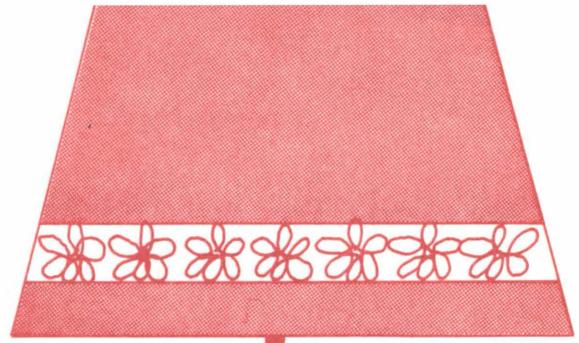


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# Making Lampshades

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## MAKING LAMPSHADES

Can you cover a lampshade? Of course you can--it's easier than you think. Almost any fabric can be used, from silk to burlap. Here are some guidelines to remember.

- Darker fabrics allow less light to pass through the shade.
- A design on the old shade will still show through a light-colored fabric when the light bulb is turned on.
- Burlap creates a nice texture, but tends to fade in bright sunlight. (But--faded burlap can be painted to restore a bright look.)
- Center the main part of the design at the center front on a flared shade.

### FLARED

There are two methods for making a pattern for a flared shade. Depending on the size and shape of the shade, one may work better than the other. Regardless of the method you use, always make a paper pattern first.

#### **Method 1: Rolling the Shade**

Place the shade on the paper. Mark the point on the shade and roll the shade along, carefully marking the top and bottom of the shade as you go. Add 1 inch for overlap. Cut out the pattern and test the fit on the lampshade.



#### **Method 2: Wrapping the Shade**

Tape tissue paper snugly around the shade, overlapping the ends. Trace the outline of the shade and the seam through the paper. Add 1 inch for overlap. Cut out the pattern and test the fit on the lampshade.



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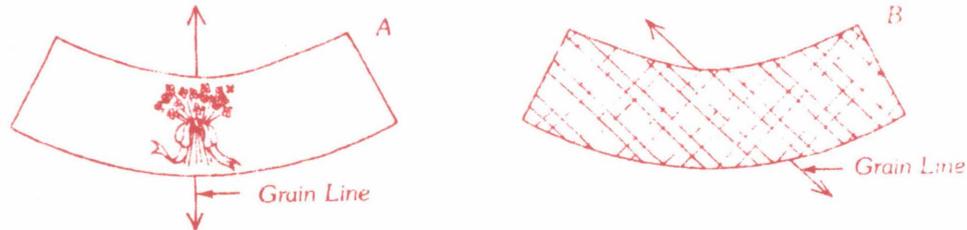
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### Preparing the Fabric

If your fabric has a directional pattern, cut the fabric as indicated in illustration A in order to keep the design centered and upright. If your fabric is geometric in checks, polka dots, or all over design, it will look better at the back seam if it is cut on the bias as in illustration B.

Fabric may be cut to fit to the edges of the shade with trim glued on to cover any raw edges or cut with a 3/4-inch allowance for turning to the inside of the shade. Glue the fabric in place inside the shade, then glue on a trim to cover the raw edges. A decorator craft glue is best here, because it is fast drying and flexible.



### Attaching the Fabric

One of the following methods may be used to attach fabric to a lampshade.

*White Glue* Using a decorator craft glue, spread the glue thinly and evenly. Place the shade on the fabric and smooth the fabric in place with your hands.

*Spray Adhesive* Spray the fabric evenly with the adhesive. Press the fabric onto the shade. This works best on smooth surface shades.

*Starch* Spread the starch on shade using a sponge. Smooth the fabric into place. Let it dry. Add starch to the top if necessary. The starch method works only on smooth surfaces.

*Fusible Web* Cut the fabric and a matching piece of fusible web. Place a web on the shade with the fabric on top. Using short strokes, work your way around the shade. Remember--no irons on plastic shades.

### PLEATED

Pleated lampshades look much more complicated than they are. They take time and some patience, but you can create your own custom shade if you are willing to try. To help determine the depth of the pleats, look at commercial shades of similar size and style. Larger or very flared shades may require 1 to 1-1/2 inches deep. I find, however, that I use 3/4-inch pleats as a general rule. Smaller pleats are harder to make accurately and control. I once tried a shade with 1/2-inch pleats--never again.

