



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** Ruched Roman blinds in Lophura fabric, from the National Trust collection, £59 per m, Sanderson; handmade curtains in Gemma Moulton's Hackney home; Roman blind in Harbour Stripe cotton, £75 per m, Tori Murphy; Gemma Moulton at work; window shade and cushions in Dulcet linen, £44.95 per m, Annie Sloan; careful measuring on Victoria Hammond's course; curtains in Rosemoor, £35 per m, Roman blind in Compton, £35 per m, both Chess Designs; making Roman blinds at the National Design Academy. **CENTRE** Curtain in Kappal Leaf, £135 per m, Abigail Borg.



National Design Academy; Create Academy; Andy Core; Philippe Devanne/Getty Images

## COURSES

# Adventures in window dressing

From covetable curtains to ravishing Roman blinds, select a hands-on course to give you the confidence and skills to create your own window coverings, says **Jenny Oldaker**

Simultaneously practical and decorative, curtains or blinds are ubiquitous fixtures in the home, and there are countless options out there to buy. However, with the ability to make your own comes the freedom to kit out your windows in absolutely any material and style, as well as the sense of satisfaction that naturally comes with creating your own home accessories (and, of course, the attendant financial savings!). Curtain-making requires knowledge and skill, but there are expert providers offering course options all over the country, whether you want to make curtains and blinds for your own home with a beginner's course, take a more in-depth approach, or even start your own curtain-making business.

If the latter is the case, the **Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers (AMUSF)** is a good port of call – its qualifications are delivered in three stages, and its website includes a directory of AMUSF-approved training centres that can deliver this. Many of these run less intensive courses and workshops as well.

The **National Design Academy (NDA)** in Nottingham also has a good course for anyone serious about curtain-making. The ten-unit Professional Soft Furnishings and Curtain Making diploma can be undertaken online over the course of 10–12 months (from £895), or as a 12-week in-studio course (from £1,500) and covers curtains, blinds, pelmets, swags, tails and more.

If you're looking for something shorter-term or less wide-ranging, good local courses in these techniques abound. The **Cotswold Sewing School** near Gloucester has courses in various subjects, all of which are designed to feel like an enjoyable break from everyday life, as well as giving students the confidence to use their new-found skills. Among its soft-furnishings courses there are one-day options in Curtain Making for Beginners (£187)

or Advanced Curtain Making (£200), plus a two-day Complete Guide to Roman Blinds (£347).

Equally wide-ranging are the courses on offer from **Victoria Hammond's School** in Hertfordshire. Victoria's company ethos is based on promoting traditional skills, and supporting and coaching its students to pursue both their creative and professional ambitions. As such, prospective pupils can choose from on-site courses that range from a one-day Making of Roman Blinds course (£195) to a 17-day accredited Diploma in Professional Curtain Making & Soft Furnishings (£2,995). The company also offers online options, whether you want to make an upholstered pelmet (£75), create a fully operational Roman blind (£155), or a course on all aspects of curtain-making and soft furnishings (£695).

In London, **The Goodlife Centre** is a brilliant resource for people seeking practical skills. Based in Bankside, this independent learning space runs hands-on workshops in all kinds of useful, practical skills. It has options to suit every level – especially beginners who want to gain a new skill and expand their abilities – and courses span everything from DIY and maintenance to woodworking, upholstery, sewing and more. Its one-day Roman Blind workshop (£125) and one-day Lined Curtains workshop (£125) are just the job for absolute beginners.

If you're looking for a basic overview of the process of designing, making and hanging your own curtains but would prefer to do it in your own time and space (rather than in person), **Create Academy** has a good online option, with a 22-lesson course in How to Make Beautiful Curtains (£127). Gemma Moulton of East London Cloth delivers an in-depth guide for how to design, make and hang perfect curtains. Across more than five hours of video lessons, students will learn how to navigate the process from start to finish, from how to choose the style and fabric for your project to step-by-step practical demonstrations. These cover pencil pleat, rod pocket and lined curtains, a valance, as well as how to professionally dress and hang your curtains.

Whether you're already a whizz on the soft-furnishings front, or a complete beginner, the courses here should provide a solid starting point to help you on your curtain-making journey.



### FIND OUT MORE

Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers (AMUSF) [amusf.org](http://amusf.org); National Design Academy (NDA) [nda.ac.uk](http://nda.ac.uk); The Cotswold Sewing School [thecotswoldsewingschool.co.uk](http://thecotswoldsewingschool.co.uk); Victoria Hammond's School [victoriahammond.com](http://victoriahammond.com); The Goodlife Centre [thegoodlifecentre.co.uk](http://thegoodlifecentre.co.uk); Create Academy [createacademy.com](http://createacademy.com)