Perfect Ways To Get Room Darkening Curtains That Work

Author: Lee Stevens
Curtain Styles You Should Definitely **NOT** use

If you want the darkest room possible. These are great curtain styles, however just no right for room darkening curtains.

**Tab Top Curtains:** Because these have to hang from decorative curtain rods. The light shines in between the tabs. Also up from behind the curtain rod.

**Grommet Top Curtains:** Because the light shines in through the grommet openings.

Also because the way the curtains heading waves back and forth on the curtain rod. This creates large gaps over the top of the curtains that allow in lots of light.

**Rod Pocket Curtains:** Because this style of curtain is threaded on to a decorative curtain rod. This means that the curtain brackets holding the rod make the curtain sit too far off the wall. Thus allowing too much light to leak from the sides of the curtains. As well as over the top behind the rod.

Personally I would avoid any kind of curtains that have to hang from a decorative curtain rod. This kind of curtain hardware is not right for room darkening window treatments. You will not end up with a very dark room.

Discover lots more about [how to hang curtains](http://www.easycurtainideas.com) here.

[www.easycurtainideas.com](http://www.easycurtainideas.com)
Curtain Styles You Definitely Should Use

**Pinch Pleat Curtains and Pencil Pleat Curtains** are the 2 curtain styles I recommend for using to darken a room substantially. The reason being is that these curtain styles can be hung from a curtain track rather than a decorative curtain rod.

This makes all the difference as curtain tracks fit so much closer to the wall than a curtain rod. The brackets that support the track are usually only about 1 inch from front to back. Where as curtain rod brackets are around 2 ½ inches to 3 inches from front to back.

This makes a huge difference in the amount of light that leaks in to the room around your black out curtains.

**Important Tips About Hanging!**

Another big thing that needs to be considered is where to install your curtain track. I usually recommend fixing it about 5 inches over the top of your window.

However when it comes to installing room darkening curtains. I recommend you fix your curtain track at 8 inches over the top of your window. This will help to block even more light.

The next big thing I recommend is to go wider with your curtain track on both sides of your window than the normal 5 inches. I would add 10 inches to each side of your window. For more info take a look at [how to hang curtain rods](http://www.easycurtainideas.com).
This again will again make your black out curtain sit much wider than the window. Thus blocking more light.
The 3rd big thing I recommend you do is to hang floor length curtains. This is regardless of how short your window may be. This will stop most light from leaking from under your curtains when closed.

The only exception to this rule is if you have a full length window such as a patio door or French doors. In this situation you just have to have the curtains touch the floor. However you will still get a little light leaking in under the curtains in places.

Now that covers all the basics of how to get your black out curtains to make your room a lot darker. You can though take it a couple of steps further and make your room almost completely light free.

**Blocking Even More Light!**

You can use valance window treatments or cornice window treatments to block a lot more light coming in to your room. Again though this only half the story. The other half of the story is the kind of valance curtain hardware you use to support it from.

This is where you need to forget about store bought valance rods. All you need to use is a piece of timber just like this one here. This is a 6 inch wide by 1 inch thick piece of timber. This one is painted white.

Also notice the self adhesive vecro strip that is also stapled to the leading edge of the board. This goes around both ends of the board as well. This will support the top treatment. The window topper will hide all the tracks, boards and brackets. So creating a really great looking finish.

It is installed 8 inches over your window like a shelf using simple “L” shaped brackets like these just below.

[www.easycurtainideas.com](http://www.easycurtainideas.com)
Once you have what is called more commonly a top board fixed in place. You can now fix your curtain track to the under side of your top board rather than fixing it to the wall as usual. The benefit you get from using this top board is that it blocks 99% of the light from the top of your window.

Most curtain tracks come with what are called “universal curtain brackets” like these on the left below. They have 2 fixing holes. One in the top for fixing upwards to the underside of the top board. Then you have a top fix only bucket as on the right below. These are smaller and more discreet when you only want to fix up to a top board or a ceiling.

Another big thing you can do when using a top board is with your curtain track. Rather than fitting just one track all the way across your window. You can fit 2 curtain tracks.