1. Determine the yardage needed.

Height

For firm fabrics

Height of shade plus 1/2-inch = \_\_\_\_\_ inches

For fabrics that ravel

Height of shade plus 1-inch = \_\_\_\_\_ inches

Length

Top circumference of shade X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_ number of pleats

Number of Pleats X 1½ inches + 12 inches = \_\_\_\_\_ inches

For straight drum shades or slightly flared shades use this easy formula:  $3 \times \text{top circumference} + 12 \text{ inches} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$  inches length of fabric strip.

2. Medium-weight fabrics are easiest to work with. To make light fabrics (gingham or sheets for example) firmer, dip in starch solution, then hang to dry. Press.

3. If the fabric needs to be pieced, do not seam it. Instead lap one piece on top of the other and fuse it. Keep the fabric pieces straight.

4. Prepare a strip of nonwaxed shelf or butcher paper, cutting it to the height of the shade plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and the length determined in step 1. All edges should be perpendicular and parallel. Lay the paper down, cover it with webbing and then with the fabric. Press until thoroughly bonded. With heavier fabrics it may be necessary to press on the paper side as well.

5. Trim firm fabrics with sharp scissors next to edge of paper, just barely cutting the paper to obtain a clean sharp edge. Turn ravelly fabrics over the edge of the paper and fuse or glue.

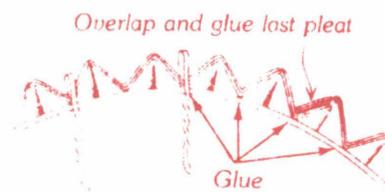
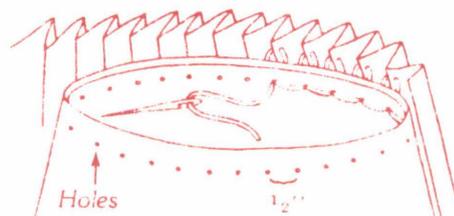
6. Taking care to keep the lines straight and parallel, draw lines  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch apart (or the depth of pleat you have selected) on the paper side. Use a see-through plastic ruler for ease and accuracy of marking. Every eight or ten pleats, use a carpenter's square or T-square to check that the lines are straight.

7. Hold the ruler at the line and lightly score with a blunt object such as a knitting needle or the edge of a spoon. Be careful not to cut through.

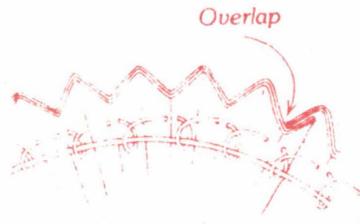
8. Fold the accordion pleats. Run the flat side of a knife or iron over bundles of five or six pleats to sharpen the edges.

9. Attach the pleating to the shade or hoops by one of these methods:

- With a tape measure for your guide, punch a hole every  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch just under the wire rim. (Use a large needle for punching.) Thread the needle with clear or matching thread. Anchor the thread and go through the first hole from inside to outside. Barely catch the fold of the pleat. Go back through the same hole and on to the next. Continue around the shade, pulling each pleat up snug as you go. Bobby pin the pleats in place around the bottom of the shade. Adjust the spacing. Put a drop of glue under each pleat. Let it dry. Remove the pins.



- Both the top and bottom of the shade may be bobby pinned and glued. Divide the top of the shade equally and make your marks for gluing the pleats. Glue and pin them. Adjust the bottom as just described.
- If you are attaching pleats to a wire frame, punch small holes 1/4 inch down from the top edge. With fine yarn or thread loop around the top wire. Repeat this for the bottom of the shade.



10. To finish the shade, the last pleat should overlap in and not out. Trim off any extra pleats. Put glue along last pleat. Clip and let it dry. Remove the clips. If a small raveling occurs along the top or bottom edge, touch it with a little craft glue or trim with sharp scissors.

