

Pretty Prints Please: Cotton Gauze Bed Curtains

Editor: Liz Johnson

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The beautiful, billowy bed curtains we associate with elegance and style, actually have a rather ordinary and functional history. In those drafty old European castles of old, the lord and his family slept in the great hall along with all their servants, because this hall was one of the few areas of the castle where the fires were kept stoked for warmth and light. The noble family's sleeping area was separated from the rest of the riffraff by curtains. Originally, the curtains were hung from the ceiling, but as the bed evolved, a frame was added to support a canopy from which the curtains hung.

Well ... there's nobility involved in that story, which qualifies as 'princessy', which makes them perfect for our teen room makeover. They also add a strong vertical element to counteract the many horizontal surfaces in the room.

Our gauze curtain panels hang on a unique cable and post system. Read our tutorial [Installing Cable Wire for Hanging Curtains](#).

Our Pretty Prints Please projects were made using fabrics from the collections of seven fabulous fabric designers: Amy Butler, Valori Wells, Anna Marie Horner, Erin McMorris, Tina Givens, Sandi Henderson and Paula Prass. Their beautiful prints were accented with turquoise and zebra fleece and a pink designer solid from Free Spirit, as well as the white, pink and orange gauze used for this project. To see how we developed our mix-and-match, teen-friendly palette, read our article: [Pretty Prints Please: Teen Room Makeover](#). To learn more about pulling prints together, read our tutorial: [Tips For Mixing Fabric Collections](#).

Sewing Tools You Need

- Any Sewing Machine (we recommend the Janome [Jem Platinum 760](#))

Fabric and Other Supplies



- Fabric for curtains: 2¾ yards of 45" wide **lightweight** fabric PER PANEL: *we used cotton gauze in white (5½ yards because we had two white panels), pink (5½ yards because we also had two pink panels) and orange (2¾ yards for one panel)*
- All purpose thread
- See-through ruler
- Fabric pencil
- Iron and ironing board
- Scissors or rotary cutter and mat
- Straight pins

For our bed, we had two goals: 1) the curtains had to provide a screen for the storage tubs we hid behind the bed, and 2) we wanted the feeling of a soaring vertical headboard with just a little wrap around to the sides. For our goals, five panels was the perfect number.

You can add (or take away) panels to create your own mood and color combination. Just figure you'll need an approximately 45" wide x 99" long cut for every panel in your design. Mix and match happy colors like we did or make all the panels the same for a serene and subtle mood. As long as you stick with a very lightweight fabric, the cable wire we recommend for hanging should be able to support quite a few panels. We could have easily added three four more panels to each side for a full 'wraparound' look.

