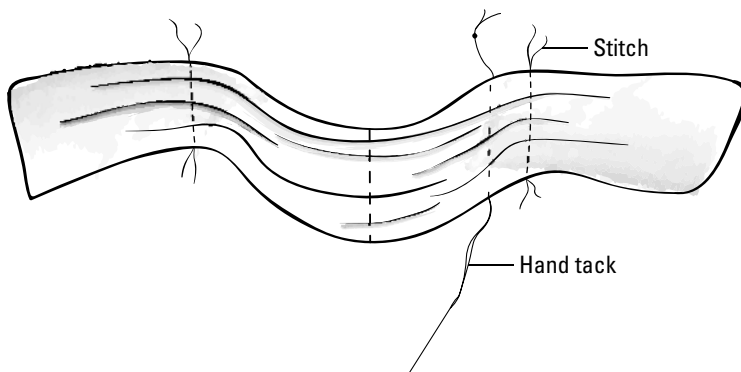Figure 7-5: The center of the fabric (where you've pinned) needs to be in the center of the rod.

Figure 7-6:
Hand
tacking
allows you
to sew
the folds
in place
without
using a
sewing
machine.

Stitch

Hand tack

Sassy scarf swags

Scarf swags are a wonderful way to dress up a room by adding romance and a bit of softness to already existing draperies, such as sheers. They loop and drape over a decorative rod, jazzing up some plain mini-blinds and providing a touch of elegance to your windows.

The length details of this project are a matter of taste: Some people like long scarves that create a puddle on the floor, while other people prefer a shorter look, perhaps right to the windowsill.

REMEMBER

Several pieces of hardware are made especially for holding swag treatments in place (see Chapter 20). But you really don't need to spend a lot of money on these specialty items. To save some dinero, you can use simple knots and a bit of ribbon — and they look just as nice.

Getting started

You need to assemble these items to create your scarf swag:

✔ A few yards of silky fabric

> To determine how much fabric you need for your window, follow these steps using your cloth measuring tape.

> **1. Measure the area of the swag that will go directly over the window top.**

> Start on one end of your rod and measure to the lowest part of the swag, going up and over the rod and back down again until you reach the opposite end of the rod.

2. **Determine the amount of fabric you want to hang down on either side of your window.**

   To do this step, measure from the top corner of your rod to wherever you want your swag to descend.

3. **Add the two amounts of fabric for your total measure.**

   For a standard 30 x 60-inch window, use a swag panel measuring about 180 x 22 inches, hemmed all the way around. The best way to get a piece of fabric with this measurement is to purchase 2½ yards of fabric, cut it in half lengthwise, and then sew the two pieces together end to end (sorry for that bit of sewing work there!). Doing so allows for enough yardage for the loop-around draping effect you want, as well as the two parts of the treatment that wrap and hang down the sides of the window.

✔ Cloth measuring tape

✔ Curtain rod

✔ Scissors

✔ Straight pins

✔ Ribbon (optional)

Making those scarf swags

To create your scarf swags, follow these simple steps:

1. **Find the center of your fabric, measured perpendicular to the selvage edge, and with pins, make a vertical line down the center (refer to Figure 7-4 from the previous project).**

2. **Hang the ends of your fabric over each end of the rod and pin the swirls and folds you like into place (refer to Figure 7-5 from the previous project).**

   Use several pins to keep it secure because the weight of the fabric can undo your work! Don't forget to take the pins out after you have the fabric the way you like it.

3. **Attach your draped scarf swag to the rod.**

   Tying a knot around the bar is the easiest way. Simply wrap your flowing end around the bar and pull it through the loop. Adjust the fabric to your liking, making sure not to tug too hard on the part you've just draped (see Figure 7-7).

   For a bit of extra security, add a small decorative flourish, such as tying and knotting (or creating a bow with) a yard of 1-inch-wide satin ribbon, which wraps around the drapery on the rod (see Figure 7-8).
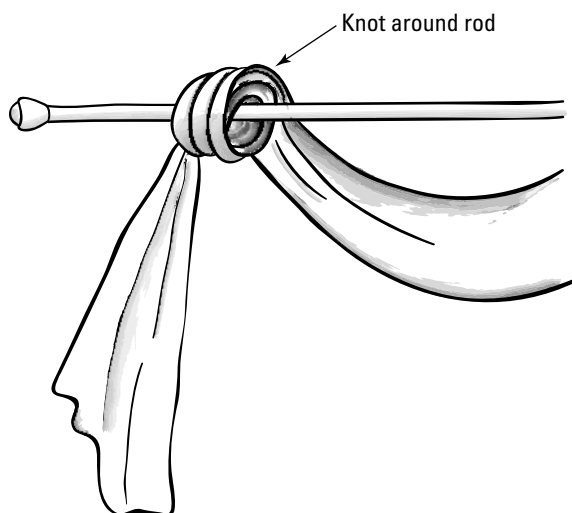
Knot around rod

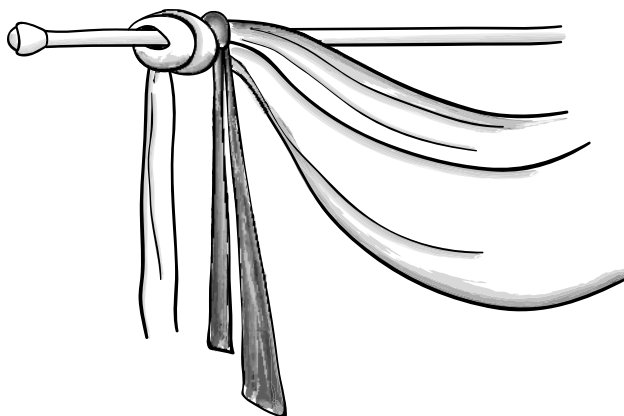**Figure 7-7:**
Tying the
knots.