#### COVERING A COMMERCIAL PLEATED SHADE

If you already own a pleated shade of plastic or light-colored fabric, you can cover it by gluing (or starching on plastic). Cut the fabric as described in the preceding section, but allow 2 inches extra height. Then brush glue on three or four pleats. Push and fit the fabric carefully into the pleats, using a butter knife or flat plastic ruler for smoothing. Leave it until it is nearly dry. Clip if necessary with bobby pins. Then continue working, a few pleats at a time, on around the shade. Doing just a few pleats at a time prevents the damp fabric from pulling up out of the pleat and bridging the crease. When the fabric is dry trim excess fabric at the top and bottom with sharp scissors and touch with glue to control any ravel.

#### FITTED BELL SHADE

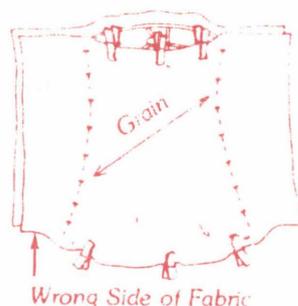
This type of shade must be cut on the bias to ensure stretch and fit. It is also fabric lined, so four pieces of fabric must be cut. Opaque, silklike fabrics work best.

1. Wrap the ribs and hoops tightly with narrow strips of twill tape or hem tape. This is not absolutely necessary, but it does give a more professional, finished product.

2. Pin the fabric to the shade, wrong side out and on the bias to establish seam lines. The



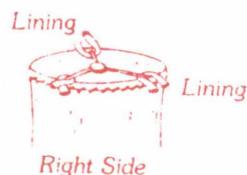
fabric should be pinned so that the seams fall on the top of the ribs. Use clothespins to hold the fabric in place at the top and bottom and to prevent marring the fabric. Trim away any excess fabric, leaving 1 inch extra at the top and bottom. Remove fabric. Stitch the seams. Trim.



3. Adjust the outside shade fabric in place, again using clothespins to hold the fabric to the hoops. Tack the seam allowances to the ribs if necessary. Fold the top and bottom edges over the hoops and whipstitch them into place.

4. Position the lining on the inside of the shade. Fit it in place as just described and whipstitch the lining to the outside edge of the shade. Make small cuts at the braces to allow the lining to fit smoothly. Cut and fold a strip of shade fabric and wrap it around the top braces, hiding the small cuts in the lining fabric. Tack it in place at the top outside edges as shown. Trim the ends.

5. Attach trim to cover any raw edges at the top and bottom. Use bias-folded strips of the shade fabric or other trims of your choice.



It is possible (though not necessarily easier) to cut this shade with one seam by rolling the shade for a pattern and cutting the fabric on the bias. The fabric is then stretched very taut to complete the shaping and to locate the seam.

### SHIRRED AND RUFFLED SHADE COVER

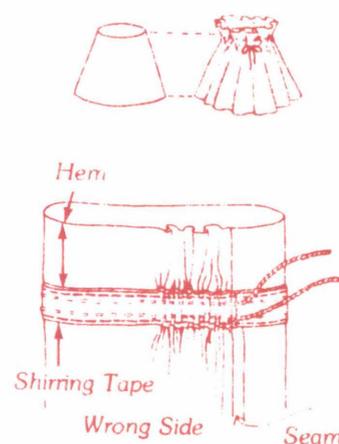
This is a quick, versatile shade cover. It has a soft look and can be accented with eyelets, lace, ribbons, and trim if desired.

1. Measure the height of shade and add 5 inches. Measure the bottom circumference; multiply it by two for fullness and add a 1-inch seam allowance.

2. Seam the ends with a 1/2-inch seam allowance to form a cylinder. Turn under the top edge 1/2-inch, then 1-3/4 inches, and hem. Turn the bottom under 1/2-inch, then 3/4 inch, and hem.

3. Stitch shirring tape to the back of the top just below the hem. Pull the cords so the fabric gathers up to fit the shade snugly. Secure the cords.

### SHIRRED AND RUFFLED SHADE/COVER



4. Add ribbon or trim accents if desired. You may wish to starch the shade to give it a little more body. Try it on the lamp first.

### GATHERED SHADE COVERS

A shade cover creates a very attractive soft shade. It consists of a gathered casing, which can be slipped over the existing shade. The advantage of a shade cover is that it can be removed, washed, and replaced. It can conceal a soiled or faded shade and is a good way to introduce texture and a feeling somewhat like a pleated shade with much less time and fabric invested.

