

To prepare rose stems, remove any leaves that would sit below the waterline and cut the ends with clean, sharp shears. Put the roses straight into a clean vase of fresh water.

Start with a clean vase and tools

Wash the vase with soap and water, then rinse it well. A clean vase gives the roses a better start by limiting the bacteria that can build up in the water.

Choose a vase tall enough to support the stems without crowding the blooms. Fill it with fresh water before you begin trimming, so the roses do not have to wait on the counter with their cut ends exposed.

Use sharp, clean pruning shears or a knife. A blunt tool can crush the stem instead of making a clean cut. Wash the tool before use, particularly if it has been used on garden plants or older flowers.

Remove leaves below the waterline

Hold each rose beside the vase to see where the water will reach. Pull or cut off any leaves that would sit underwater. Leave the higher leaves in place if you like their look.

Leaves left in the water can decay and encourage bacterial growth. Removing them also makes it easier to see when the water needs changing.

Handle the stems carefully. Rose thorns can scratch skin, so use gloves if needed. You do not need to remove every thorn to prepare the flowers for a vase.

Cut the stems

Trim each stem just before putting it in water. Cut at an angle with one clean motion. An angled end is less likely to sit flat against the bottom of the vase, leaving room for water to reach the cut surface.

Cut off enough stem to give the roses the height you want. Check the arrangement as you work, and remember that you can always trim a little more. Follow these steps for each rose:

- Hold the stem firmly above the point where you plan to cut.
- Make a clean angled cut with sharp shears or a knife.
- Place the cut end in the prepared vase water promptly.

Avoid smashing the ends. Crushed tissue does not help the roses drink and can make the stems harder to keep clean.

Keep the water fresh

Check the vase daily and add water as needed. Change the water if it becomes cloudy, and rinse the vase before refilling it. Remove any leaves or petals that have fallen into the water.

When you change the water, trim a little more from the ends with clean tools. This gives each stem a fresh cut. Keep the arrangement away from direct sunlight and heat to help the blooms last longer.

Clean tools, bare stems below the waterline, and fresh cuts are the main things to remember. Once the roses are in water, a quick daily check will help you keep the arrangement tidy.

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