Figure 7-8:
Adding on a
bit of ribbon.

Hiding Your Unmentionables: A Simple Lace Shelf Valance

Adding a simple fabric valance over shelving is a great way to hide the items you use daily but you don't necessarily want displayed. These valances are just perfect for an open area between kitchen cabinets, to tuck away everyday nondisplay dishes, or over the sink to hide a shelf of dishwashing products. Another ideal use is in the bathroom, where a valance can hide

items on top of your medicine chest mirror, adding a bit more discreet storage (check out the color section for an example of this option). Lace also does wonders to soften the look of a hard, tile-lined bathroom, and you can pull in decor colors by choosing a complimentary fabric. (Use a simple 1-inch tension rod for fastest mounting or a flat rod that extends out a few inches from the wall for maximum storage capacity.)

A benefit to using lace: You don't always have to fuss with creating a rod sleeve or finding clips you like. Some laces feature a pattern of small holes, called *beading,* that you can just weave a very thin curtain rod through, or you can snip thin slits through the fabric and insert the rod through them.

Gathering your supplies

Before starting on your valance, make sure you have the following supplies nearby:

- ✔ One piece of lace, cut to measure

    The key to this project is proper measuring. To determine the correct amount of fabric, use this formula:

    1. **Measure the width of the area you want to cover and multiply by 2.**

       For example, if the area you're working with is 30 inches wide, cut a piece of lace that measures 60 inches wide. (Doubling the width of the window allows the fabric to create natural gathers at the top when the rod is inserted and hung.)

    2. **Measure the height of the area and add 4 inches.**

       For example, if the area height is 18 inches, cut your piece of lace to measure 22 inches long. Because the fabric is two times the width, you'll create natural gathers at the top of the lace when the rod is inserted.

    Although we recommend lace as an ideal fabric for this project, a light, checked gingham is also a good choice. If you decide to use a nonlace fabric that needs a hem, add another inch to each measurement for both the length and the width, and make your hem with the fold-and-fold method. It's just pressing the fabric over so that it tucks under a ½-inch and then sewing a straight line to create a hem (see Chapter 14 for more on this way of hemming).

- ✔ Cloth measuring tape

- ✔ Chalk

- ✔ Iron and ironing board

- ✔ Sewing machine or needle and thread

Working with lace

Lace adds a feminine and delicate feel to any room. Don't save it only for formal areas; lace is a terrific fabric to add to your kitchen or bathroom.

Polyester machine-made laces are the best choice for simple no-sew curtains because they don't fray and can be cut in many ways. Here are a few other tips:

✒ **Cut your panel width to match the area.** If you want to create side seams, make sure to add an inch on either side.

✒ **For your fabric length, measure down to where you want the treatment to stop and add a few inches to the length.** If you decide to trim your lace along the motif at the bottom, you'll have adequate fabric to do so, plus the needed fabric for creating your rod pocket.

Regarding whether to hem or not, you don't need to hem polyester machine-made lace if you don't want to sew too much; you can cut along the design — say, the rounded part of a heart or the petal of a lace flower — to create a curvy hem. If you're working with handmade lace, don't cut the bottom because it'll unravel, and make sure you create a hem. Cut your lace carefully and sew it either by hand, sew it slowly on your sewing machine using a zigzag stitch, or hem it with a serger.

If you want to make no-sew lace curtains with a lace that unravels or frays, consider using a bit of Fray Check on any areas that have been snipped. Fray Check is like light glue that dries clear and stops fabrics from fraying. (See Chapter 5 for the specifics about Fray Check.)

If you're using cotton lace, always hand wash it before you begin your project to avoid later shrinkage (see Chapter 3 for the best way to pretreat fabric). You don't need to launder polyester lace beforehand.

Making your shelf valance

When creating your shelf valance, follow these easy steps:

1. **Measure 3½ inches of lace at the top and fold it over so that a ½ inch is tucked under (see Figure 7-9).**

2. **With a medium-hot iron, press the lace flat.**

   Be very careful not to burn or melt your synthetic lace because it's prone to dissolve under high heat.

3. **Stitch across at the 3-inch point, with your sewing machine or by hand, to create one large sleeve (see Figure 7-10).**

4. **Create the gathered 1-inch ruffle above the 2-inch rod sleeve below it:**

   • From the fold at the top of your fabric, measure down an inch and draw a straight line across with your chalk.

   • Sew across the line with your sewing machine or by hand (refer to Figure 7-10).

