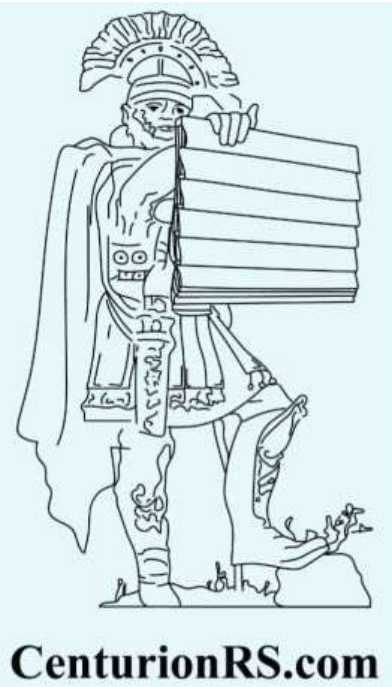


Flat Roman Shade Instructions

www.CenturionRS.com

Supplies Needed –

2-, 3-, or 4-cord Widget kit (Sample shade in video series uses 3-cord)

Face Fabric, Lining Fabric, Wood Mount Board (Common Stock Pine), Flat Steel Weight Bar (3/4” x 1/8”), white Duct Tape

Tools Needed to Fabricate: Scissors, Long Ruler, Pencil, Iron, Needle/Thread, White Glue, White Duct Tape, Hand-held or pneumatic Stapler & Staples, Phillips Head Screwdriver, Awl, Metal Blade Hand Saw (or power tool), Wood Hand Saw (or power tool)

- ✓ Test your fabric first to know if it is suitable for iron heat or steam setting.
- ✓ Consider print for pattern match.
- ✓ If there is more than one shade per room, match the pattern on all shades as best as possible.

These 12 steps correspond to the YouTube series on our Centurion Roman Shade Channel (https://www.youtube.com/@CenturionRS/playlists) for “Make Your Own Flat Roman Shade” published March, 2026. Each daily video matches each step in the instructions printed here. If you need a visual for a particular step, please refer to the YouTube video for that step. It is recommended that you watch the entire series before making your shade so that you are familiar with the steps.

Centurion Playlists

Step 1 – How Many Lift Cords Does My Shade Require?

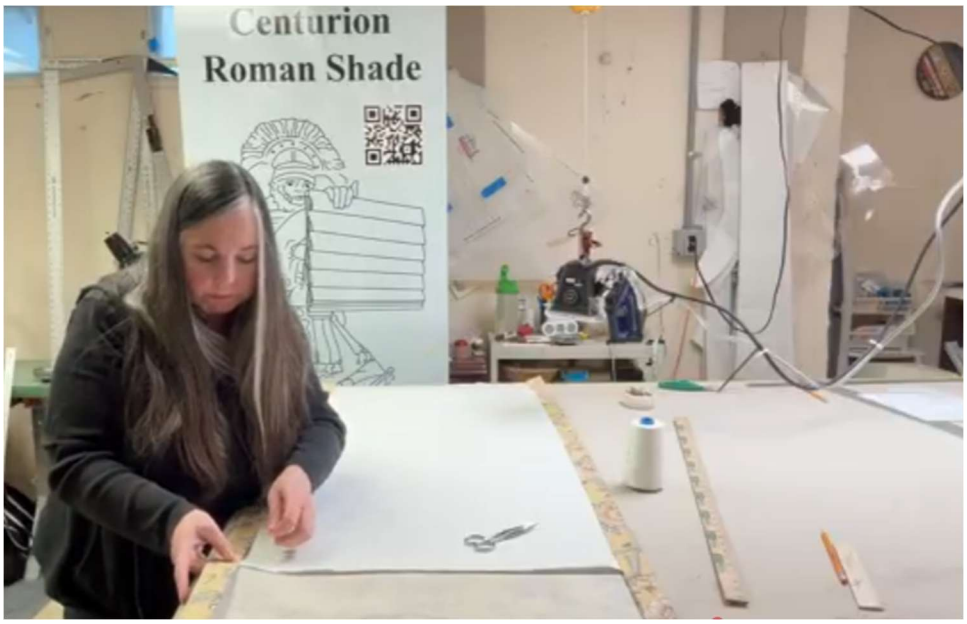
- Widget kits can be ordered in 2–, 3–, or 4–cord kits.
- It is generally recommended that there be a lift cord every 10” of width for a basic flat shade.
- You should test your fabrics to see how many lift cords you need.
- If you add ribs (advanced fabrication method) you may be able to go much wider between lift cords.
- Fabric weight is generally irrelevant, but the rigidity of the fabric and the look (straight or relaxed) of the shade design both have a bearing on the number of cords.

