



Workroom Threads

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carolina custom draperies
Workroom to the Trade

When Width Becomes Length . . . Confusing?



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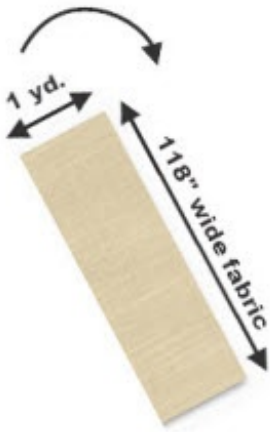
It seems that even the most experienced designers get confused when estimating yardage that is extra wide. I'm referring to fabrics that are generally 118"-130" in width. These are considered "seamless" fabrics because you could create drapes that go from wall to wall without ever having a seam. How can this be? It is because the width of the fabric becomes the length of the drape.

The concept is quite simple. In fact, because the concept is so simple it seems that many designers overthink it and create elaborate ways of estimating this type of yardage. Or they plan to seam the extra wide widths together just as they would seam together any other fabrics.

Let's make seamless seem easy!



All drapery fabrics have a selvage on the left and on the right. Most drapery fabrics are 54"W so when you find a fabric that is 118" - 130" wide you know that something is different. These wide fabrics also have a selvage on the left & right so it seems logical that these selvages would be sewn together to make a wide panel just as they are with the 54"W fabrics. NOT SO!



These wide fabrics are intended to be turned so that a selvage is at the top and a selvage is at the bottom. This is called railroading. The 118"-130" fabric width becomes the drapery length. When you purchase these wide fabrics you have actually purchased the drapery length. So how in the world do you know how much fabric to order?



Since the drapery length is now given to us by the wide fabric all that needs to be calculated is the fullness desired in the width of the drapes.

For our example let's say our rod is 130"W and we want to use 2.5X fullness. $130" \times 2.5 = 325"$ + 12" for side hems + 12" for returns and overlaps = 349" needed for our fullness. $349" \div 36" \text{ in a yard} = 9.6 \text{ yds.}$ rounded up tells us that 10 yards would be ordered. No calculations needed for length! No seams!

Vertical Repeat Means Vertical at Window

If you want your seamless drapes to be lined you should use a seamless lining. Some seamless fabrics also have pattern repeats. In recent months I've been discussing how to calculate yardage with a vertical repeat. A vertical repeat is measured vertically as it runs parallel the selvage.

When a fabric is intended to be railroaded the vertical repeat quoted by the mill is considered to be vertical when it is fabricated and viewed at the window (same is true on railroaded upholstery fabric). The repeat will be perpendicular to the selvages, i.e. it runs left to right between the two selvages which is horizontal on the bolt. Therefore, when the fabric is turned sideways and becomes railroaded the repeat becomes vertical.

Where the ordinary becomes extraordinary

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