5. **Insert your rod into the created rod sleeve, gathering the fabric to create a ruffled effect, and hang your valance.**
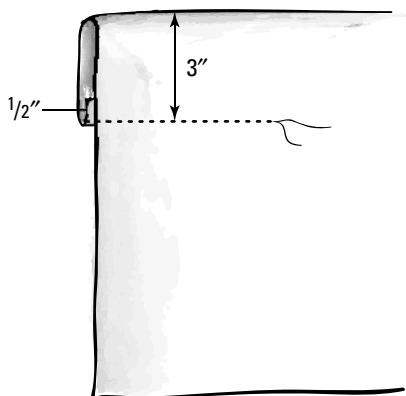
3″

1/2″

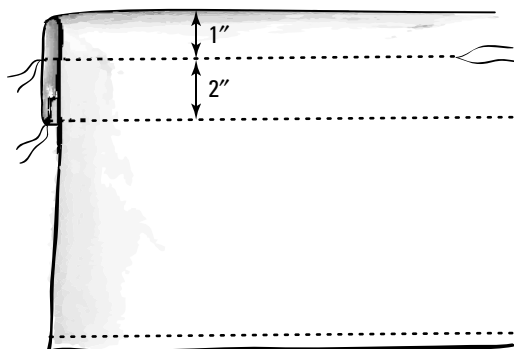**Figure 7-9:**
Folding
down your
fabric top.

1″

2″

Figure 7-10:
Stitch your
hem and
create a rod
sleeve.

Dollars and cents: A sample budget

To make the simple but sweet-looking lace shelf valance with ruffle top, you only need a few bucks, less than 15, to be exact. Here's how it breaks down:

- 2 yards of polyester lace: $12
- Coordinating thread: $2
- A piece of chalk: 25 cents

Because this project calls for inexpensive poly-ester lace, you can make a few different colors of this valance and change them at your whim (or for special holidays). What a great way to brighten up that old area over your sink!

Whipping Up Ultrasuede Curtains

These curtains are very simple window treatments that effectively block light and give your room a modern appearance. They're great for young men's rooms, or any room where you want a bit of style without any frills or fuss.

We recommend using Ultrasuede, or if you find Ultrasuede too costly, a less expensive faux-suede similar to Ultrasuede, for these curtains. Ultrasuede may be the most fantastic fabric ever! It never frays, it's washable, and it has the rich appearance of suede without all the hassle. It also comes in many different weights — from lightweight (called "soft" or "light") to heavyweight (called "Ambience"). Mediumweight Ultrasuede is best for the projects in this chapter.

REMEMBER

Confusing the right, or face side, and the wrong, or back side, of Ultrasuede is easy to do. Just remember, the right side is the most evenly saturated with color, so use a discerning eye before you begin a project.

Basic Ultrasuede panel

A basic Ultrasuede panel can create an ideal look for any informal room. We suggest you try it in a bedroom, family room, library, or even the kitchen. This panel curtain adds texture with its suede appearance while providing privacy and blocking light and drafts.

Getting your basics together

All you need to complete this project are

- ✔ Any color of mediumweight Ultrasuede fabric

  The measuring is easy. Your panel must be the same size as your window, including the trim mold (for effective sun blocking). If you want a fuller look, add a half-width measurement.

  For example, for a 30 x 60-inch window, use an extra 15 inches, so your width would be 45 inches.

- ✔ Curtain clips
- ✔ Scissors (or pinking shears)

Making the panel

Here's how to make the basic panel, literally 1-2-3:

1. **Measure your window's width and height.**

2. **Cut your panel the exact size of your window.**

   If you want a fuller look, add a half-width measurement.

3. **Attach curtain clips to the top of the panel, about one every 5 inches, and hang.**

TIP If you want to make this project even easier, skip the clips and grab your scissors. Cut small slits at the top of your panel and thread a rod of your choice through the holes. For best results, cut ten 1½-inch vertical slits every 3 inches, starting 1½ inches from the side. These slits need to start about a ½-inch down from the top (see Figure 7-11).

You can embellish your panel however you want, or use pinking sheers instead of scissors to add a different edge. For tips on accessorizing window treatments, see Chapter 8.

TIP You can also cut an inch of fringe for a Western/Native American flair. The panel's length measurement doesn't change if you choose to use these extra flairs.
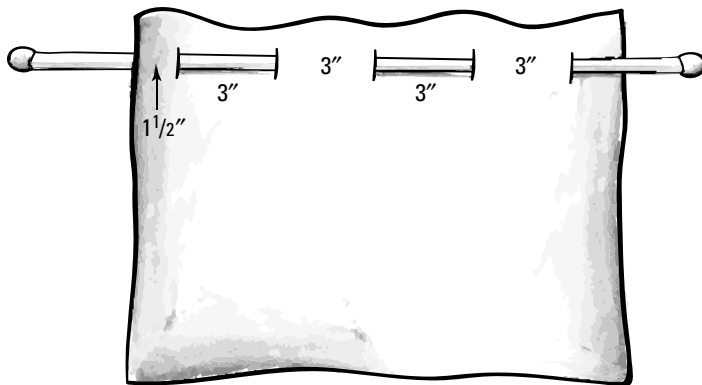

Figure 7-11:
Cutting slits
at the top.

