

To slow drooping, put cut tulips in a clean vase with fresh water, trim the stems and keep the flowers cool. If they have already bent, wrap the stems loosely in paper and let them drink while supported.

Start with a clean vase and fresh water

A vase that held last week's flowers can look clean while still harboring residue. Wash it with soap and water, rinse it well and fill it with fresh, cool water before adding tulips.

Choose a vase tall enough to support a good length of each stem. A narrow opening can help hold the bunch together, but it should not squeeze the stems tightly. Remove any leaves that would sit below the water, where they can decay.

Check the water each day. Tulips can drink a surprising amount, especially in a warm room, and an empty vase leaves their stems unable to take up water. Change the water regularly and rinse the vase when you do.

Trim and support the stems

If a bunch has flopped over on the kitchen table, give it a fresh cut and some support before arranging it again. These steps may help the stems regain firmness, although very old or damaged flowers may not recover.

1. Take the tulips out of the vase and remove any damaged or submerged leaves.
2. Use clean, sharp scissors or a knife to cut a small amount from the bottom of each stem.
3. Gather the flowers into a loose bunch and wrap paper around the stems and lower part of the flowers, keeping them upright without crushing them.

4. Place the wrapped bunch in fresh water in a clean vase. Leave it in a cool spot for a few hours, then remove the paper and arrange the flowers.

Cutting the stems a little shorter also gives the flower heads less distance to lean. Keep enough stem length for the vase to support them comfortably.

Move the vase to a cooler place

A sunny windowsill may show off the petals, but heat can shorten the flowers' vase life. Set the vase away from direct sun, radiators and other heat sources. A cool spot on a table or shelf is usually a better choice.

Keep the bouquet away from ripening fruit as well. Some fruit releases ethylene gas, which can speed aging in flowers.

Expect some natural movement

Cut tulips continue to grow in the vase and can bend toward light. A bunch that stood straight at breakfast may lean toward the window by the next day. This movement is normal and does not always mean the flowers need more water.

Turn the vase occasionally if the stems are leaning in one direction. You can also rearrange the bunch or trim the stems again as needed. Some curves will remain, and the flowers may look relaxed rather than perfectly upright.

Fresh water, a supportive vase and a cool position will help tulips stay firm for as long as their condition allows.

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