

Below are guidelines for selecting a suitable fabric, to enhance the look and longevity of your BQ soft furnishing products.

There are pros and cons for all fabric compositions and weaves. We recommend you speak with your fabric rep about the performance expectations of the fabrics you are choosing. Also remember the inherent characteristic of the fabric will not change when the fabric is made into soft furnishing products.

BQ is always happy to sight your fabric sample and give advice on how it will behave when made up.

CURTAINS

BQ can manufacture almost any drapery classified fabric into curtains/drapes.

There is a wide choice of suitable quality print and plain fabrics in the market. Select a curtain heading style to best suit your fabric.

FABRIC COMPOSITION & WEAVES

The below list of suitable fabrics applies to the main curtain fabric and any contrast bands added. Ensure fabric chosen for contrast bands is stable and will behave in a similar way to the main fabric.

Be mindful when using a natural fibre such as cotton, linen or silk, direct sun will cause fabric to fade fairly quickly, especially for curtains in a window recess and for bright colour fabrics.

COTTON

- 100% cotton will make and hang very well in drapery.
- The weighty handle means you will get a great fall in your pleats and fabric will hang very straight.
- Cotton can be pre-shrunk and pressed or steamed so is a fairly hard wearing natural fibre in terms of manufacturing and handle in the end product.
- May be prone to a bit of movement but not to the extent of linen. 100% cotton is more prone to shrinking than dropping, just like in apparel.
- Prone to fading so use of linings or sheers on a track behind is important.

COTTON / POLYESTER

- Cotton/polyester blends where the blend of fibres is fairly even (eg: 60% cotton 40% polyester) are generally the best performing drapery fabrics on the market.
- The slightly higher cotton content gives great handling, giving the curtains weight so they hang/dress well and giving a soft finish. The polyester content gives stability to the cotton and helps stop it from shrinking or dropping out too much.
- Cotton/poly blends can still drop and an acceptable amount would be 10-20mm in the first 12 months.
- This composition can be pre-shrunk, pressed and steamed if required. Initial creasing when first installed will generally drop out within the first week with good warmth in the room.

continued overleaf

POLYESTER

- 100% polyester is generally the most stable fibre in the textile market and is extremely versatile and often most cost effective.
- Great in sheer fabrics and available in a range of weaves and thicknesses, so the way in which the fabric handles and drapes will vary.
- You can expect very little to no movement from 100% polyester, however take into consideration the quality of the fabric and how open the weave is. Some poor quality polyesters have been known to shrink or get a rippled look to the fabric when exposed to hot sun, however this is quite rare.
- There are many polyester blends that give you a “linen” or natural fibre look without the instability factor.
- Polyester in its most basic form is a plastic fibre which means it is very light weight and quite springy. This springy nature can mean that 100% polyester fabrics (both sheer and solid) can be prone to billowing or flair which may result in the curtains not hanging as straight or uniform as one might like. If you are going for a more full bodied look then this will not be a problem.
- If your sheer polyester fabric does not come with a weighted hem then we can add to the bottom of the curtain, to help control this billowing factor.
- 100% polyester fabrics can also be affected by static.
- Polyester is mostly resistant to creasing, however if left folded for a long time before install or the fabric has had creasing within the roll prior to manufacture then this can cause “memory creasing” which can be rather difficult to get out. Memory creasing is where the polyester fibre has been manipulated into the crease shape and forms a memory. BQ can press the creases out as best we can however often the creasing will reappear over time. Pressing polyester is a balance between heating the fibre hot enough to manipulate the fibre flat again without damaging it further. This tends to be an issue mostly where a continuous sheer is supplied as doubled over on a standard width roll or the fabric roll has been stored on its end for a long period of time and the fabric has wrinkled on the roll.