Ultrasuede net curtains

This style of window treatment allows in light and has a cool, organic feel. If you're treating an informal room, such as a den, child's play room, or child's bedroom, that needs a fun focal point, try this project. (Kids especially love it because it allows in light in bits and pieces; they can put their notepads

underneath and draw the images the light and shadows create!) This project takes a while to correctly cut, but it's worth the extra effort.

Gathering your supplies

To make Ultrasuede net curtains, you need the following supplies:

✔ Any color of mediumweight Ultrasuede fabric

To figure out how much fabric you need:

1. **Measure across your window for the panel width.**

2. **For the length, measure from the top of the rod to your windowsill and subtract 15 inches to allow for the natural stretch of the fabric when it's hung in place.**

   For our project, for an usual 30 x 60-inch window, use a piece of fabric 30 x 45 inches. After you cut the fabric to achieve the net design, it expands and stretches down to cover the 60-inch-long window.

✔ Curtain clips

✔ Marking chalk

✔ A mat knife or X-Acto knife

✔ Safe cutting surface

✔ Shears

✔ Yardstick or ruler

Making your net curtains

To create your net curtains, follow these steps:

1. **Spread your fabric out on your worktable, weighing down the edges if necessary.**

2. **Starting 1½ inches down from the top and from the left-hand side (see Figure 7-12), cut four 6-inch-long horizontal slits, leaving 2 inches in between each one.**

   If your fabric panel is narrower, cut off the extra fabric equally from either end. If it's wider, add extra cuts, but always use the cutting measurements we give you for the best results.

3. **Measure down another 1½ inches and starting 4 inches from the left-hand side, cut three 6-inch horizontal slits, each 2 inches apart.**

   Continue alternating between the four-cut and three-cut lines until you get to the bottom of the panel.

4. **Attach curtain clips every 5 inches at the top of your panel and hang it from your curtain rod.**
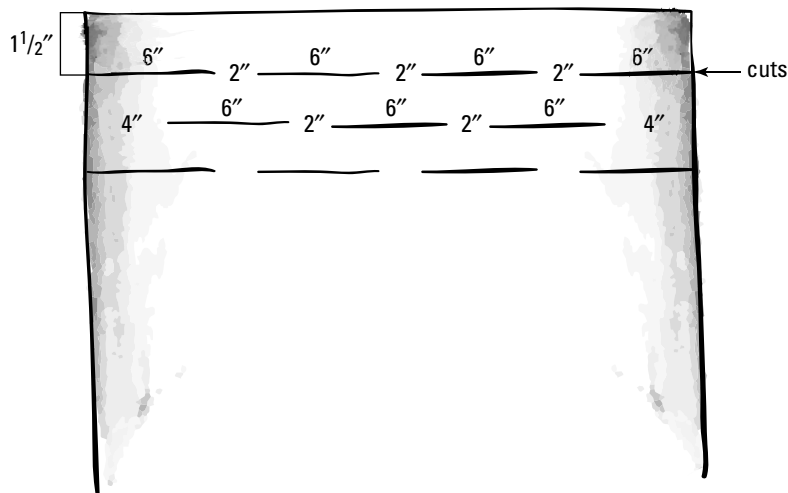
$1^1/_2''$

6″ — 2″ — 6″ — 2″ — 6″ — 2″ — 6″ → cuts

4″ — 6″ — 2″ — 6″ — 2″ — 6″ — 4″

Figure 7-12:
Cutting your
net curtain.

Ultrasuede cutout curtains

Another project you can try is one that uses unique cutout designs. The cutouts allow some light through, yet still give privacy. Follow the style we suggest in "Making your strip curtains" later in this chapter, or you can design the cutout motif to suit your decor. Try it in most any room, even more formal rooms like dining and living rooms. You can "fancy" it up by choosing an ornate cutout, or simplify it with an elegant but elemental one.

This curtain is essentially the same as the basic Ultrasuede panel (measure it the same way), but you use an X-Acto blade or cutting knife to create a design similar to a stencil (or you can use an actual stencil if you feel that may help you get the design you want). Try diamonds, hearts, or triangles — simple shapes that are dramatic — or try a scalloped edge on the bottom (see "Creating your cutout curtains" later in this chapter).

TIP

The best way to keep your fabric flat and secure when cutting with a sharp blade is to apply a paperweight, heavy books, or other weights on the fabric. (Fabric weights are available commercially, but they're a waste of money.)

WARNING!

Fabric markers and Ultrasuede aren't a great mix: This fabric may absorb the ink a bit too well and not wipe away. If you need to draw your image with something finer than tailor's chalk, work on the wrong, or back side, with a nonbleeding ballpoint pen.

Getting it all together

To start, you need these supplies:

- ✔ Any color of mediumweight Ultrasuede fabric

  To determine how much fabric you need:

  1. **Measure across your window to determine your panel's width.**

  2. **For the length, measure from the top of the rod to your windowsill.**

     Your panel needs to be the same size as your window, including the trim mold (for effective sun blocking). If you prefer a fuller look, add a half-width measurement. For example, for a 30 x 60-inch window, use an extra 15 inches, so your width is 45 inches.

