

Houseplant Repotting Checklist and Pot Size Guide

FitInFlow.space · Based on NC State, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri and Kentucky Extension guidance. Updated October 2026.

1. Does it need repotting?

Strong signs: ☐ Roots out of drainage holes ☐ Roots on the soil surface ☐ Roots circling the root ball

Supporting signs: ☐ Dries out in 1 to 2 days ☐ Slow growth in spring/summer ☐ White salt crust

Wait if: just bought it, mid-winter, in flower, or struggling for another reason (light, watering).

2. Pot size: move up 1 to 2 inches, with drainage holes

Current pot	Move up to	Avoid
4 in (10 cm)	5 to 6 in	8 in or more
6 in (15 cm)	7 to 8 in	10 in or more
8 in (20 cm)	9 to 10 in	12 in or more
10 in (25 cm)	11 to 12 in	14 in or more

3. Supplies

☐ New pot with drainage hole ☐ Fresh potting mix (not garden soil), pre-moistened ☐ Coffee filter or mesh for the hole

☐ Gloves and face mask ☐ Clean scissors ☐ Newspaper ☐ Watering can **No gravel layer in the bottom.**

4. The 8 steps

#	Step	#	Step
1	Water lightly the day before	5	Trim brown, mushy or smelly roots
2	Filter over the hole, base layer of mix	6	Set at the same depth, about 1 in below the rim
3	Tip and tap the pot; never pull the stem	7	Fill sides; firm gently, never pack
4	Tease apart circling roots	8	Water until it drains; top up if it sinks

5. Aftercare

Bright, indirect light for a week. Water when the top inch is dry. Empty the saucer. Check the mix label before fertilizing.

A little droop for a few days is normal. Still declining after 2 weeks? Check the roots for rot.

6. Safety

Potting mix can carry **Legionella** bacteria: wear gloves and a mask, dampen the mix, wash hands after (NSW Health). Fever, cough or breathlessness within 2 to 10 days? See a doctor.

Keep pets away while repotting. Pet ate a plant or fertilizer? Call your vet or ASPCA Animal Poison Control: 888-426-4435.

7. Repotting log

Plant	Date	Old pot	New pot	Notes (roots, mix used)