

Modernize and motorize with smart blinds



The mere mention of motorized window coverings to my clients typically yields one of three responses: they're too extravagant, too technical or too intimidating. All are myths.

The truth is motorized blinds have come a long way. They're available at a variety of price points, in a range of styles and functions.

Imagine blinds that rise with the morning sun, or lower during the heat of the day, programmed for maximum convenience, comfort, energy efficiency and even cost savings, with minimal

SARA AUGENBLICK DESIGN BASICS

effort on your part.

Motorized window coverings are part of a growing "smart home" trend that's turning average homes into virtual castles. Once thought of as a rare luxury, automation is now a feasible option for anyone.

When considering upgrades for your home, cost is often top of mind. Homeowners are always pleased to learn they can lower their energy consumption and utility bills simply by raising the blinds to take advantage of natural light, or lowering them to reduce indoor temperature.



Motorized blinds have come a long way and are available in a wide range of price points, styles and functions.

Motorized blinds take the all the legwork out of that chore. Now, here's one better: put your motor on a timer, or include a temperature sensor to automatically raise and lower your shades based on your predetermined time and temperature settings. Now, that's smart.

Brains aside, motorized blinds also offer a leg up on their manual counterparts when it comes to hard-toreach skylights and windows, or if you have a lot of them.

Today's motorized window coverings employ radio frequency technology, which can operate in a range of 65 feet with the push of a button. This means no more aiming or pointing a remote. And what about unsightly power cords?

All electrical motors can be hardwired, out of sight and out of mind. Of course, a standard cord can plug directly into your electrical wall outlet if you prefer. Alternatively, a battery-operated motor lets you enjoy cord-free power without cutting into your drywall.

So, what's this little luxury going to run you? The cost of motorized blinds has dropped in the past few years, as affordable as \$150. Suppliers like Lutron and Somfy offer electric power starting in the \$400 ballpark.

If blinds aren't your thing, drapery tracks can also be motorized, offering a perfect solution for wide windows. Tracks up to 30 ft. can run on a single motor, and can even be custom-curved to manoeuvre around corners.

For fully automated tech junkies, this is another element to add to your home settings. You'll have to purchase an interface from the motor provider and have it programmed with the home automation company. You



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can then control this feature from your smart phone or tablet.

A professional window covering specialist will offer solutions based on your needs and wants. You'll be surprised at what's possible these days.

New technology can seem intimidating, but once we familiarize ourselves with the concept and its benefits, we wonder how we ever got along without it.

TIP: Multiple windows that are side-by-side can be connected to a single motor, cutting down the cost. However, a joint connection means the blinds will also operate in tandem.

TIP: For operation, request one remote control and one wireless wall switch as a backup, in case the remote gets misplaced.

TIP: Ask about the product warranty, what it covers and

how long it's in effect.

 Sara Augenblick is the principal and designer at Model Space Designs,

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Homeowners are always pleased to learn they can lower thier energy bills by automatically raising their blinds.



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