How to Arrange Flowers Like a Florist

Whether you're seeking a simple-but-effective way to freshen up a room in your home or you're looking for a thoughtful gift to share with a loved one, there's nothing quite like a bouquet of fresh stems. There's nothing wrong with picking up a pre-made bouquet at the grocery store or ordering from a florist, but crafting your own custom bouquet is a thoughtful way to infuse your arrangement with personality. (Plus, you'll save on pesky delivery fees.) Luckily, a DIY flower-arranging project isn't as hard as you think. Of course, you'll need the right supplies, but experts say floral arranging is more of an art than a science. In other words: don't overthink it. "I encourage people not to think like a professional floral designer," says Joseph Marino, a pro florist from St. Petersburg, FL. "I find it only serves to cause anxiety and feelings of inadequacy. Floral arranging at home should be fun and creative." Step 1: Procure Your Blooms and Greenery Before you do any arranging, you'll need to obtain some flowers and greenery. Marino suggests starting with the freshest flowers you can afford. "Whether sourced from a floral market, grocery store, farm, or farmer's market, using quality materials always makes arranging flowers more fun," he says. If you decide to cut items from your garden, Marino says it's best to do so early in the morning and allow them to hydrate for a few hours before creating your arrangement. Step 2: Choose Your Flowers Now, it's time to choose the flowers and greenery you want to use in your arrangement. Mario says it's easier to work with a color palette that's soft and similar in shades rather than bright, bold colors with high contrast. In general, he recommends sticking with a maximum of three colors in an arrangement for a cohesive look. Try to use a variety of textures and forms. "If you are choosing to use store-bought roses or chrysanthemums which have stiff straight stems, complement them with something softer and a little more relaxed in nature, like hydrangeas or tulips," Marino says. Nsombi Woodson says it's also helpful to choose a variety of sizes; large, medium, and small-sized blooms will make for a more layered look in your creations. For a 5 inch-wide vase, you will need around 25-30 stems of flowers, plus some greenery. "Foliage adds texture and movement to an arrangement, so think about collecting a couple of varieties of different greenery," Woodson says. Step 3: Cut Your Flowers Lay your flowers and greenery on the counter by type of flower or foliage. Then, use very sharp shears or a floral knife to cut the stems at an angle, which Marino says will help them absorb the most water. Your flowers and greens should be about 1.5-2 times the height of your chosen vessel. For example, if your vessel is seven inches tall, Marino says the height of the flowers should be about 10-12 inches. For a less precise approach, Woodson says you can also measure your stems by holding them up to the face and cutting them to your desired length. Now is also a great time to trim off any damaged buds and leaves on the stems. Marino recommends trimming off all but the top layer of leaves. You can always trim off more later if your arrangement looks like it has enough foliage in it.