



Tips and advice for healthier homes






Habitat for Humanity is a registered charity and Community Housing Provider. In pursuit of our vision, a world where everyone has a decent place to live, Habitat builds and manages affordable housing, delivers essential repair and renovation services and advocates on behalf of those in housing need. All of our work is delivered in partnership, and focused on building strength, stability and independence through the provision of decent shelter.

Healthier Homes

Our behaviour within the home can have a huge impact on the health of our loved ones – making simple changes can benefit everyone. These tips and advice will help you keep your home warmer, drier and help to reduce your power bills.

The information in this booklet was informed by the Healthy Homes Initiative Assessment Manual, developed by Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand.

Contact Us

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Curtains are a relatively affordable form of insulation and can significantly reduce heat loss through windows. However, the way they are hung, materials they are made from and the way in which they are used will largely determine whether they are effective or not.

Choosing a curtain with separate lining that are full length to the floor will help reduce heat loss and provide better insulation against the cold.



We recommend using multi-fixed or face-fixed rails as there is less chance of warm air falling behind the curtain and being lost out the window.

We recommend sealing the bottom of curtains if they do not reach the floor – either using something to push up against them or taping them to the sill so air cannot escape out the bottom. This is the easiest way to keep a large amount of heat in your home.

- Open your curtains in the morning. Let the free heat from the sun warm your house. Close your curtains before it gets cold outside and lock in the warmth from the sun and your heater.
- Open windows for at least half an hour every day as this will encourage the circulation of fresh air and dry out your home. You can also use a squeegee or a cloth to wipe off any condensation on the inside of the windows. This will help prevent mould forming on the backs of the curtains.
- Remove dust build up. Regularly vacuum your curtains to remove the build up of dust and ingrained dirt. Alternatively, shaking your curtains or putting them through the drier on a cold spin will remove dust build up and keep your curtains fresh.
- Don't wash your curtains too often. Curtains can be washed in a machine, but hand washing curtains is better. Curtains should be air dried on the line to avoid shrinkage – do not dry curtains inside as remember this creates moisture in the air.
- Clean mould build-up on lining or replace lining where needed. Using hot soapy water regularly to clean the back of curtains will help keep mould away. Remember to dry curtains so that all the dampness has gone. Mould on curtains is not healthy and should be removed or replaced.

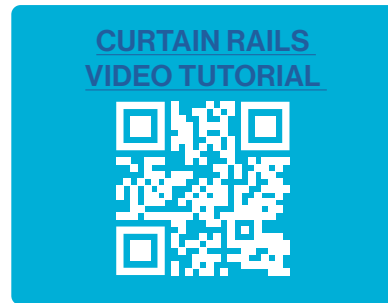
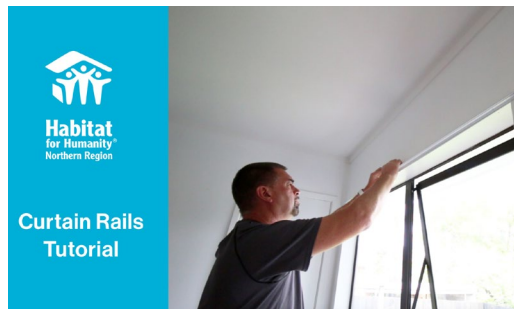


How to hang your curtains and rails

Rails

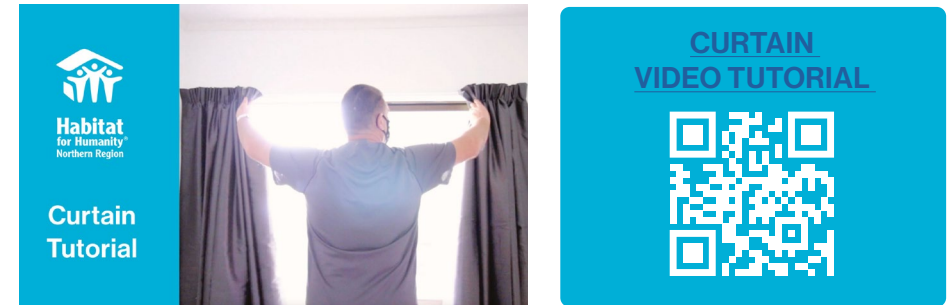
Measure the length of the window from the frame and add 20cm to either side (so curtains sit on the wall, not in front of the window).

1. Cut the rail to the measurement using a hacksaw.
2. Ensure there are enough gliders needed to hang the curtains.
3. Screw the rails to the trim using a screwdriver or drill.
4. Insert the end caps to both sides.



Curtains

1. Before hanging the curtains, pull the string on the back to get an even gather. The curtain should be gathered so the curtain fits half of the window. (Do not tie off the ends yet).
2. Put curtain hooks onto the back of the curtain. Count the number of gliders on the curtain track to give you the number of curtain hooks to put on.
3. Glide the curtain hooks onto the curtain gliders on the track. Pull the curtain to half way across the window. Pull the string again if the curtain reaches past half of the window, or pull the curtain to reach half of the window.
4. Tie off the string.



Cleaning your curtains

- We recommend washing every 12 months.
- Do not handle fabrics with dirty hands as this will spoil the fabric.
- Remove hooks and rims before cleaning.
- Cold or warm hand wash with a gentle detergent is best. Do not wring or rub.
- If hand washing is not an option, machine wash on delicate using cold cycle.
- Do not tumble dry. Drip dry in the shade with the fabric side down. Avoid any lining coated side touching as they may stick.
- Warm iron on fabric side only.
- Summertime is the best time to clean curtains.



Useful links and information

- Winter energy payment
workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/winter-energy-payment.html
- Warmer, drier homes
health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/warmer-drier-homes
- Make the most of your electricity
energymate.nz
- More information about Habitat Northern Region
habitat.org.nz/northern
- More Housing Help and Tutorials
habitat.org.nz/housing-help/



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How to clean mould



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How to use a window scoop



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