

Window Coverings for Condos

Sooner or later, every condo owner is confronted with a decision about window coverings, but it's not always an easy one. Depending upon the unit's floor and sightlines, some may not feel the need for window coverings at all, but they would be missing out on benefits other than assured privacy. So, presuming you are not inclined to go without any coverings, you essentially have to choose among blinds, shades, shutters, curtains, drapes or a combination of options.

Therefore, you need to consider your priorities beyond privacy – such as comfort, aesthetics and cost. Drapes tend to be of heavy fabric, offering a textured framework for windows, and the potential for dramatic room décor. When fully closed, they help to shield rooms from unwanted sunlight and outside heat or cold to help maintain climate controls. Louvred shutters can provide similar functions, but hard surfaces affect acoustics. Meanwhile, curtains are airy, light



and delicate, but require blinds or lining to help manage daylight or temperature exposure.



Identifying Effects of Summer Solstice

Just after mid-June, the summer solstice will mark the time of year when we get the most hours of daylight. At the same time, the sun's path will climb higher in the sky, in an arc that reaches its annual zenith at midday. Due to the higher position of the overhead sun, shadows will be shorter, compared to other times of the year. This increases the amount of direct sunshine exposure on unprotected property. So, if you're planning a backyard or balcony space, observe the sunlight exposure this month for indications of where to position seating, gardening, cooking or leisure areas, as well as protective canopies.

Of course, it's even more important to protect our indoor spaces from the hot summer sun. Even though some rooms and balconies may actually receive less exposure to direct sunlight during the solstice, it pays to observe the sun's path throughout the summer. This may help you determine where heavier window drapery can assist in reducing your dependency on expensive air-conditioning – as well as help protect sunlight-sensitive plants, and help prevent carpets and furnishings from fading due to overexposure.

Smart Products for your Condo

Wireless monitoring systems aren't just for condo security cameras. There are lots of new products on the market that make your condo more manageable, even when you're not home. Here are just a few:

- Programmable deadbolt attaches to the inside of your door, and lets you control the locking mechanism from your phone.
- Wireless meat thermometer for the oven or BBQ is simply inserted into the meat and will alert your phone when the pre-set temperature is achieved.
- Monitor pad placed under your mattress reported to measure sleep-patterns such as REM, etc., without body attachments.
- Smoke and CO detector with a smart-hub speaker that lets you use voice-command to disable false alarms.
- Power bar that distributes electricity to various connected appliances, and reports their consumption to your smartphone, allowing you to shut off unwanted energy hogs, etc.