LINEN

- Ideal for most curtain heading styles.
- Linen often has the best weight and handle and will drape/fall beautifully.
- Linen curtains will fall into pleats very well which makes it a great fibre to use when going for a tailored look or straight fall to the curtain.
- Even when pre-shrunk, linen will react to the environment, with curtains shrinking and dropping depending on the humidity levels in the air, and therefore sitting at different levels during the year. If your client has evaporative cooling this could present problems when using linen for drapery. Also a curtain near a heating duct will sit at a different length to another curtain in the same room. To make the movement in linen curtains less obvious, we recommend the curtains are designed to sit on, break or puddle/pool on the floor so variations in curtain length are less noticed.
- Linen also creases very easily and although it can be pressed and steamed there will always be some level of creasing due to handling and being stacked back.
- We press all linen curtains prior to packing but cannot stop creasing that happens through transportation or handling.
- Curtains will look rather creased when first hung but should drop out relatively quickly. Steaming curtains can help reduce creasing however the steaming will cause the fabric to drop. Curtains will normally shrink back up upon drying out but may not be completely level.

LINEN/VISCOSE & 100% VISCOSE

- These compositions will move!
- As viscose can not be pre-shrunk your client will need to expect a certain level of movement in their curtains. To make the movement less obvious, we definitely recommend the curtains are designed to sit/break or puddle/pool on the floor so variations in curtain length are less noticed.
- These fabrics will hang beautifully though and have a subtle lustre, which makes it so appealing.
- These fabrics will also crease a lot and as viscose can only be pressed at a very low heat, curtains may look very creased upon install. The creasing is likely to drop out over time but your client will need to be prepared for the fabric to have some level of creasing at all times.

VELVET

- Offers a luxurious look, beautiful texture and great thermal qualities.
- Due to the variety of velvet compositions on the market they can all perform a little differently in terms of how they handle, fall and move.
- When making velvet curtains BQ will run the pile facing up as standard, as this will give a deeper and more intense colour and functionally any pile disturbance will disappear quickly as the pile relaxes. We can make the curtains with the pile running down on request although not recommended. This gives a smoother and more consistent appearance but will look lighter in colour and gives a more matte finish. Depending on the fabric, the hems and seams can also look puckered due to the shadows that appear across every little indentation.
- Due to the pile, velvet is very prone to “bruising” meaning the fibre gets crushed and distorts the lustrous finish. For this reason BQ recommends hand sewing of velvet in curtains and a surcharge is applied for this. Some polyester short pile velvets are more durable and will machine sew ok but BQ will not guarantee the outcome or take responsibility for any bruising that occurs in transport and when machine sewing of velvet is requested.
- It is not recommended for velvet to be pressed or steamed.
- Velvet curtains should be lined to protect them against direct ultra violet light exposure, which may cause pile loss, colour fading and fibre degradation. Lining will also enhance the draping and general appearance of your curtains.
- We recommend to always use a pull cord or rod to open and close your velvet curtains as hand contact will likely bruise and crush the texture of the pile.
- After hanging velvet curtains it is recommended that they be drawn across, allowing the pile to breathe and relax. Warwick Fabrics also recommend finely spraying curtains with water to dampen and don't touch curtains while drying. This will remove creases and marks. The pile will continue to relax and improve over time due to surrounding atmospheric conditions.
- All lined and unlined velvet curtains will have hand sewn hems as standard. Plain sewn hems are available on request.
- In an effort to improve the aesthetic finish of velvet curtains, our standard base hem finish is a single fabric turn rather than a double fabric turn. The fabric raw edge is overlocked and the hem is secured with hand sewing as standard. As velvet is a thick fabric, a single fabric turned hem provides a flatter and nicer finish to the front of the curtain and the overlocked fabric edge on the reverse side of the curtain will still be hidden on lined curtains by the lining fabric. For unlined curtains, please specify on your order form if single or double turned base hems are required.