- ✔ Curtain clips
- ✔ Marking chalk
- ✔ A mat knife or X-Acto knife
- ✔ Safe cutting surface
- ✔ Shears
- ✔ Yardstick or ruler
- ✔ Stencil (optional)

Creating your cutout curtains

To make your cutout curtain creations, follow these easy steps:

1. **Spread your fabric out on your safe cutting surface or worktable, weighing down the edges if necessary.**

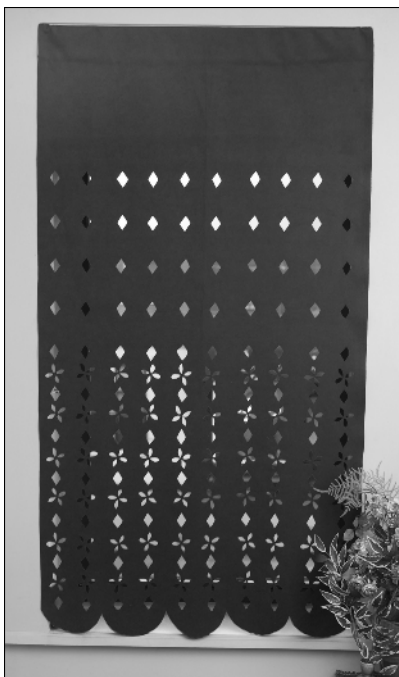2. **With your yardstick or ruler, determine the size of each cutout and the space between each one.**

   You want equal space between each cutout and to the right and left edges of your panel.

3. **Use your chalk to create the pattern you want to cut out of your fabric (see Figure 7-13 for inspiration).**

   Start at the center and work left, and then right, to get an even amount of motifs and spaces across the bottom.

   Consider drawing a light horizontal chalk line across the "top" of your design area. Doing so helps you keep your designs straight when drawing freehand.

Figure 7-13:
This curtain
features
various
cutout
designs and
a scalloped
bottom
edge.

4. **Cut out your motifs using your knife.**

   Work slowly and take a break from your work once in a while to see if you're doing it right.

5. **Attach curtain clips every 5 inches at the top of your panel and hang it from your curtain rod.**

Ultrasuede strip curtains

This ultramodern "curtain" allows plenty of light to come through, sways in the breeze, and is sure to be a conversation piece among guests. It's created with horizontal panels of Ultrasuede (or other faux-suede fabric) held together with rows of safety pins that add a fun, modern-looking metallic look. Try it in any informal room. You can also try it in doorways, where it allows in sound, air, and light.

TIP

For this project, use silver-toned clips if your safety pins are silver, and brass or gold-tone if your safety pins are gold-toned. Buy one large box of safety pins to be sure of the uniformity of the pins. Believe it or not, not all 2-inch safety pins are the same. When they're grouped as in this project, a stray really stands out. You can buy safety pins by the box at dollar stores or at any crafts store (see Chapter 20).

Gathering your supplies

Before you begin, make sure you have these supplies handy:

TIP

- ✔ Any color of mediumweight Ultrasuede fabric

  You may want to try alternating colors on different panels — say, blue, red, blue, red — or you can always use the same color throughout.

  To determine your fabric needs:

  1. **Measure your window width.**

     Your fabric width will be your exact window measurement, including your trim mold (for effective sun blocking).

  2. **To determine your length, measure from the top of your rod to the window sill, but plan on allowing for 2 inches of** *air space* **— the 2-inch area that the safety pins will take up — between each panel.**

     You may need to make your bottom panel a bit longer than the panels above it if your total length isn't an even number. The panel will look fine if you need to take this step. Don't make it shorter; it may seem like your last panel was a poorly planned afterthought.

     As for the proportion of the panels, unless your window is really oversize, stick with the 10- to 14-inch measurement for each panel. You'll get a better effect this way.

  For a 30 x 60-inch window, use four 10 x 30-inch Ultrasuede panels and one 14 x 30-inch Ultrasuede panel, which you can safety pin together. The total panel length with 2-inch safety pin increments is about 62 inches.

- ✔ Cloth measuring tape
- ✔ Curtain clips
- ✔ A measuring tape or yardstick
- ✔ About 130 two-inch safety pins (all from the same box/boxes)
- ✔ Shears

Making your strip curtains

To make your strip curtains, follow these steps:

1. **Cut your fabric into the correct panel measurements, as discussed in the previous section.**

2. **Pin the four 10-inch panels together using the safety pins, as in Figure 7-14.**

   The pins need to be an inch apart. Make sure all the safety pins face the same direction and are evenly spaced, to create a professional no-sew look.

Your bottom panel is 14 inches long. Depending on how deeply you pinned your safety pins into the panels, you may need to trim a small amount off to adjust to your window height.

