

Pleating and Fullness for Stage Curtains



Summary Points

Pleating is a relatively common application in sewing and fabric construction, and pleats are found everywhere from slacks to skirts.

Pleats also play an important role in the construction of your stage curtains, helping provide greater “fullness” and a more appealing appearance.

However, there are several different types of pleating that can be used in the construction of your curtains, and you’ll need to know what types offer the look that you want.

Read the next page for more information on the following:

- Pinch Pleats
- Box Pleats
- Knife Pleats
- Shirring
- Fullness

Please feel free to call us if you have any questions.

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Pleating and Fullness for Stage Curtains

Pleating is a relatively common application in sewing and fabric construction, and pleats are found everywhere from slacks to skirts. They also play an important role in the construction of your stage curtains, helping provide greater fullness and a more appealing appearance. However, there are several different types of pleating that can be used in the construction of your curtains, and you'll need to know what types offer the look that you want. Here is an overview of what you'll find available.

Pinch Pleating

A pinch pleat is almost exactly what it sounds like. First, a large pleat is made in the fabric. This is then sectioned by several smaller, narrower pleats. Pinch pleated drapes can be used with clips and rings if you need to have manual operation capabilities, but they can also be used with drapery hooks and a traverse drapery rod.

Box Pleating

Box pleats are often used with heavier material. These are large pleats that are made by creating a loop in the fabric and then flattening the loop against the outer surface. Box pleats can be almost any size, and the actual size of the pleats will depend on how full you want the curtains to be. While these pleats are often used with heavier fabrics, they can also be used with lighter options if you prefer.

Knife Pleating

Knife pleating helps create curtains that have a larger number of narrow pleats, and are usually used with lighter fabrics. The pleats created are smaller and sharper than box pleats or pinch pleats, and are often featured on curtains used for special occasions.

Shirring

Shirring is not really a type of pleat, but it is a process used to help create fullness in stage curtains. Shirring refers to the process of gathering the material into folds, and can be done manually, or with the use of shirring tape. This is a good option if you want a loose look to your curtain, rather than tight pleats.

What Is Fullness?

Fullness is a common term used to describe an aspect of stage curtains, but it can be difficult to define. In essence, it is directly attributable to the amount of pleating present. For instance, a curtain that has no pleating at all (a flat sheet) has 0% fullness. However, a curtain that has 100% fullness will start out as fabric that is twice as wide as required, and then pleated to the size requested.

For example, if you wanted a stage curtain 40 feet wide with 100% fullness, the curtain manufacturer would start the process with a piece of fabric 80 feet wide. Through pleating, the manufacturer would reduce the width until it was 40 feet and 100% full. Of course, the size of the pleats also plays a role in the final fullness of the curtain. If you want a curtain with 100% fullness, the pleats are usually 6 inches in width. Less fullness will require fewer, narrower pleats, whereas more fullness would require more, wider pleats.

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