FREE GUIDE

Blind Care and Child Safety Guide

How to keep corded and chained blinds safe for children, clean each type of blind, manage condensation and damp, and know when a blind needs a repair.

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Why this guide matters

Blinds last for years with very little attention, but two things deserve a few minutes of your time: making sure any cord or chain is safe around children, and keeping the blind clean and dry. This guide covers both, starting with safety, because it matters most. It is based on the advice we give when we fit blinds made in our Rainham workshop across East London and Essex.

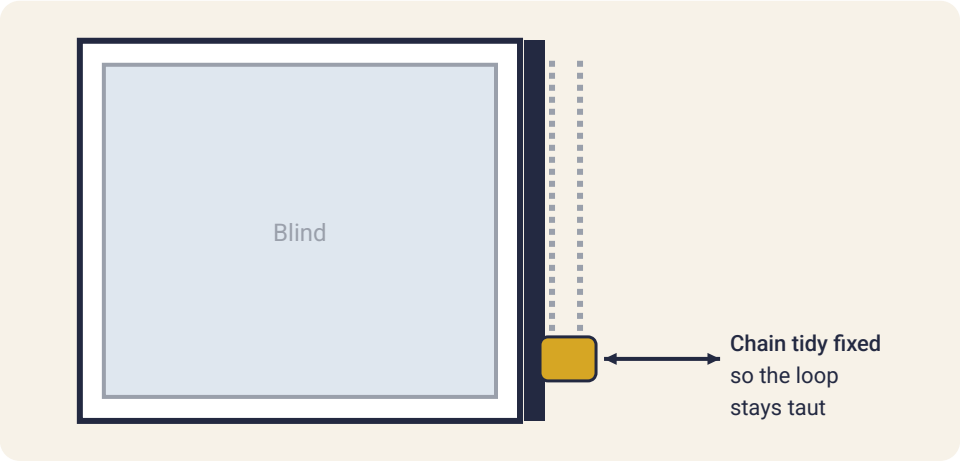
Child safety for corded and chained blinds

Looped blind cords and chains can be dangerous for young children [1]. The aim of every rule below is simple: no child should ever be able to reach a loop of cord or chain. At the very least, keep all cords and chains secured out of reach of babies and young children [2].

Chain blinds: use the tensioner.

Roller blinds and vertical blinds often run on a looped chain. That loop must be held taut by a tensioner or chain tidy.

1. Fix the tensioner firmly to the wall or frame beside the blind, so the chain stays permanently taut [1].
2. Set it as far from the top of the blind as the chain allows [2].
3. Check every few weeks that it has not worked loose. A loose tensioner is the same as no tensioner.

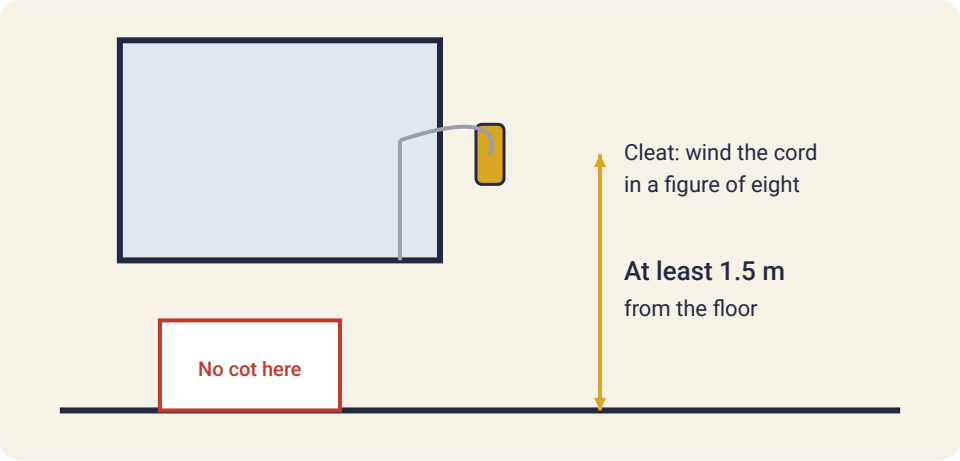


A tensioner holds the chain loop taut so it cannot be pulled away from the wall

Corded blinds: use a cleat at 1.5 m.

