

WHITE PAPER

WINDOW SHADES

WANT PRIVACY? BUY SHADES!



Dual Roller Motorized and Motorized FlexShades at Boston University School of Law, Boston, MA.
Photographer: Alan Wycheck of Alan Wycheck Photography, Harrisburg, PA.



Draper Bottom-Up FlexShades are excellent for privacy.

- Window shades can be an excellent choice for ensuring privacy in your home or workplace.

Window shades can be an excellent choice for ensuring privacy in your home or workplace. But we must consider that we all have different ideas of what “privacy” means. To some people, being able to see a shadow through a mesh or translucent shade is not privacy. To others, blocking detailed views in from the outside, while allowing some general outline of shadow to show is just fine.

There are a number of issues to consider, including not losing the positive aspects of natural light and views of the outside, overall design of the space, location, window size, and budget.

Whenever we talk about using shades for privacy, we need to talk about the space in which the shade or shades will be placed. If your only interest is keeping people from seeing in at certain times, then it may seem that a blackout shade is the perfect solution. Blackout roller shades use opaque fabrics that can be deployed quickly and easily at the press of a button. However, blackout shades are not as flexible as mesh, light filtering fabrics. When they are closed, you can't see out or enjoy the use of natural light.

There are options for striking a balance between privacy and natural daylighting. Although they are primarily designed to manage daylight, not provide privacy, light filtering mesh

fabrics can offer a bit of both worlds, depending on the openness factor and color of the fabric. A 1% open fabric will provide more privacy and less light than a 10% open fabric, for instance. Fabric color can also have an impact. Darker mesh fabrics have better view-through, while lighter fabrics create more privacy.

Duplex fabrics offer a lighter outside color to better reflect light and restrict views in, while also having a darker interior color to allow better view-through from the inside. People on the darker side of a mesh shade will see through it, and a shade with less than about 10% openness is almost opaque from the lighter side.

In addition to color and openness, the type of weave has an impact. A twill weave, which is a pattern of diagonal parallel ribs, is a tighter weave than the traditional basket weave and so provides more privacy. Twill weave fabrics carried by Draper include Phifer's SheerWeave Series 2701 and "M" Screen by Mermet. Textured fabrics, such as Phifer's SheerWeave Series SW5000, work nicely at filtering out glare with a natural look, and thanks to the textured look can also help maintain a level of privacy.

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Dual Roller FlexShades with mesh (left) and blackout (right) shade fabrics.
Photography: Matt Oberer of MattOPhoto, Albuquerque, NM

Privacy becomes a much bigger issue when the space is occupied at night with the lights on. There's rarely any significant view from the outside during daylight hours, so most offices can use mesh shades and provide both privacy and view through for the occupants. However, a 24-hour dialysis center needs room darkening shades in all patient areas.

To help understand how different colors and openness factors affect privacy, Draper offers an online simulation tool. Click here to check it out. draperinc.com/WindowShades/ViewThroughSimulator.aspx Play around with different combinations in both residential and commercial settings and see what works best to provide the level of privacy you prefer. Although the view in the simulator is from the inside out, you can use it to consider the view inward at night.

The great thing about the fabrics mentioned above—and others offered by Draper—is that they look nice. These aren't your grandparents' pull-down school shades. Today's shade fabrics are designed with options to fit in with any design scheme, whether in the home or in the office.

Sometimes you don't want to choose between options. Perhaps you can see a time when total blackout is necessary, while other times you'd like the combined glare control and view-through characteristics of a light filtering

shade. Draper offers a couple of products that can let you have the best of both worlds. One option for enjoying natural light without sacrificing privacy is the Bottom-Up FlexShade. Unlike traditional shades that unroll from the top of the window, the Bottom-Up FlexShade unrolls from the bottom of the opening. This means you can raise the shade part of the way, blocking views, while allowing light in through the upper portion of the window opening. Another idea is our Dual Roller FlexShade. The Dual Roller features two shades in one unit. You can have a light blocking fabric on one roller, and a light filtering fabric on the other roller. For more privacy, lower the light blocking shade. For glare control and better view-through, lower the light filtering shade.

You can find some ideas on using shades in our Window Shades Gallery: draperinc.com/WindowShades/Gallery.aspx. For more information on using shades to help provide privacy, comfort, and glare and heat control, visit Draper's Contact Us page to find the appropriate contact for where you live (draperinc.com/ContactUs/), or call your local Draper dealer. If you need help finding one, you can also contact us for help.

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