

Stripes are one of the easiest ways to balance awkward proportions. Hang broad horizontal stripes at a narrow window and you instantly increase its sense of width. Use vertical stripes where the ceiling is low and you will add more height and open up the space. The beauty of stripes is their simplicity, so don't undermine that by overdressing the window: stick to neat blinds and gathered panels that screen the light without too much fuss. Roller blinds are the simplest of all effects, worked with a basic cord-and-cleat mechanism that adds a practical, almost nautical look. For a softer, more rustic style, use traditional country fabrics such as quilts.

Try neat, striped fabric in practical areas such as kitchens, bathrooms and utility rooms.

Use horizontal stripes to widen a narrow window and vertical stripes to add height.

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When making roller blinds, use reversible fabric if you don't want to lose the pattern where it rolls up at the bottom.

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Individual blinds are practical for a run of windows or for glazed doors, as each one can be worked separately to let you control the level of light and privacy.

Make use of existing "finished" panels of fabric such as bedspreads and tablecloths by recycling them as simple curtains and blinds.