Venetian, Roman and some pleated blinds use cords that are pulled and then stored.

1. Fix a cleat to the wall or frame beside the blind, out of children's reach and at least 1.5 m from the floor [1][2].
2. After every use, wind the cord round the cleat in a figure of eight [1][2].
3. Store all spare cord on the cleat [2]. Nothing should hang below it.



Fix the cleat at least 1.5 m from the floor and wind the cord in a figure of eight

Keep cots and furniture away.

1. Keep cots, beds, high chairs and play pens away from blinds, because children like to climb [1].
2. Check that sofas, toy boxes and window seats do not give a child a step up to a cord.
3. Look again whenever you move furniture round.

> **SAFETY**
> Moving the cot away from the window is one of the simplest and most effective things you can do in a nursery, whatever blind you have.

Safety devices on new blinds.

Since 2014, all internal blinds made and sold in the UK must comply with specific child safety requirements [4]. New blinds with looped cords must have child safety devices fitted when they are made, or supplied with the blind [1].

When a professional installer fits a new blind in a home, they must fit the safety devices and explain how to use them, with no exceptions [3]. If you fit a blind yourself, read the instructions and fit every safety device supplied [3]. Some devices are built in, such as chain connectors that break apart under pressure and breakaway cord tassels. Others, such as tensioners and cleats, have to be fixed in place and used [3].

Blinds that are safe by design.

For children's rooms, the simplest answer is a blind with no loose cord at all. A blind is safe by design when it is cordless or has concealed or tensioned cords [5]. Examples include spring blinds you move by hand, wand operated blinds and motorised blinds [3]. Perfect Fit blinds keep their workings inside a frame on the glass, and a spring Perfect Fit blind has no chain at all.

> SAFETY
> Be wary of blinds bought direct from sellers outside the UK, which may not meet these requirements [4].

Quick home safety checklist

Walk round each room with this list.

1. Can a child reach any cord or chain, from the floor or by climbing? If yes, fix it today.
2. Is every chain held taut by a tensioner that is firmly fixed [1]?
3. Is every cleat at least 1.5 m from the floor, with the cord wound on it [1]?
4. Is any spare cord hanging loose below a cleat?
5. Are cots, beds, high chairs and play pens away from every blind [1]?
6. Is there furniture under a window that a child could climb?
7. Do older blinds still have their safety devices, or have any gone missing?
8. In a child's room, would a cordless, spring or motorised blind be a better choice?

Cleaning by blind type

Always check the care label or instructions for your blind first, because fabrics and finishes vary. As a general rule, little and often works better than a deep clean. Never soak a blind, and keep water away from the roller mechanism.

Roller blinds. Lower the blind fully and dust it with a soft brush or the brush tool on a vacuum, set to low.

Wipe small marks with a barely damp cloth and let the fabric dry fully before rolling it up.

Blackout blinds. Treat the front as you would a roller fabric. Be gentle with the coated back, which can mark or crack if scrubbed or folded. Dust lightly and spot clean only.

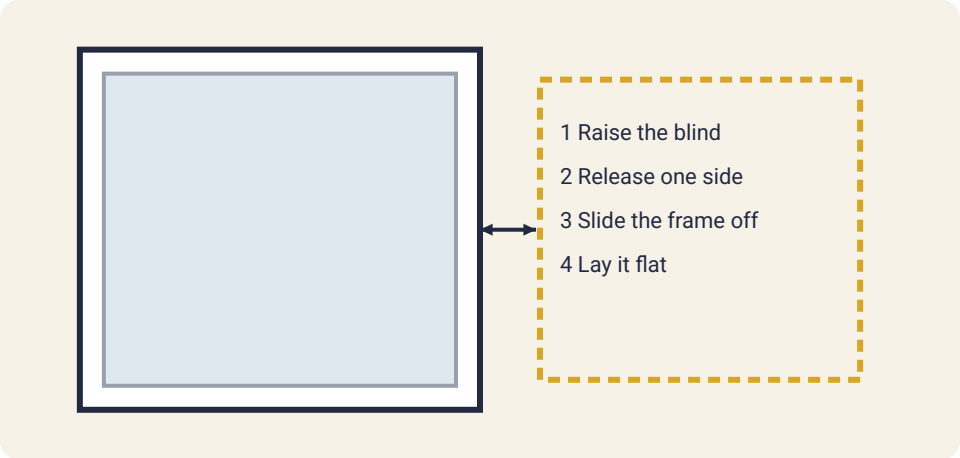
Pleated blinds. Dust with a soft brush or a vacuum on low, working along the pleats. Avoid pressing the pleats flat. Spot clean with a lightly damp cloth.