Step 2 – Cutting The Face Fabric and Lining Fabric

- Consider print and pattern placement before cutting the Face Fabric
- Cut Face Fabric using the following formula
    - Cut Width = Finished Width + 6” (3” each side hem)
    - Cut Length = Finished Length + 6” (to wrap the board at top) + 8” (4” double bottom hem)
- Cut the lining to the exact finished width x finished height + 2”

Step 3 – Putting the Lining & Face Fabric Together; Turning Side Hems & Stitching

- Lay cut face fabric, wrong side up on worktable
- Press up 8” from bottom
- Lay cut lining fabric, right side up on the wrong side of the face fabric. The lining should be placed at the press line (8” up from bottom edge).
- Press side hems 3” on each side and then again 1.5” under and press.
- Whip stitch by hand (or use a glue tack for blackout fabrics) to stitch the side hems. Only stitch the length of the fabric lining, on each side.



Step 4 – Finishing The Bottom Hem

- Press the Skirtex hem stiffener to flatten out any creases from shipping
- Cut the hem stiffener about -1/2” less and lay in the turning the fabric hem around.
- Fold up the bottom hem 8” and then fold under 4”, press with an iron. Make sure all the edges are aligned and square.
- Stitch the hem (ladder stitch on one side) and whip stitch across the width
- Cut the weight bar to the finished width – ½”
- Wrap the weight bar with 1 piece of white duct tape (optional)
- Insert the weight bar into the folded hem (on top of the Skirtex), using the side hems to conceal the raw edges
- Stitch the remaining side of the hem

- Install the “clear Hem Grip” by sliding it from the center upward over the ¾” x 1/8” weight bar. Make sure the steel weight bar is at the bottom of the hem flat and horizontal. Be careful not to stretch the fabric while inserting the plastic grip. **Do not pry open the hem grip as it will create stress cracks in the plastic that can break over time.**

