

Tools you may need:

- ✓ Measuring Tape
- ✓ Pencil
- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Ladder

How to Measure *for Exterior Shutters*

Measuring your windows properly is an important step to ensure your installation goes both smoothly and that the end result looks great. This guide will give you some great recommendations and ideas on how to correctly proportion your shutters.

The first thing you need to decide is whether you are installing your shutters for decoration (meaning they will be fixed and not be able to close), or if you want them to actually function (option to open and close the shutters). All of the shutters on our website can be installed decoratively, and all other shutters (excluding vinyl) can be installed in a functional fashion.

Decorative Shutters

When measuring for decorative shutters, it is important to keep in mind your goals. Most people install decorative shutters to add color and a touch of personal style to their windows. In this case, it is best to find a single width of decorative shutters that works for all of your windows.

However, some people insist that their decorative shutters should also look like they can close over the window (even though decorative shutters will not). While the goal here is slightly different, it is still perfectly acceptable.

A third and more encompassing goal is architectural uniformity. It is important to understand that architecture is a regional science. To truly add value to your home and give it curb appeal, it should look like it belongs in your neighborhood. In some parts of the country, it is common to install 12 inch wide decorative shutters on windows that are 8 feet wide. In other areas, it is common to measure the glass of the window and install exterior shutters that look like they will cover the glass entirely, but not the window trim. The most common way to measure for decorative shutters is to measure the window trim and install shutters that are the entire height of the trim. The best advice we can give you is to start by taking a walk or a drive around your local area to determine just how to make your home "fit in", paying careful attention to the homes that are constructed of similar materials and design to your own.

If you happen to be the first in your neighborhood to install decorative exterior shutters, as a rule of thumb it is best to start by measuring the entire window including the window trim both vertically and horizontally.

Shutter Width

Window Width	Recommended width	Window Width	Recommended Width
18" or smaller	5¾" or 8½"	40" to 43"	14½", 15", or 16½"
18" to 24"	9", 9¾", or 11"	43" to 48"	16½"
24" to 28"	12"	48" to 50"	16½" or 18"
28" to 36"	12", 14½", or 15"	50" or larger	18"
36" to 40"	14½" or 15"		
40" to 43"	14½", 15", or 16½"		
43" to 48"	16½"		
48" to 50"	16½" or 18"		
50" or larger	18"		

In choosing the width of your exterior shutters, you should take into consideration the width of the window and the distance the windows are spaced apart. It is generally best to find a single width that works for all of your windows. The width that usually works best is between 25% and 33% of the total width of your window including the window trim. Refer to the chart at the right.

When using vinyl shutters on windows that are wider than 50 inches, we recommend using double wide vinyl shutters. However, if you prefer not to use the bi-fold shutter style, you can use 18" wide shutters and it will still look reasonably well.

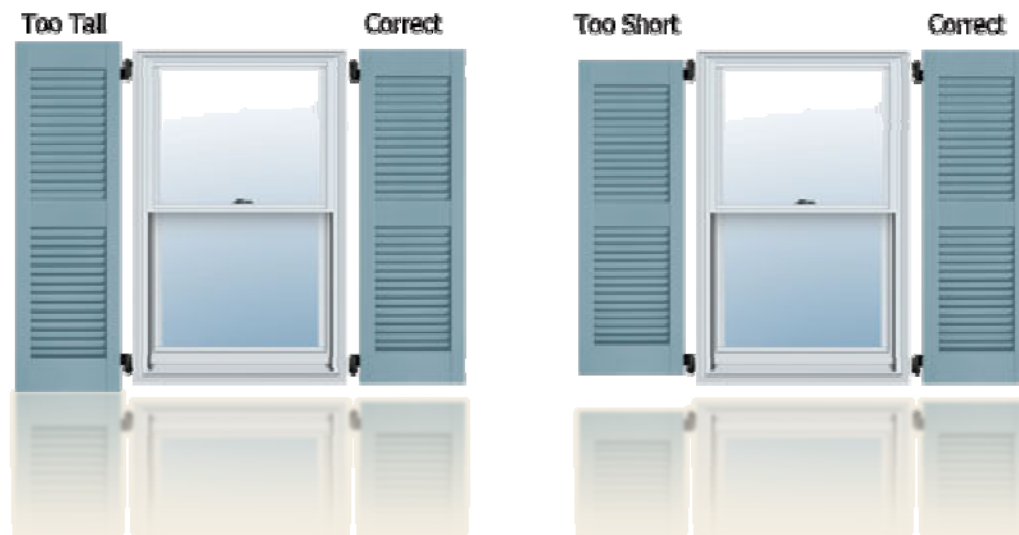
If you prefer to make your outside shutters look like they will close over the windows, find a width that is close to 50% of the size of the glass and window frame only, excluding the window trim. Since vinyl shutters don't have that much flexibility in terms of shutter width, it is best to err on the side of the exterior shutters being narrower than 50% of the window width.