SILK

- Silk is a beautiful and delicate fabric that makes beautifully into drapes.
- Being a generally high sheen fabric, silk will be reflective and part of the inherent character is the shadows and play of light it produces.
- Silk is very easily light affected and hence we recommend silk curtains are always lined with a full blackout 3 pass lining.
- Your client should be made aware that the leading edges, base hems (if window glass is to the floor) and side hems on linen curtains, are prone to fade more quickly than the rest of the curtain. Fading is likely within the first few years.
- We recommend bump interlining for all silk curtains. Not only will it give a full bodied look and a much better aesthetic finish, but will also help to protect the silk from deterioration through exposure to harsh sunlight, moisture and other environmental effects and will assist with insulation.
- Darker tones will fade out more quickly than light ones.
- Silk drapes do look best when pooled onto the floor with a “fluffed up” look.

SOFTWEAVE, TRIPLE WEAVE, DIMOUT AND ULTRA DIM FABRICS

- Not recommended as main fabric as these fabrics pull easily during manufacturing and when installed.

STRETCHY FABRICS

- Not recommended as curtain drop is not stable over time.

PATTERN FABRIC

Where patterned/print fabric is joined, BQ will always ensure perfect pattern match so the pattern is not interrupted across the curtains and joins become almost invisible.

If the same fabric is used throughout the room on multiple sets of curtains, roman or roller blinds, please notify BQ so we can ensure pattern flow throughout the room.

Provide BQ with the details of your pattern repeat, especially if the fabric has a large pattern repeat, as additional fabric may need to be ordered to achieve pattern flow throughout the room.

FABRIC WIDTH

Fabrics more than 150cm wide can not be processed through our pre-shrinking oven. Therefore consider fabric movement much more when having curtains made in wide width or continuous fabrics with high natural fibre content.

For sheer curtains, BQ recommend wide width fabrics run in a continuous direction, to avoid vertical fabric joins that are especially visible.

Fabrics with a weighted hem will maximise the available curtain drop length when using a wide width fabric run continuously.

HEADING STYLES

CARTRIDGE, EVO & GOBLET

- Suitable fabric: solid plain and pattern fabrics.
- Not suitable for curtains with angled top.

EYELET, PENCIL PLEAT, RIPPLEFOLD, ROD POCKET, TAB TOP & WAVE

- Suitable fabric: solid and sheer plain and pattern fabrics.

FLAT PANEL

- Suitable fabric: solid and sheer light to medium weight fabrics including linens, cottons and silks.
- For very sheer unlined fabrics, heading buckram will be obvious and metal hooks may be seen through fabric. Double buckram can be requested so metal hooks aren't visible.
- Not suitable for curtains with angled top.

GATHERED

- Suitable fabric: solid and sheer plain and pattern fabrics, although not recommended for thick and heavy fabrics.

INVERTED PLEAT

- Suitable fabrics: solid and sheer, plain and pattern fabrics.
- Thick and heavy fabric not suitable for inverted pleat curtains.
- If unlined curtains using very sheer fabric, we use a double layer of main fabric so buckram isn't seen through fabric. Additional fabric may be required.
- For fabrics with vertical stripes, consider the interruption to pattern flow along the curtain heading due to inverted pleats.
- Hidden seams is recommended so vertical fabric join not seen along curtain heading.
- Not suitable for curtains with angled top.

KNIFE PLEAT

- Suitable fabric: fine sheer fabrics.

PINCH PLEAT

- Suitable fabrics: solid and sheer, plain and pattern fabrics.
- Thick and heavy fabric not suitable.
- Heading buckram will be obvious on very sheer unlined fabrics.
- If unlined curtains using very sheer fabric, we use a double layer of main fabric and double buckram (charge applies) so buckram and metal hooks aren't seen through fabric.
- If using a light coloured fabric, and curtains are blackout lined, we recommend contacting our Customer Service team for advice.
- Not suitable for curtains with angled top.

RELAXED FOLD

- Suitable fabric: solid and sheer fabrics with a soft handle for the best result in hanging.

SCANDI

- Suitable fabric: solid and sheer fabrics with a soft handle for the best result in hanging.

Unlined

Lined