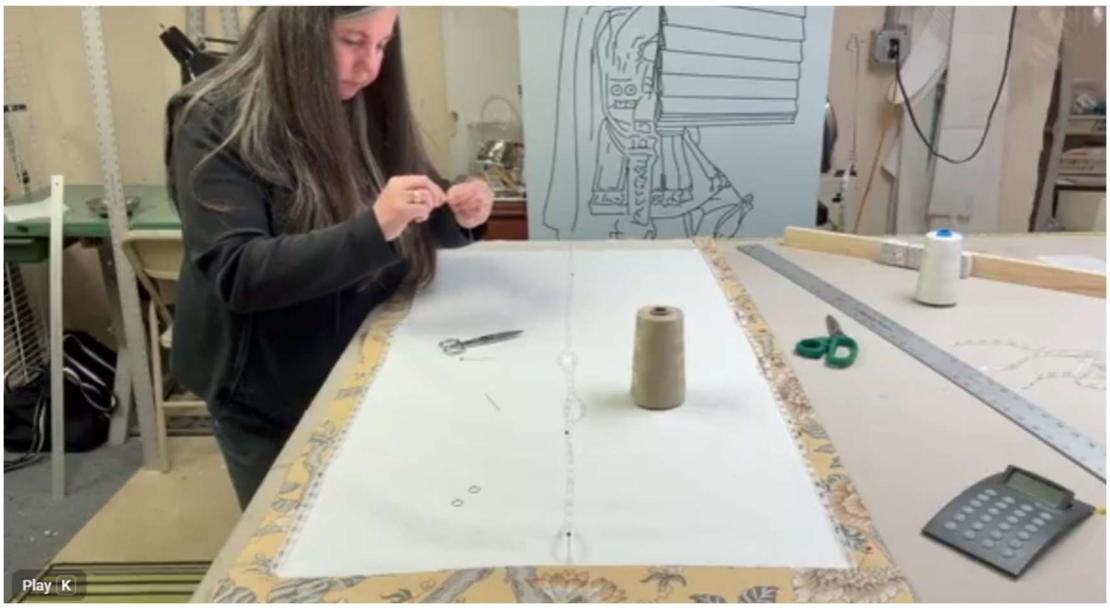
Step 5 – Measure & Mark The Tack Points

- Re-check and measure finished length. Press top face fabric down over lining at the top of the shade.
- Calculate the amount of vertical spacing for tack points on the length.
    - Subtract 4” for bottom hem (ring & knot placement)
    - Subtract 1 ¾” for wood and Widget bulk
    - Divide by a number so that the spaces are less than 8” between tack points
- Cut the length of ladder tape needed for each lift, you can leave it longer and cut again in the next step.
- Pin the ladder tape at the tack points on all left cords. Make sure the tack points are square and level across the shade, vertically and horizontally. Adjust the ladder tape so that every tack is sewn through a solid section of the ladder.

Step 6 - Sew the Tack Points & Bottom Brass Ring

- Hand tack with a needle and thread, the bottom of the ladder tape to the shade hem. Include the brass ring in the bottom tack at the hemline. Be sure to catch **both** fabrics and the ladder shroud in this tack stitch.

- Moving up vertically on the lift cord, hand tack the ladder tape up from the last tack. Continue tacking moving up vertically toward the top of the shade.
- Repeat the previous step for each vertical lift cord.
- Optional - Place a small dot of glue on each hand tack. Allow it to dry completely. For a blackout shade, you may also want to use a “quick dry correction fluid” as this will cover any pin holes or light leaks caused by the stitch.



Step 7 - Attach Shade to Wood Mounting Board

- Press top edge and place pins on the front side for placement.
- Staple a small square of fabric to the end of the board.
- Align the shade to the board from the top, front edge and staple in a few places to secure.
- Unfold the board toward yourself and wrap the remainder of the fabric covering the board and tuck 1” under and staple on the narrow inside edge. Trim away any bulk from side hems to eliminate bulk.

Step 8 - Installing The Screw Eyes

- On the underside of the wood mount board, insert the screw eyes in the middle of the underside of the mount board, in line with each ladder tape row.
- Use and Awl to pierce the fabric and wood, insert the screw eye by hand and use a flat head screw driver (or similar tool) as a lever and turn until secure and perpendicular position.
- Repeat for each screw eye.

Step 9 - Installing The Widget

- Remove the rubber bands and uncoil the cords from around the outside of the Widget.
- Mount the Widget with 2 screws going into the designated, most outboard holes. (***CAUTION****: Only tighten mounting screws until Widget is gently attached to the mounting board…over-tightening will prevent the cords from reeling/unreeling. You should be able to slightly rock the Widget back and forth on the mounting board.*)
- The Widget should be placed closest to center as possible.
- The Widget should be placed so that the cords go out in both directions. The stickers should be visible.

Step 10 – Threading the Ladder Tape & Knot Off At Bottom Rings

- Thread the cords through each screw eye on the mounting board.
- Use the plastic needle to individually thread each ladder tape. Go in and out in a serpentine manner, going over and under the solid ladder sections.
- Start by counting 3 solid sections of ladder above the closest tack point to the top of the shade. Continue threading the cord down the length of each ladder tape. Alternate the cord so that it "weaves in-and-out" of the ladder tape so that it is integrated. Go through the brass ring at the bottom and cut off excess leaving about 8".
- **Tie off each cord at the brass ring using a double Hitch knot. Refer to tutorials if you need a visual diagram of this knot. We have a diagram in our reference FAQ's and Blog posts.**
- Tuck in the excess 8" into the bottom hem between the whip stitches of the bottom hem.

Step 11 – Pulling the Pin

- Once all the cords are threaded and knotted at the bottom (double check this step is complete), you can remove the pin under the sticker which will release the tension device. Save the pin…it must be re-inserted to take the tension off the Widget for any adjustments. Your shade will now retract with your assistance to make sure the folds are not interfering.

IMPORTANT: The pin must ALWAYS be re-inserted before untying any cords at the hem!

Step 12 – Steam Folds & Test Shade

- With your shade laying in front of you, facing the right side up, use your hands to adjust and hand press the folds. Your shade may benefit from some steam to help set the folds for function.
- Now you can test the shade by raising and lowering. You can mount or clamp the shade to a stand to test. Be careful when mounting to test or installing that none of the cords are pinched during this process. Improper installation of the shade may effect your shade raising and lowering properly, especially if one or more cords are inadvertently pinched.