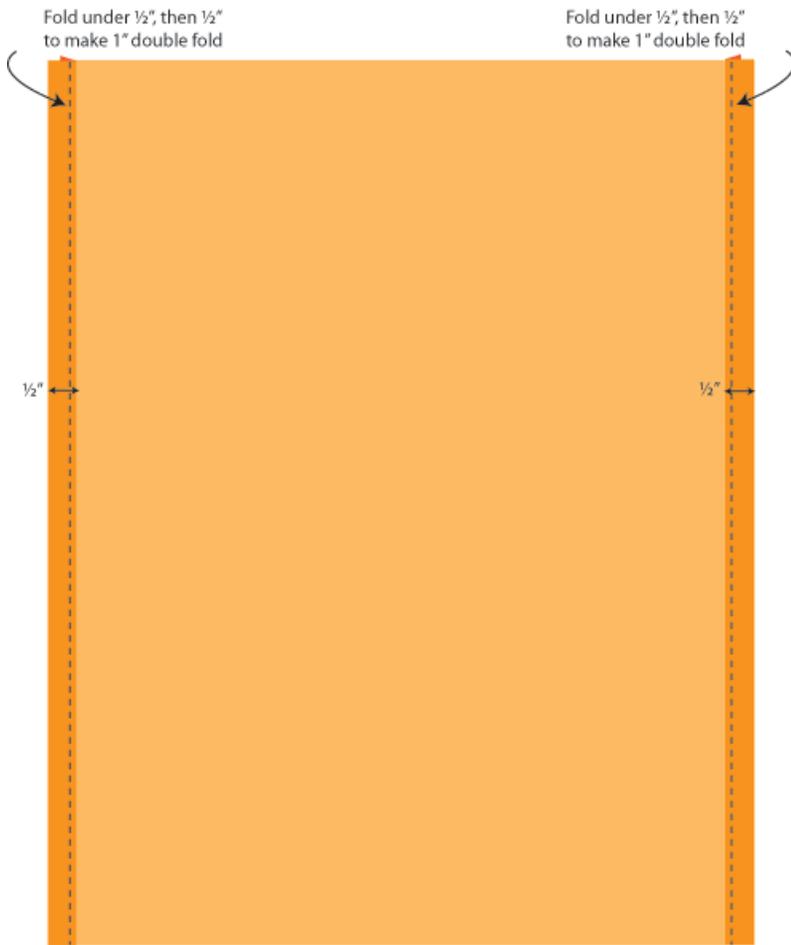
Getting Started

1. Your first step is to confirm the actual length of your curtain. Measure from the the taut cable to the floor (ours was 95"). Then measure the overall length of your hanging clips (ours were about 3"), and subtract that measurement to get your final finished length (95" - 3" = 92").
2. You will need 2" for a top hem and 4½" for a bottom hem. After all this math, we determined our panels needed to be cut 98½" in length (92" + 2" + 4½"). 2¾ yards is 99", which is how we came up with our cut recommendation above. Unless you have super-high ceilings, this should be a safe amount of fabric for most installations.
3. For width, we simply used the entire 45" width of the gauze.

At Your Sewing Machine

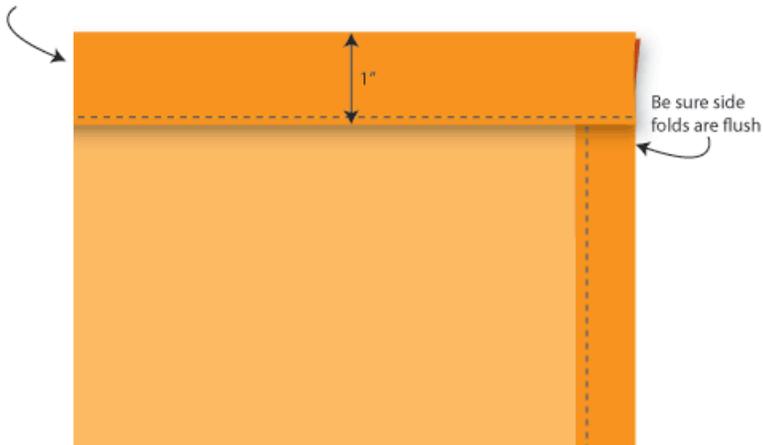
Each panel should be hemmed on all four sides.

1. To hem the sides of each panel, first fold in one long raw edge ½" and press. Then, fold in another ½". Your first fold rolls inside the second and you end up with a nice folded edge. Press this double fold. Pin, and stitch in place, sewing close to the inside folded edge in the fabric.



2. Repeat to create the hem on the opposite side of the panel.
3. To hem the top of each panel fold down the top raw edge 1" and press. Then, fold down another 1". Press this double fold. Pin, and stitch in place, sewing close to the inside folded edge in the fabric. Make sure your edges are flush.

Fold under 1", then 1" to make 2" double fold



4. To hem the bottom of each panel fold up the bottom raw edge $\frac{1}{2}$ " and press. Then, fold up another 4". Press this double fold. Pin, and stitch in place, sewing close to the inside folded edge in the fabric.



5. For more information about hemming, read our tutorial: [How to Make a Simple Hem](#).
6. Repeat steps 1-4 to hem as many panels as you need.
7. Attach hanging clips at evenly spaced intervals. We found each 45" panel required nine hanging clips.



8. Carefully hook clips over wire to hang and adjust 'pleats' so the curtains have a nice, billowy look.

Hints and Tips

Support your fabric as you sew

You will be working with a lot of fabric during this project. Make sure you set your sewing machine on a surface that can provide ample room to the back to support your work. If you simply let the fabric fall straight down behind the machine, the weight of the accumulated fabric can drag and pull on your fabric as you try to feed it through the machine. That can lead to messed up seams. Set up your machine on one end of your dining room table and let the fabric flow out and over the top.

Contributors

Project Design: Alicia Thommas

Sample Creation: Kathy Andrews, What Sew Ever

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