3. **Use your measuring tape or yardstick to ensure an even bottom border.**

4. **Clip your curtain clips onto the top of your curtain and hang with the coordinating rod of your choice.**
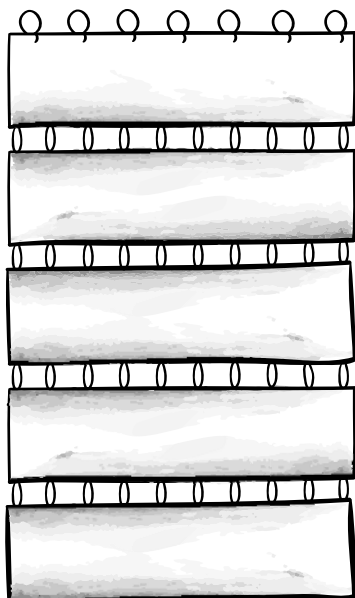

Figure 7-14:
Pin the
panels
together
with safety
pins.

Fashioning Frayed-Edge Draperies

Frayed-edge draperies are a simple treatment and require no sewing at all, just a few clips for hanging. This treatment lends a natural, organic-looking feeling when the frayed ends move in the breeze. You can use this unique frayed look in any room; try a simple fabric for an informal room, or a more ornate fabric for a formal room.

When choosing a fabric, select one that easily unravels to get the frayed fringe effect. Loosely woven fabrics, such as simple cottons, are great for this project, while cotton twills and polyester fabrics don't work because their weave is too tight. Before you commit to yardage, get a sample and clip a small piece of your loose-weave fabric to test it. Pull threads from both the side and the bottom. Are you getting the effect you desire?

Gather your supplies

Before starting this project, gather these necessary supplies:

✔ A few yards of fabric that unravels (see the earlier discussion in the previous section about selecting a fabric that unravels)

To determine how much fabric you need:

1. **Add 12 inches to your width measurement.**

   Six inches on either side gives you adequate fabric to allow for the initial trimming and then the fraying process, plus a little fabric to spare in case you want the fringe a bit wider. (Snipping fringe that is too long is a lot less work than taking too much fabric off to begin with and trying to correct it later.)

2. **Add 7 inches to your length measurement to allow for the fabric that drapes over the top of the treatment.**

For a 30 x 60-inch drape, use a piece of fabric that is 45 (because fabric doesn't come in 42-inch widths) x 67 inches.

✔ Curtain clips

✔ Measuring tape or yardstick

✔ Shears

✔ Sewing machine with appropriate thread (optional)

Get ready to fray

Here's how to fray your fabric and make your draperies:

1. **Cut your panel to the correct measurement.**

2. **To prep your fabric for fraying, trim off an inch or two from the left and right sides.**

   Doing so makes pulling the threads easier in order to create the fringe. (You don't have to trim the top and bottom, which fray well on their own.)
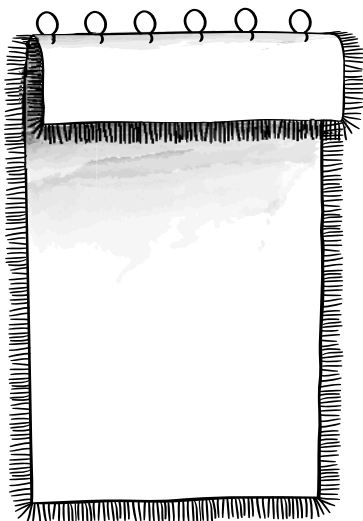
3. **Unravel each side, pulling outside threads one or two at a time.**

   Your goal is to obtain an inch of fringe all the way around, top, bottom, and sides. Keep your measuring tape or yardstick handy so you can keep all your sides even.

4. **When you're done, simply fold 7 inches of fabric over to the front of the panel (see Figure 7-15).**

5. **Add your clips at the top of the fold and hang your panel from your rod (shown in Figure 7-15).**

Figure 7-15:
Fold the front panel to create your sleeve and attach curtain rings.

TIP

If you don't mind doing a bit of light sewing, consider zigzag stitching around the edges where the fringe starts, as a final step, to secure your frayed fringe. (This step is a nice extra, but the panel still holds well without the added stitching.)

Cruising with Car Wash Curtains

Yep, they look just like the "curtains" you encounter in the drive-through car wash. You get a flowing, festive look with this treatment, which is also terrific in doorways. When the curtain is stationary, you get plenty of sun protection, and when the wind blows through the window, you can enjoy plenty of movement. This window treatment is especially great for kids' rooms, and they're always fun to look at and fun to touch. (Be careful with very young children because they love to tug and pull up on the streamers; it may be a safety hazard.)

You can make these curtains in several different ways. You can use ribbon, Ultrasuede, or plastic shower curtain liners. None requires any sewing and they can all be easily made with just a pair of sharp scissors.

Ribbon car wash curtains

You can use strips of fabric to create this curtain, but we prefer to use lengths of ribbon. One-inch-wide ribbon is a great choice for this project. Don't limit your ribbon color choice to only one shade; try red, white, and blue, all pastels, a variety of colors to create a rainbow-like effect using the full color spectrum, or gradient-toned blues, for a moiré effect, which can give your window a wavy, watery-looking appearance.

TIP

If you choose to use ribbons and you're treating an average-size window or larger, definitely look into buying from a ribbon wholesaler to save money (see the resources section of Chapter 20 for more info).

