



BE A CURTAIN QUEEN – Curtain Panels

Measuring, Pinning, and Sewing Pleats – Lesson Eight

Measuring

Fold the panel in half vertically, lining to the inside, side hem over side hem. At the fold, you have the center point of your center pleat or the center of the space between your two middle pleats. Using your pleat calculation sheet computations, count the number of pleats you'll have and the number of spaces between pleats. If you have an odd number of pleats, the center fold will be located in a pleat. If you have an even number of pleats and odd number of spaces, the fold will fall in the middle of the center space.

Since this first marking is doubled due to the fold, divide the pleat or space distance in half. Mark that measurement from the fold line with a pin. If this is a pleat, you're good to go with your first pleat pinned. If this is a space between pleats, pin both the top piece at the pin measurement from the fold. Pin the bottom side of the panel separately but at the same distance from the fold. Pins should be placed vertically into the header for ease of folding the pleats together later.

Measure the next space or pleat distance (whichever is the opposite of your center) from your first pin location. Pin both upper fabric and the underside that's folded beneath at the same distance from the pin. Then measure the next space or pleat, whichever comes next in your alternating pleats and spaces between. Mark with pins again.

Continue across to the side edges of the panel, measuring and marking with pins. Your final pins should be 3-1/2 inches from the end on both upper piece and the one that's beneath. If it's off slightly, adjust the pleat sizes as needed (but not the spaces between pleats) to make the side edge 3-1/2-inch returns come out right. It's totally fine to have some pleats a tiny bit larger than the others, and it won't be noticeable.



Folding and Pinning Pleats

Unfold the width of the pin-marked panel. If your center fold is at a pleat, your first pleat is already pinned. Go to the next pin, which is the beginning pin for the next pleat. Align that pin with the next pin, which is the other end of the pleat. Pin both layers together at the pin location. Remove any extra pins, since only one needs to be intact for sewing at the measured location. Collect the next two pins to form your next pleat, aligning and pinning there as before. Continue pinning all pleats across the width of your panel.

If your center fold is at a space between pleats, begin pinning pleats by aligning the pins for pleats in one direction to the outer edge, and then the other direction. Or, begin at one end and pin all pleats together across the width of the panel.

Sewing Pleats

At the sewing machine, align the top edge of both sides of the fold of the pleat. Begin stitching at the pin marking. Place needle into the fabric at the pin, then remove it to avoid stitching over pins. Stop after the beginning reverse stitches and two forward stitches. Measure the distance from the needle to the pleat fold line. Hold hem gauge (or small ruler) as you stitch to keep your stitch line at that same distance as you sew to the edge of your buckram (or 4 inches from top edge). Back stitch to set the stitches, remove pleat from machine, and snip threads.

You can also sew pleats in the opposite direction. It works well both ways, but with stitching the opposite direction, align the edges evenly across the top edge of the panel. This direction may be trickier, so stitch pleats in the direction that's most comfortable for you.

After all pleat seams are stitched, you're ready for the next step of forming the actual pleats into your style choice. Bravo...you did it!