Shutter Height

In most cases, the height of decorative shutter that is most appropriate is from the top to the bottom of the window trim. If there is a sill at the bottom of the window and you are installing vinyl shutters, it is important to leave a gap of at least 1/4 inch to allow the vinyl material to expand and contract. This of course does not apply to other shutter materials.

Many homes are constructed with different heights of windows on the first floor than on the second floor. Be sure to measure every window before placing your order for exterior shutters.



Operable Shutters

To make your shutters actually function you need to be more careful when you take your window measurements. Take the time to measure accurately as this will ensure the shutters function the way you expect.

Measure your windows as if the shutters were actually closed over them. Measuring windows for operable shutters requires that you measure both width and height at 3 different points because many windows are not perfectly square. Typically, you will want the shutter to cover some part of the window trim in addition to the window frame and glass. On a brick home with recessed windows you will typically want the functional shutter to cover the entire opening in the brick, not just the window itself.

Shutter Width

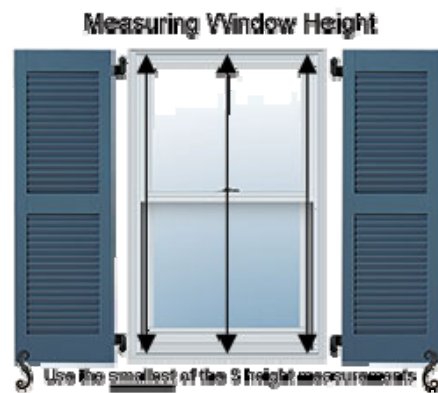
Measure for the shutter width at the top, middle, and bottom of the window from the left side to the right side as shown in the diagram. If the widths at each of these points are not the same, use the SMALLEST measurement of the three.

This measurement is then divided by 2 to give you your operable shutter width. For example, if your window width measurement is 31" wide at its narrowest point, you should order 15½" wide shutters ($31 \div 2 = 15.5$).



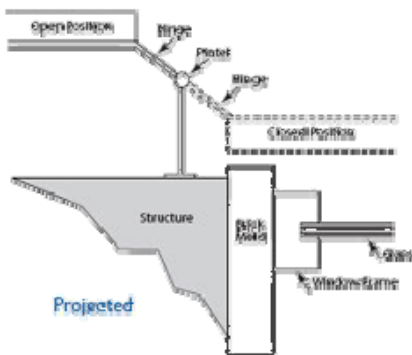
Shutter Height

Measure for the shutter height at the left side, middle, and right side of the window opening from the top of the window to the bottom excluding any window sill. If the heights vary at each of these points, use the SMALLEST of the three measurements. This measurement will be the height of the shutter you need to order.



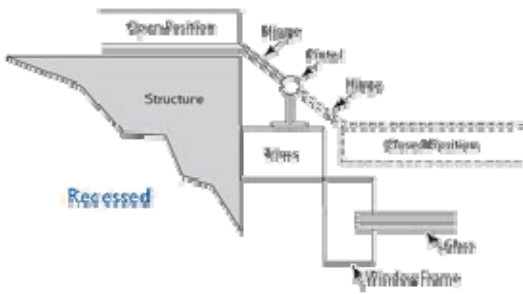
Shutter Hardware

Ordering the right hardware can make all the difference when installing your new functional shutters. There are a few things to consider when deciding on your hardware. Review the information below to see what type of installation your shutters will be.



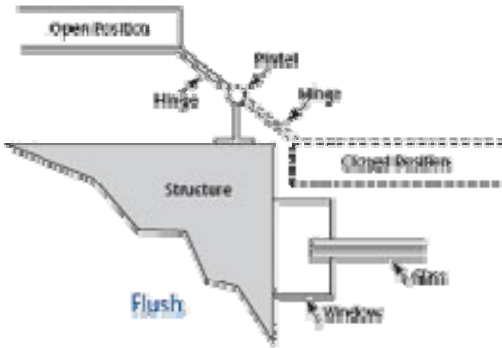
Projected Installation

The exterior shutters are going to function so that in the closed position they will cover the opening. Notice that the pintel offset is greater than the other examples. This creates depth and allows the shutter to close without binding with the edge of the structure. The projected installation example is the easiest for measuring because there is no trim or structure to dictate the measurements.



Recessed Installation

The exterior shutters are going to function so that in the closed position the shutters are going to be between the trim around the windows. Thus the measurements must be made from inside trim to inside trim for width and height. It is important to recognize the depth created by the trim as the depth of the shutter might be greater than that of the trim. If this problem exists, then combining pintel and hinge offsets can create more depth as in the projected example.



Flush Installation

The exterior shutters are going to function so that in the closed position the outside edge of the shutters is flush with the surface of the structure. Thus the measurement must be made between the inside edges of the opening of the structure for width and height. It is important to recognize the depth of the opening as the depth of the shutter might be greater than that of the opening. If this problem exists, then combining pintel and hinge offsets can create more depth as in the projected example.