Gathering your supplies

To make this curtain, you need the following items:

- Strips of fabric or ribbon

  To figure your fabric or ribbon needs:

  1. **Take the width of your window and multiply by 2.** That's the number of 1-inch wide ribbons you need.

  2. **Take the length of your window, multiply by 2, and then add an inch (which represents the extra length needed to create the knotted loop that holds it in place).**

     This measurement represents how long each ribbon needs to be.

  For example, for a standard 30 x 60-inch window, use sixty 1 x 121-inch long strips of fabric, or try ribbon cut to the same dimensions, which you knot and hang along the rod of your choice.

- Scissors

Making the curtain

Check out Figure 7-16, which is the simplest way to create ribbon car wash curtains, and follow these steps:

1. **Measure your ribbons, allowing for the extra inch of fabric needed to make the loop and knot.**

2. **Cut the ribbons to the appropriate length.**

3. **Loop them around right on the rod of your choice.**

   You can do it any way that's pleasing to you. In Figure 7-16, the loop tucks under the downward hanging ends. Just be sure the two ends are of equal length before you pull the ribbon tight to secure your loop.
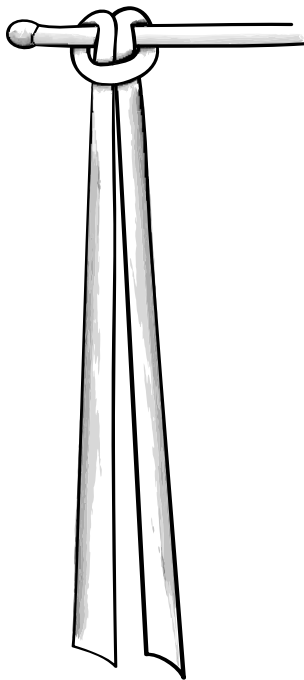
Ultrasuede car wash curtains

Using Ultrasuede (or another brand of faux-suede fabric) is another way to create these fun curtains. You get less of a breezy effect because faux-suedes are heavier, but you'll get more sun protection, too. Add this treatment to any informal room.

Getting your supplies together

When making Ultrasuede car wash curtains, use the following supplies:

✔ Any color of mediumweight Ultrasuede fabric

   To figure out how much you need:

   1. **Measure your window width and add 15 inches to your measurement.**

   2. **Measure your desired length.**

      For a window measuring 30 x 60 inches, use a piece of fabric that measures 45 x 60 inches.

✔ Curtain clips

✔ A measuring tape or yardstick, if you have a hard time keeping the strips an even 1-inch wide

   You could also use a clear ruler, which allows you to see the fabric better.

✔ Scissors

Assembling the curtain

Follow these simple instructions to assemble the curtain:

1. **Cut your fabric to achieve the correct size panel.**
2. **From the bottom of the panel, cut 1-inch-wide strips all the way up until you reach 3 inches from the top of the panel.**
3. **Attach curtain clips to hang.**

Shower liner car wash curtains

This project is fun, perfect for a child's room. It's an easy way for you to indulge them in their three favorite colors. Check out the discount and dollar stores for shower liners, where they're a bargain, and you can pick up your shower curtain hooks there, too. Red, white, and blue, or red, clear, and blue are nifty combos.

Gathering your gear

To begin this fun project, you need these items:

✔ Three different-colored shower liners (one can be clear)

✔ To get the right measurements for your curtain:

1. **Simply add 15 inches to your window width measurement.**
2. **For length, just snip the shower curtain liner to the length you need.**

   For a window measuring 30 x 60-inches long, use a piece of shower curtain liner that measures 45 x 60.

✔ A measuring tape or yardstick, if you have a hard time keeping the strips an even 1-inch wide, or you could use a clear ruler

✔ Scissors

✔ Shower curtain hooks

✔ Clothespins (optional)

Creating the curtain

You can make this curtain in a snap, but don't be afraid to work slowly to get it done right:

1. **Line up the holes of the three shower curtain liners so that you can make sure that your strips line up.**

2. **Clip the three liners together with clothespins if you want to keep the slippery liners from moving as you cut.**

3. **Starting from the bottom, cut each shower liner into a panel that measures 45 x 60 inches.**

4. **From the bottom of each panel, cut 2-inch-wide strips all the way up, until you reach 3 inches from the top of the panel (where the prepunched holes are).**

5. **Hang the layered shower liners on your curtain rod with plastic or metal shower curtain hooks (see Figure 7-17).**

Figure 7-17:
Layered shower curtain liners make a fun and easy window treatment.

Avoiding the Sewing Machine: No-Sew Shades

A nice alternative to curtains and draperies, shades are great for rooms of small proportions, such as half baths, and the two fun shades in this section are perfect for young adult rooms.

Shades with color transfers

Color copy heat transfers are wonderful, and you can make any photo, art image, or original art into a heat transfer at a copy shop. This project is fun for kids, and a nice way to personalize a room.

This project makes one shade, and you can choose any motif: an Andy Warhol–type, four-photo self-portrait; a floral collage; a tribute to favorite music groups past and present; whatever your heart desires. You can make a photomontage of the person who occupies the room, or use this treatment as a tool to designate sides of a room that are shared by more than one child. How about a design of one child's artwork? Maybe you want to try a black-and-white theme: Cut out a bunch of pictures of zebras and go to town. The options are totally fun and truly limitless.