Vertical blinds. Close the louvres and dust them from top to bottom, then turn them and do the other side. Take care not to unhook the louvres from their carriers, and check the weights and chain at the bottom are still linked.

Roman blinds. These are soft fabric and hold dust in the folds. Vacuum gently on low with the blind down. Many Roman blinds should be dry cleaned rather than washed, so check the label before doing anything more.

Venetian blinds. Close the slats one way and wipe them with a soft cloth or duster, then close them the other way and repeat. Aluminium and faux wood slats can be wiped with a damp cloth and dried straight away. Real wood should be kept dry.

Perfect Fit blinds. Clean the fabric or slats as for their type. The frame unclips from the window, so you can take the blind off to clean the glass behind it. Wipe the frame with a damp cloth. Our separate fitting guide shows how to remove and refit the frame.



Raise the blind, release one side and slide the frame off to clean behind it

TIP

Do not use spray polish, oil or lubricant on a blind or its mechanism. It attracts dust and can mark the fabric.

Condensation and damp around blinds

Condensation forms when moist air hits a cold surface such as a window [6]. Blinds do not cause it, but a blind close to the glass will meet it first. Occasional condensation that clears quickly is not a problem, but

a lot of it building up around windows is a sign of damp [6].

To keep windows and blinds dry:

1. Keep trickle vents open and clear [6].
2. Open windows for at least five minutes several times a day, or longer if you can [6].
3. Run extractor fans for at least 15 minutes after a bath or shower, and use the cooker hood while cooking and for at least 15 minutes afterwards [6].
4. Cover pans when cooking and dry clothes outdoors when you can [6].
5. Wipe down windows after showering [6]. In cold weather, wiping the glass in the morning helps too.
6. Raise blinds for part of the day so air can reach the glass.
7. In kitchens and bathrooms, choose wipeable fabrics or aluminium slats that cope with moisture.

> SAFETY
> If you see mould on a blind or the frame, deal with it promptly. Children, older people and people with skin or breathing conditions are most at risk from mould [6]. A mould-covered fabric blind is usually best replaced.

Retensioning a spring or chain blind

If a blind stops working properly, it is often an adjustment rather than a repair. Here is the outline. Our guide How to Retension a Perfect Fit Roller Blind on our website has the full steps.

Spring blinds. A spring blind that stops short of the top has usually lost tension. The usual fix is to lift the roller out of its brackets and roll the fabric back up by hand, then refit it and test, repeating until it rises fully. Some systems have a locking pin to hold the spring while the roller is out.

Chain blinds. A chain blind has no lifting spring. If the chain is slack, refix the tensioner so the chain is taut. If the blind slips down with the chain taut, the clutch is probably worn.

> SAFETY
> Never remove the spring unit from the roller tube while it is under tension. A wound spring can unwind suddenly and cause injury.

When to call us

Call us rather than carrying on if:

1. A spring blind will not hold tension after retensioning.

2. A chain blind slips with the chain taut.
3. A tensioner, cleat or other safety device is missing, broken or will not stay fixed.
4. The fabric is torn, frayed or mouldy.
5. A Perfect Fit frame will not sit flat, or its brackets feel loose in the seal.
6. You want to replace corded blinds in a child's room with a safer type.

NEED A HAND?

Book a free measuring visit

We measure at your home for free, make your blinds in our Rainham workshop and fit them across East London and Essex. Your written quote is emailed or phoned through after the visit.

Book online: homedecisions.co.uk

Call 01708 505379

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Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

References

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