#### Tiffany Shades

1. Cut the fabric equal to the height of the shade plus four inches and the circumference plus 4 inches.

2. Seam the short ends together. Then fold raw edges under  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch. Turn the folded edge under  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch and stitch to form a casing. Leave an opening for a drawstring or elastic.

3. Adjust the fabric on the shade with a drawstring or elastic. With tailor's chalk mark the bottom edge of the shade frame. Remove and flatten the fabric. Add fringe, trim, eyelet, lace, and so on. Replace it on the frame.

Follow the same directions for a very flared shade, except you may wish to add a little more fullness in the bottom circumference.

#### Drum Shades

1. Cut a strip of fabric equal to the height of the shade plus 4 inches and the circumference  $\times 2$ . The strip may be seamed if necessary. Seams can be hidden in the gathers.

2. Seam the short ends together. Then fold raw edges under  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch. Turn the folded edge under  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch and stitch to form a casing. Leave an opening to insert a drawstring or elastic.

3. Cut a  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch elastic and run it through the casings, drawing it up so that the cover fits the shade snugly. Remove any excess elastic, sew the ends together, and close the openings by sewing.

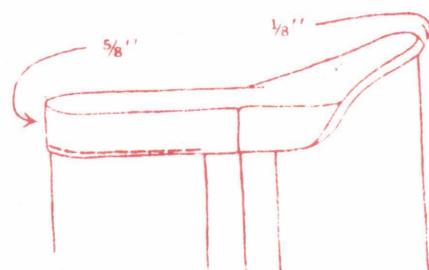
*Ruffled Top and Bottom*



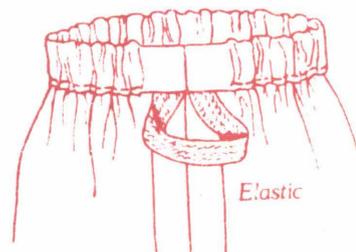
*Victorian Fringed*



*Turned-Under Casing*



*Wrong Side*



*Wrong side*

## FLUTED SHADES

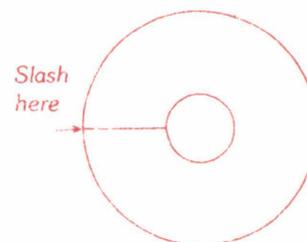
The directions for fluted shades are based on a full circle. To determine if your lampshade is a true fluted circle, look at it from underneath. If there is no seam, it is a circle pattern. Sometimes the base of the shade is fluted and the crown is a flat cone. To create a pattern for the cone, it may be easiest to cut a strip of true bias and stretch and fit it to the shade top.

1. Measure the circumference of the throat (narrowest part) of the shade (A). Measure the depth of the shade (B) and the depth of the crown (C).



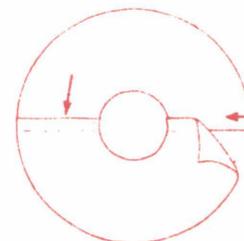
2. On paper draw two circles with the same circumference as C. To do this, first determine the diameter of the circle as follows: the circumference divided by 3.14 equals the diameter. Draw a line equal to the diameter. Find the middle of the line and use a compass to make the circle.

3. From the outer edge of the circle just draw and measure out the distance of the depth of the shade (B) at several points. Connect the lines to form a circle.



4. Repeat step 3, but measure the distance of the depth of the crown (C) to make a smaller circle.

5. Cut out each circle. Make a slash through from one side to create an opening.



6. Fit each circle on the shade to check for fit. Then cut them out from good fabric and glue them to the shade with spray glue or craft glue. Add trim, bias tape, or ribbon at the throat and at the top and bottom to conceal raw edges.

When you fit the pattern to the shade if you find the edges of the pattern do not quite meet because of the thickness of the fabric, cut two half circles with 1/2-inch seam allowances instead of the full circles as indicated in steps 3 and 4. This adjustment will allow enough extra fabric to allow for bulk.

References: VPI&SU Publication 171, *Portable Lamps for the Home*  
 MK-435, *How to Make Cut and Pierced Lampshades*  
*Fabric Decoration for the Home*, Janet Roda  
*Decorating With Fabric*, Alfred Allan Lewis