

SEW, You Want New Aliner Curtains?

With the holidays past, and camping season a few months off, this is a good time to consider an indoor



DIY project: new curtains. The execution is not hard; if you can sew a straight line with a machine, you can make new curtains to slide over your windows. The challenge is in the planning.

Fabric A medium-weight drapery fabric is a good choice; it is often wider than dress material. Avoid large designs. They can be overwhelming in a small space, and you will need extra fabric to allow matching. Avoid dark colors, too, as they are prone to fading. Your curtains will last longer and offer more privacy if they are lined. Laminated fabric is hard to find, but drapery lining is widely available and can be sewn to your curtain fabric. Look for a medium weight lining that provides some sun and thermal protection. You also need a roll of "stay tape" (to stabilize the stretchy diagonal edges of the corner curtains), about 12" of sticky-back white fuzzy (loop) Velcro, and 12" of sew-on hook-side Velcro. These items are available from fabric stores such as Joanne Fabrics.

Hardware For curtains that slide on a track, you need to purchase "glide tape" (which is sewn to the curtain) and "white wall track" (which is screwed to the wall). Both can be ordered online - one source is dyersonline.com. The standard tape package contains 72" of tape, and the track comes in lengths that vary around 45", depending on vendor. These supplies are not expensive, but since you have to pay shipping, be sure to order enough the first time. If you already have the sliding track system, order new tape. The plastic buttons become brittle with age and it's time-consuming to remove old tape. At most hardware stores, you can buy finishing washers (for tiebacks) and decorative screw caps (also available at <http://tinyurl.com/yddnugm>). Screws should be fully threaded, with no smooth shank, and stainless steel is best. Use an awl or ice for putting

holes in the fabric and Velcro, and for starting screw holes in the wall.

Measuring *Length:* The finished curtains on the A walls should all hang to the same distance above the hinge. Allow enough coverage at the top of the window for the wall track. *Width:* In order for the curtain panel to clip into the end of the wall track, and cover the hardware, the side edges of the curtain should extend 1" beyond a glide-tape button. Hold the glide tape above the window to determine this minimum width. The measurement will be wider than the actual window. Measure all the windows, including the door. Add at least 2" to each width dimension to allow for seams. Curtains should always be cut lengthwise on the raw fabric, matching the fabric design, or they won't hang properly.

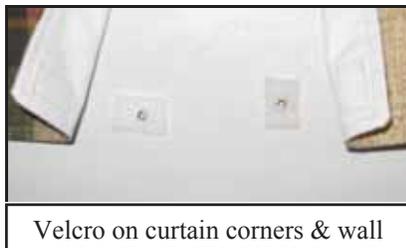
Corner curtains require special attention, noted here in italics. If your fabric has a printed pattern, you cannot create matching triangles by cutting a square in half – if you do, one triangle will be upside down! Matching triangles on a single wall must be cut as vertical, mirror-image twins.

NOTE: *If your corner windows are the usual 21" high, and you want your finished curtain to have two equal legs of about 32", those raw cut edges must be at least 33 3/4", NOT 33", or you have no seam allowance for the diagonal. The surest method is to make a paper pattern for your corner, pin it to the fabric, and cut 1/2" from the edges all the way around.*



Knowing the width of your fabric, figure how many yards you will need for your project. Make a similar calculation for the lining, which may be manufactured in a different width. To confirm your calculations, sketch your layout on graph paper. You will also need fabric to make tie-backs for your curtains. These 4" strips can be cut horizontally. Remember to allow extra fabric for all seams and hems.

Construction The easiest way to line your curtains is to cut mirror-image pieces of fabric and lining, adding ½" seam allowance all the way around. Pin the right sides together and stitch ½" from the edge all around, leaving about 6" unstitched. Trim excess material from the corners and turn the piece inside out through the unstitched pocket. Use the scissor points to *gently* poke the corners into shape. Press the edges carefully, fingering the unstitched pocket into place. Topstitch around the entire panel, including the unstitched pocket, about ¼" from the edge. Press again. Place the glide tape along the top of the back of the curtain panel, with the end glide buttons about 1" inside each side. Stitch the top of the glide tape to the back of the top of the curtain panel, sewing along the topstitching. Use a zipper foot on the machine so that you can sew close to the glide buttons. Finally, stitch the bottom edge of the glide tape in place. If you are using glide tape on both top and bottom of a curtain, as you would for the roof bubbles, make certain that the upper and lower buttons are directly opposite each other so that the open curtain pleats evenly. Add a piece of sew-on Velcro to the back of any curtain hem or corner that you want held against the wall.



Velcro on curtain corners & wall

The panels for the corner windows are right-angle triangles. While construction is basically the same as for the rectangular curtains, the stretchy diagonal edges need special care. When you pin the lining for sewing, include a strip of Stay Tape along the diagonal sewing line and stitch it into the seam. The narrowest (bottom) point of the triangle will be thick and needs careful trimming to remove extra bulk before it's turned inside-out. The large curtain next to the door may have one triangular side. This area can be cut separately, then sewed to the rectangle as part of the whole curtain.



Rear door-side window & corner

Tiebacks: Cut tieback strips 4" wide and 1" longer than the finished length. Fold the strip in half length-wise, right sides together, and stitch ¼" from the long edge. Press the seam open and turn the strip inside-out. Center the seam and press again, turning ½" of the raw ends inside. Topstitch all the way around, ¼" from the edge. Sew a square of loop-side Velcro to one end, over the long seam.

Mounting

Glide Track: The plastic track can be cut to length with utility shears. If in doubt, cut it long and shorten it as needed. Mark the screw holes by holding the track, with curtain attached, at the desired location. Put a screw near each end of the track.



Screw cover

Fixed corner triangles: Use masking tape to hold the curtain in place. Through the diagonal curtain edge, screw 4 small pan-head screws in decorative covers.

Tiebacks: Through the non-Velcro end of each tieback, seam-side up, screw a short pan-head screw and finishing washer, hiding the screw behind the curtain.

Velcro: After the curtains and tiebacks are in place, press the fuzzy side of sticky-back Velcro to each piece of sewn-on loop Velcro. Stick it against the wall where desired, pull away the curtain, and screw each sticky-back Velcro in place with a short, small flat-headed screw.



Tieback, showing finishing washer and velcro

This description is based on my experience in replacing the curtains in our 2007 Aliner LXE. Even though your windows may be different, I hope will find this article helpful. It was a manageable DIY project and the results were well worth the effort.

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 2009 Alite
 2007 Aliner LXE Expedition
<http://aliner.teahaus.us>