

Recut flower stems every two to three days while they are in a vase. Take a small piece off each stem and replace the water at the same time to help the flowers continue taking up water.

Set a regular schedule

Every two to three days is a useful routine for most cut flowers. If you arranged them on a Monday, check them again on Wednesday or Thursday. You do not need to make a fresh cut every day, and doing so will shorten the stems faster than necessary.

Look at the water between scheduled cuts. If it becomes cloudy or develops an unpleasant smell, clean the vase and replace the water sooner. A slimy stem end is another reason to rinse the stems and trim them.

Recutting can help a flower draw water, but it cannot make an old bloom fresh again. Some flowers naturally last longer than others, even when they receive the same care.

How to recut the stems

Choose a clean knife or sharp garden shears. Dull blades can crush stems rather than leave a clean cut. Have a clean vase and fresh water ready before you start.

1. Remove the flowers from the vase and set them somewhere clean.
2. Empty the vase, wash it with soap and water, and rinse it well.
3. Trim about half an inch from the bottom of each stem. Make the cut at an angle.
4. Remove any leaves that would sit below the waterline.
5. Fill the vase with fresh water, add flower food if you have it, and return the stems promptly.

Follow the directions on the flower food packet for the amount of water to use. If the arrangement is tied, you can keep it together while trimming, as long as you can reach each stem safely and make a clean cut.

Watch the water and leaves

Leaves left underwater can decay and make the water dirty. Check for them each time you change the water, especially after shortening the stems, since a leaf that was above the waterline may now sit below it.

Keep the vase topped up between full water changes. Some flowers drink more than others, and a low water level can leave shorter stems out of reach. Check that every stem end remains submerged.

Rinse the lower parts of the stems if they feel slippery. A clean vase matters too, because simply adding fresh water to a dirty container does not remove the residue inside.

Adjust as the arrangement ages

Remove flowers that have wilted or started to decay. This keeps the arrangement tidy and makes it easier to see which stems still need care. You can move the remaining flowers to a shorter clean vase as their stems become shorter.

Keep the arrangement away from direct sun and sources of heat, which can cause flowers to fade more quickly. Continue checking the water and trimming the stems every two to three days for as long as the flowers look good.

A small, regular trim is enough. Clean water, a clean vase, and submerged stem ends are just as important.

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