Use a fabric roll-up shade if you can; plastics don't allow the transfer to adhere (but see the note in Step 2 in "Getting started on your shade").

Gathering your gear

When making this shade, you need these basics:

- Color copy of the image/s of your choice
- One fabric shade
- Hammer
- Mounting hardware to mount shade
- Sewing machine with zigzag (optional; see Step 2 in the next section)

The art of heat transfers

The best way to do a heat transfer is to place it exactly where it needs to go (check to see if it's straight with an L-square) and iron it on the highest heat your iron has, with no steam. Lift the corner to check your work and see whether it's taking to the fabric. Keep the heat and pressure up. When it starts to take, starting at the top, lift the paper a little at a time until you get to the bottom of the transfer. After you remove the paper, remember to iron only on the back of the shade. You can't directly iron onto the transfer, or it will burn and ruin your iron!

Getting started on your shade

Making this shade is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. **Take your image to the copy shop.**

   The largest color copy transfer the copy shop can make is about 17 x 11 inches.

2. **Follow the directions on adhering a heat transfer the copy shop provides you (if it doesn't, see "The art of heat transfers" sidebar in this chapter).**

   If you can't find a fabric shade, iron your heat transfer onto a white, 100-percent cotton piece of fabric and sew it onto your shade with your sewing machine's zigzag feature.

3. **Put your shade up with your hammer and mounting brackets or other appropriate hardware.**

Clear Contac paper "shades"

You make this "shade" with adjacent squares covered with clear Contac paper, which is a great material to work with for many reasons: It allows in light, while still offering some privacy, and it's cheap and easy to use, so you can change your mind often, or redecorate your window for each season, holiday, whatever your whim.

Sneak a peak at the end of this project to see the finished job (Figure 7-18). This simple project gives any informal room a fun feeling. Consider making this shade for a modern bedroom, where the square panels are echoed

elsewhere in your decor. Try it in a child's bathroom or bedroom; it's a great opportunity to let your kids' artwork have a better place to shine than the refrigerator door.

To create a hanging window shade, apply clear Contac paper over equal-size pieces of paper, which laminates the images so they stay in place and the shade pieces maintain their integrity.

Gathering your gear

Before you start, get the following items ready:

- ✔ Any kind of interesting paper that matches your decor

  Some ideas include colorful construction paper, a color-page sheet from a newspaper (check out foreign-language newspapers if you're matching an ethnic decor), beautiful wallpaper or wrapping paper, vintage greeting cards, color copies of photos, images from children's books, or anything you like. For kids' rooms, try spelling out names, words, or messages by using a letter on each Contac-covered square.

  To figure out how many squares you need, follow these steps:

    1. **Measure your window length and width.**

    2. **Figure how many identically sized squares you need to reach your windowsill, interspersed with 2-inch clips between each square.**

       Try 4 x 4-inch squares because they break down nicely for a 30 x 60-inch window and provide a variety of images. For a window of this size, use about seven or eight rows of squares, and they'll be ten squares long each, with 2-inch paper clips between each square. You can do the simple math; now get cracking on finding all those images!

- ✔ 6 yards of clear Contac paper

- ✔ Curtain clips

- ✔ Curtain rod

- ✔ Hole puncher

- ✔ Scissors

- ✔ One box of 2-inch paper clips

  Because paper clips can vary in style and color from company to company, use all your paper clips from one box for a uniform appearance.

Making your shade

To create your shade, follow these steps:

1. **Cut your decorative paper into 4 x 4-inch squares, enough to fill your window.**

2. **Apply one layer of the clear Contac over one side of the decorative paper and then the opposite side.**

   Doing so "laminates" the image, suspending it between the Contac paper.

3. **Cut the Contac paper–covered image leaving a ½-inch edge of Contac around each square.**

4. **Punch a hole at the top and bottom of each square, being sure to keep the holes within the ½-inch of clear Contac paper.**

5. **Arrange the squares in columns and attach with large paper clips.**

   Be sure to only punch one hole at the top for the bottom squares.

6. **Attach the top paper clips to your curtain clips.**

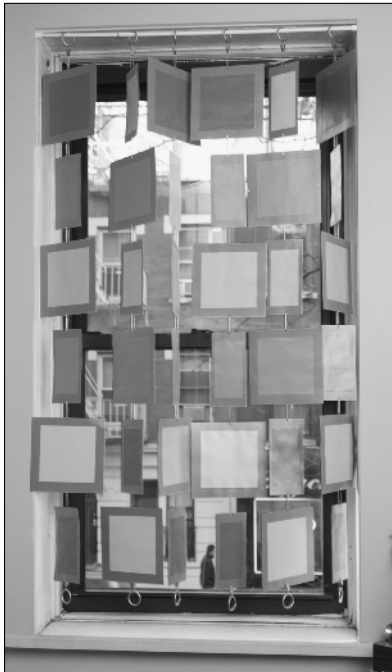7. **String along your rod and hang (see Figure 7-18).**

Figure 7-18: String 'em up.