These 2 tracks need to be about 5 inches longer than half the length of your top board. This will allow them to overlap with a small gap between like in the picture here on the right.

This means when you close your curtains, they will overlap each other by 10 inches. This will block 99% of the light at the center point of your window.

www.easycurtainideas.com
In the picture here you can see there are small white pieces that fit between the top board and the curtain track brackets. These are called “spacers” and as the name suggests. They create a space between the underside of the top board and your track.

This allows the large brackets that hold up the top board to fit comfortably between the top board and the curtain track. I usually fit the curtain track to the top board at ground level. Then present it to the large “L” brackets already fixed to the wall over my window. You just need to then slide the top board in to place. Then use some small screws to hold it in place.

You can use many things as spacers. Such as several thick rubber grommets. You can also just simply make some out of small blocks of wood with small holes drilled through the center. So any thing will do as a spacer as long as it creates the space you need. It really doesn’t matter what it looks like as you won't see it when it's all finished.

The next thing to do is to add a hook eye screw to both ends of the top board. These fit as close to the wall as you can get them. They screw upwards to the underside of the top board.

When hanging your curtains the last curtain hook on each outside edge of your curtains hangs from these hook eyes.

This makes the outside edges of your curtains hug the wall down each side of your window. This gives you the best light blocking down the sides possible.

www.easycurtainideas.com
Here on the right you can see how the curtain panel hangs right up against the wall. This combined with going wider past each side of your window with the curtain hanging hardware. Will make it a very good light block and it also a very neat way to hang curtains.

In the picture on the right you can see the right curtain panel closed over the window. The other curtain track sits in front by about 5 or 6 inches. This makes the curtains overlap well creating a total light block from the center of your window.

Creating The Finishing Touch!

Now the final part of this jigsaw puzzle is the top treatment. Either a valance window treatment or a cornice window treatment. Both of these will hang from the leading 1 inch edge of the top board.

They have 2 benefits, firstly they block the remainder of the light from over the top of your curtains. Secondly they cover up all of the window treatment hardware. Thus making for an attractive finished looking window treatment.

www.easycurtainideas.com
You have 3 ways of securing your top treatment to the edge of the top board.

1. Using Velcro tape on the edge of the top board and the top of your cornice or valance.

2. Using small hook eyes screwed in to the edge of the top board at 3 or 4 inch spacing. All the way around the 1 inch edge of the board including the sides. The curtain hooks in your valance will then hook through the hook eyes to hang.

3. The final way to hang a valance would be to use a staple gun to staple between the valance pleats directly in to the 1 inch edge of the top board. This obviously will only work for a pleated valance. Such as a double or triple pleated valance. Also for a pencil pleated valance, the kind that gathers pleats as you pull the cords in the header tape.

You should if you use all these black out curtain ideas have a window treatment. That will block enough light to make your room very very dark.

Believe me you don't want to block every last speck of light coming in to your room.

A True Story!

I will tell you a little story of a customer I had a few years ago. I installed some perfect fit roller shades to their bedroom windows. My customer insisted they did not want to see any light whatsoever coming in to the room. They told me they were very light sensitive and it affected them sleeping well.

So I fitted the perfect fit roller shades as asked. These roller shades fit in to a surrounding frame. This frame is then fitted in to the window recess. The edges between the frame and the window recess are then sealed to block all light gaps.

www.easycurtainideas.com
So now when the roller shades are pulled down within the surrounding frames. They block 100% of the light from that window. Not a speck of light can be seen. I finished the job and left my customers to enjoy sleeping much better.

About a month later when out and about. I bumped in to these customers and asked how they were liking their super dark room. They told me that they had not realized how dark total darkness really is. They could not see their hands in front of their faces. Not a thing in the bedroom.

They went on to tell me that they now leave the bedroom door open a fraction with the landing light on. Just so they can get out of bed to use the bathroom without breaking their necks.

So the moral of this story is that even though folks may say they want total darkness. Almost nobody really does in reality ;-)