This how-to sewing instruction is courtesy of Susan Woodcock, professional educator and owner of Custom Workroom Technical Center, a hands-on training facility for home décor sewing professionals. Learn more at www.WorkroomTech.com

Buckram-Fold, Blackout Roman Shade

A new Roman shade method by Susan Woodcock

This Roman shade uses buckram, instead of ribs or rods, to provide stability and structure to the shade folds. Blackout lining prevents shadowing. This method eliminates pinholes of light; a common problem with blackout lined shades. The following sample shade finished 20 inches wide by 45 inches long with 6 inch vertical ring spacing.

Materials and supplies:

Face fabric suitable for Roman shades such as cotton and cotton blend home décor fabrics.

Blackout lining (sample used Hanes Outblack)

3 inch woven döfix iron-on buckram

Iron on döfix blackout tape

Sew on rings, shade lift cord, and ladder tape

Basic sewing tools and rulers

High quality steam iron such as Reliable Velocity 200IR

Weight bar (based on lift system used)

Roman shade lift system that accepts cords

Yardage:

For shades up to 45 inches wide:

Finished Length of Shade + 8" = _____ divided by 36" = _____ yards

For shades over 45 inches wide, you will need to seam fabrics together:

Finished width of shade + 8" = _____divided by _____ width of the fabric = _____ number of cuts*

Finished Length of Shade + 8" = _____ times the number of cuts* = _____divided by 36" = _____ yards

When using fabric with a pattern motif, allow enough to match the pattern on each shade in the room, and when seaming fabrics together for larger windows.

Cutting:

Cut face fabric finished width + 8 inches x finished length + 8 Inches

Cut blackout lining the finished width wide x the finished length + 2 inches

Cut pieces of 3 inch woven döfix iron on buckram the finished width minus ½-inch. You will need one piece for the bottom hem, and each section between the rings. This shade used 6 pieces of buckram. Note: The size of buckram used should be half of the ring spacing or less. For example; 3 inch buckram is used for 6 inch spacing, and 4 inch buckram can be used for 8 inch ring spacing. If ring spacing is 7 inches, use 3 inch buckram. Pre-plan how many pieces of buckram by figuring your rings spacing on a template.

Buckram Fold Roman Shade Step-by-Step:

1. Place main fabric, face down on the worktable. Fold over 4 inches on each side, measuring to check that the width is accurate. Fold cut edge under to create 2 inch doubled side hems. Press the side hems.
2. At the bottom, fold over 6 inches and fold the cut edge under and press to create a 3 inch doubled bottom hem. (A)

3. Starting at the bottom, place one piece of 3 inch buckram **fusible side up** even with the crease pressed in at the bottom finished length. Do not fold it into the hem. The double fold bottom hem will be unfolded below the buckram. (B)
4. Measure from the top edge of the first piece of buckram 3 inches, and place the second piece of buckram, evenly spaced **with fusible side up**. Stab pins into the table or use weights to hold the buckram pieces in place. Repeat for the rest of the pieces of buckram spacing 3 inches apart. (C)
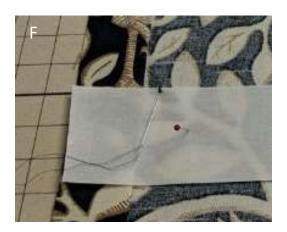
B

C

5. Mark ring spacing at the top edge of each piece of buckram. Ring spacing will be 2 ½ inches from each side, and 10 inches or less apart in the center. For this sample, there are three columns of rings; one on each side, and one down the middle.

6. To make it easier to move the shade around, you can secure the buckram with pins, or use low-tack blue tape. Do not tape over where the buckram will be sewn in the next step. (D - E)

7. Hand stitch the buckram to the face fabric at each mark, using a thread that matches the face fabric. (F) Because blackout lining is used, you can float the threads from each tack point without clipping. Continue tacking all the buckram pieces to the face fabric, folding the shade carefully so that the buckram pieces stay flat. (G) There are 18 tack points on this shade sample.

8. After all the buckram is tacked, remove the tape. (H)

9. Cut small pieces (3/4 inch square) of the iron on döfix blackout tape; one piece for each tack point. (I) Lift each piece of tacked buckram and place one square of the blackout tape below each tack-point, under the buckram and with the **fusible side up.** (J) Fold the buckram back over, covering the blackout tape pieces. (K)

10. After all the pieces of blackout tape are in place, carefully place the blackout lining face up over the back, covering the buckram and keeping the shade neat and square. (L) Place the blackout lining under the pressed side hems, and even with the finished length. Press the entire back of the shade using heat and steam to fully secure the buckram and blackout tape to the lining.

11. Finish side hems with an iron on hem tape, or fabric glue. Place the weight at the bottom of the shade before finishing the hem across the bottom. Use fusible tape or fabric glue to finish the bottom hem. The outside edges of the bottom hem can be hand sewn using a ladder stitch.

12. Sew a shade ring slightly below each tack point that was made in Step 7 (so that the stitching is over the square of blackout tape). The bottom rings should be sewn at the top of the hem, catching the hem and blackout lining underneath. You should be able to see and feel a small raised area from the knot where each piece of buckram was tacked. If needed, make a small mark ¼-inch minimum to ½-inch maximum below each knot for the ring spacing. **When sewing the rings, do not sew through the buckram, or to the front of the shade**. Only sew through the blackout lining. You will be sewing over the square of blackout tape. This hides the pinholes of light. When using ladder tape, stitch in place with the rings and tie off at the top, and bottom rings. (N-O) You can also use the ladder tape without rings, sewing the tape directly to the lining

13. Measure and mark the finished length and complete the shade by attaching it to a board or headrail and threading the cord through the ladder tape and rings. (P-Q) Attach the required cord safety devices, labels and warning tags.

Additional information:

Using buckram that is exactly half of the vertical ring spacing creates a slightly spaced, cascading look to the folds. If you want a tighter stack, use a piece of buckram smaller than the fold size. You can rip-down the döfix buckram to the size you need because it is a woven. Ripping is very quick and accurate!

To make an interlined shade with this method, cut interlining the same size as the blackout lining. Add the interlining in Step 2. In Step 3, the buckram will be placed on top of the interlining, fusible side up. In Step 6, the buckram will be tacked with the face fabric. A printable how-to instruction for making an interlined, buckram-fold, blackout shade can be found at www.homedecgal.com.

You can use any shade headrail lift system that accepts cords whether it's a track or tube with a clutch, spring, or motor.

Susan Woodcock owns Home Dec Gal, a how-to sewing resource and custom workroom in Western North Carolina, and is a Bluprint (formerly Craftsy) instructor, home décor sewing educator and international speaker. Susan's publishing credits include *Singer® Sewing Custom Curtains, Shades and Top Treatments* (Creative Publishing Intl., 2016) and *First Time Window Treatments, The Absolute Beginners Guide* (Creative Publishing, Intl., 2019). Together with her husband, Rodger Walker, Susan co-produces the Custom Workroom Conference, an annual educational event and trade show. In 2017, Susan and Rodger founded Custom Workroom Technical Center or "Workroom Tech", a hands-on training facility dedicated to the workroom industry. She credits her mother with teaching her to sew and inspiring her career of creativity.