

# Roman Blinds

This document has been produced by the British Blind and Shutter Association (BBSA) to highlight the key characteristics of roman blinds to help you make an informed choice when buying your blind.

**The product characteristics detailed below represent the state of the art and any relevant standard.**

## Fabrics/Linings

Fabrics that are cotton or have a high cotton content can take on moisture and can also shrink. For this reason, these fabrics are not suitable for high moisture environments.

Fabrics that have a lot of give (slightly stretchy) will not tend to remain flat after some use.

Patterned fabrics may not match adjacent blinds or be centralised on the blind.

Very large blinds that are made using a plain fabric will show more stitching/construction than patterned fabrics.

Roman blinds can be machine sewn giving rows of stitching through which light will penetrate, or stab stitched which gives only the occasional pin-prick of light. Any light penetration will be more obvious with darker/blackout fabrics.

Standard linings may allow the stiffeners (rods) to be visible as a shadow when the blind is lit from behind. Blackout linings or bonded blackout help prevent this, but any stitching which penetrates the fabric will show up as pin-pricks of light.

## Fitting in a bay window

When fitted in a bay window, there will be some gaps where the neighbouring blind headrails meet each other. The amount of any gap will depend on several factors including the shape of the bay, the style of the window and the specification of the blind system.

Similarly, at the edge of the bay there may be light gaps/potential loss of privacy depending on the angle of the bay and adjoining walls.

Roman blinds in bay windows may see the fabrics of front and side blinds touching when the blind is operated.

In a bay, blinds are typically made to the maximum drop, so some blinds may rest more heavily on the cill than others.

## Fitting inside the reveal (window recess)

To fit the blind, there will be a gap between the edges of the blind and the walls of the reveal for operating clearance. If there are any obstructions in the reveal, for example tiles or a dado rail, the blind will need to be made to the narrowest width, so outside the obstruction there will be a bigger gap between the blind and the reveal.

The length of the blind is normally made to the maximum drop so that the fabric may sit heavy on the cill if it is not level.

## Reveal (recess) not dimensionally consistent

Roman blinds are made square, however in reality reveals are often not. The head of the window or cill can be uneven and the distances between the side walls throughout often vary.

The distance from the edge of the reveal to the window may also vary, so blinds will either be fitted to run parallel to the window or to the edge of the reveal.

## Blind Stack

When roman blinds are fully raised, the folds of fabric will cover the top portion of the window. The amount covered and how far the stack of folds protrude into the room are dependent on the height of the window and the construction of the blind.

Roman blinds may not naturally fold into panels when raised, particularly those in bay windows, and they may therefore require some dressing by hand.

## Dim-out

Roman blinds with opaque fabrics/blackout linings provide a good degree of dim-out but there will be light coming around the extremities of the blind and possibly through the stitching. This is more apparent with blinds fitted inside a reveal than those fitted outside.

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Due to their product specification, roman blinds do not offer blackout.

## Motorisation

There is a wide range of motorised solutions available for your comfort and convenience and each system will have its own characteristics. Some points to consider are:

- **Speed and alignment** - due to mechanical and electrical tolerances, blinds in the same installation may not travel at the same speed and may not line up if stopped during the travel of the blinds.
- **Noise** - being operated by a motor, some noise will be emitted. Quiet motors may be an option.
- **Wiring** - some surface wiring may be required. Where 240V mains power is involved, a competent person will be required to provide a power feed unless the blinds can be powered from a plug inserted into an existing socket.
- **Motor protection** - most motors are fitted with a thermal cut-out to protect them from getting too hot (usually from over-use). When cooled sufficiently, the motor will start working again.

## Child safety

All blinds with cords or chains which could pose a risk of strangulation to young children **must** be fitted with safety devices. The device required will be determined by the blind type being used.

For further information on window blind safety visit: [www.makeitsafe.org.uk](http://www.makeitsafe.org.uk)



## Visual Product Inspection

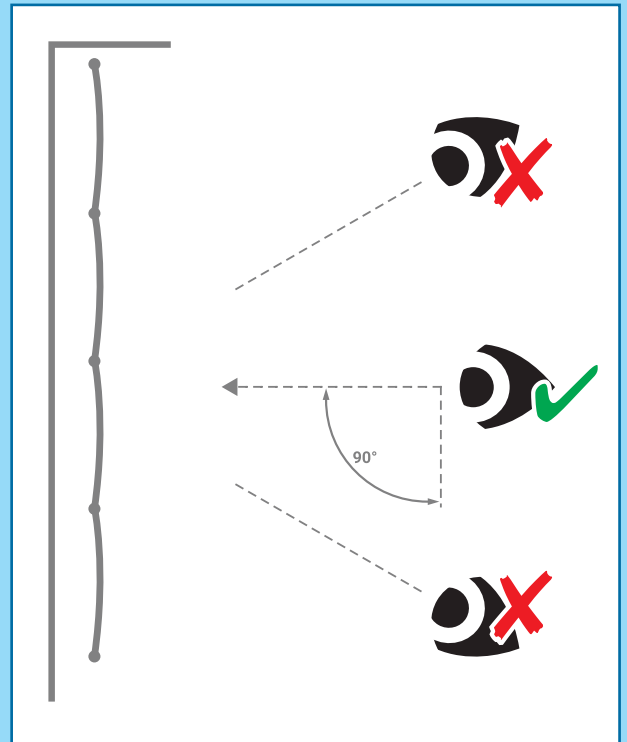
When checking the visual characteristics of any blind/shutter, the following should be observed:

### Viewing distance and lighting

3m for exterior products in diffuse daylight;  
2m for interior products with lighting suitable for normal room use.

### Viewing angle

Perpendicular to the surface being checked.



### Viewing aids

Naked eye (and any corrective glasses if applicable).

Always ensure you read and carefully follow the operating and maintenance instructions.