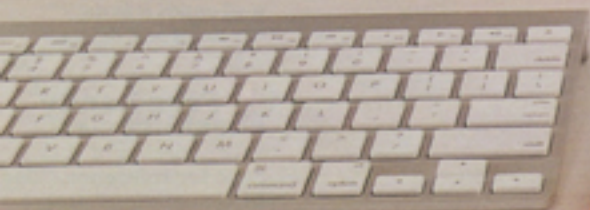


Snap Happy

A whopping 86 percent of digital photos we take never leave the memory card. Time to do right by those precious memories. Here's how to get your pics organized, backed up, and out where you can enjoy them.

BY BERIT THORKELSON | PHOTOS GREG SCHEIDEMANN
STYLING ED GALLAGHER



Download and organize

This simple six-step process for managing digital photos helps you get your pictures in order on your computer, backed up, and easily accessible.

STEP 1: DOWNLOAD At least once a month, download photos from your camera and/or phone to your computer. Funnel the images directly into a photo management program such as iPhoto, Picasa, or Windows Live Photo Gallery. "It's important to at least get them downloaded so your photos aren't stuck on a camera that could get stolen, damaged, or lost," Jody Al-Saigh of Picture Perfect Organizing says.

STEP 2: EDIT, EDIT, EDIT Review the photos you've downloaded on screen, deleting duplicates and poor-quality shots. Get tough on people-free scenes and repetitive party pics. "Fight the instinct that says every photo is precious," consumer technology analyst Kristy Holch says. "In reality, bad photos are just clutter that makes it harder to find the good ones." If editing that first big batch is overwhelming, tackle it in 15- to 20-minute increments until it's done.

STEP 3: MAKE FOLDERS Decide on a method for organizing photos on your computer. Chronological is one approach; by theme is another. Al-Saigh suggests a hybrid of the two: Make a folder for each year, and inside it, a folder for each month. Label the months by number rather than name (for example, 02 for February) so the computer lists them in the right order. Inside the month folders, create themed subfolders (Mexico vacation, pizza party, etc.).

STEP 4: RENAME AND FILE Now rename each photo, replacing that random string of digits your camera assigned to it in favor of something that will help you find the image later. (Many photo programs will automatically rename photos using a keyword you specify and a number.) If you color-correct, fix red-eye, or otherwise edit your images, do that as you rename. For quick fixes, try your photo program's one-click editing tool, such as Picasa's "I Feel Lucky" button or iPhoto's "Enhance" feature. Then save the renamed, edited photos into the folders you just created.

STEP 5: BACK UP Once a batch of photos is organized into folders, back it up right then. Experts recommend using at least two of the following methods: an external drive, an online storage service, or prints. (Most don't recommend backing up on DVDs or CDs unless the discs are archival-rated, which are expensive.) If you go with an online service, look for one that focuses on storage. Those that offer printing often charge for downloading a photo and reduce its resolution. See page 82 for more information on backing up your photos.

STEP 6: DELETE Now that your photos are organized and secure, it's safe to erase them from your camera or phone. You'll avoid accidentally downloading duplicates and give yourself a nice clean slate for the next month's photo opportunities.

When it comes to deciding which photos to keep, Tracey Dawkins and Elizabeth Waskom of Get the Picture have an easy litmus test: "Ask yourself, Would I hang this on a wall or put it in an album? If not, delete."

Free handy checklist Get a short version of this page for reference. BHG.com/digiphotos

Store and protect For safekeeping of digital photos, you have three options: an external drive, an online photo service, and good old prints. Here's what you need to know about each.

EXTERNAL DRIVE It might sound techy, but it's quite easy to use. Just connect the drive to your computer and drag your folders of organized, edited photos onto it. Prices start around \$100 for about 500 GB of storage, which will store about 200,000 photos taken with a point-and-shoot camera.

ONLINE SERVICES There are literally dozens of photo sites, each offering a combo of services, including storage, printing, and online sharing. The chart on page 84 lists a few of our favorites and what they do best.

PRINTS "The best backup is still a printed photo," says Cathi Nelson, founder of the Association of Personal Photo Organizers. But many experts say don't bother with a home printer—supplies are expensive and the quality rarely good. Instead, use an online service or a store kiosk. Nelson suggests trying a few stores to see which one churns out the best prints. And don't discount the small, independent shops. "Your local photo lab wants your business so is usually a great source of help and info," Nelson says.



TWO TO TRY Here are a couple of ways to get pictures off the computer and into your hands: Create a custom photo book, above left. Sites like Shutterfly (shutterfly.com) make it easy to upload photos, design pages, and add captions. Plus, ordering a duplicate for Grandma is a snap. Hardcover books start at \$30. Or keep a photo-safe box of prints, above right, on the coffee table to encourage browsing. Using a photo-safe pen, label the pics with names, dates, and stories behind the images. For more fun photo gift and display ideas, and the best sites for creating them, see page 223.

Best online photo services

Suzanne Kantra, editor of Techlicious (techlicious.com), picks the winning websites for storing and sharing photos.

Photo site	Best for	Cool features	Good to know
Shutterfly shutterfly.com	Making prints and photo gifts	Personal "share sites" let you invite people to view your photos, share their own, and order prints and products featuring those photos.	Unlimited storage with no minimum purchase. But you can't download a large photo at its full resolution.
SugarSync sugarsync.com	Backup and archiving	View photos on any device without having to download. AutoSync feature instantly saves phone pics to the site and to your PC or tablet.	5 GB free storage; more costs \$5/month. Full-resolution downloads but no professional printing service.
Flickr flickr.com	Photo sharing	Browse photos and chat real-time with up to 10 friends. Identify people in photos with tags. Order prints for home delivery or store pickup.	Upload 300 MB of photos a month free. Unlimited storage and full-resolution downloads cost \$25/year.

Learn photographer Greg Scheidemann's top three easy secrets for making every photo you take look better. Find them in our digital edition. BHG.com/digital

INNOVATION

Be a sharper shooter

Your phone is always with you, so why not turn it into an awesome picture-taking machine? Here's some gear and an app that will help you do just that.

Hold the phone A tiny tripod, *right*, lets you take a steady still life. Flexible legs wrap around anything. Holds iPhones, other phones, and most handheld devices. *GorillaMobile*, \$20-\$40, joby.com

A better look Wide-angle, telephoto, and fish-eye lenses attach via magnetic ring to capture more of the scene than your phone's built-in lens can. *Loftek camera lens kit*, \$50, photojojo.com



More power to you The Camera+ iPhone app lets you crop, apply special effects, control focus and exposure, and perform lots more fancy tricks. *Camera+*, \$2, campl.us ■

Get the app.

For buying information see page 230.



Guess what?

We shot this story entirely with an iPhone 4S. How's that for innovation?

“Send that box of old nondigital photos to a service such as ScanDigital.com or ScanCafe.com. For about 25 to 50 cents a photo, you'll receive a disc of images. When you copy them to your PC, change the date stamp to when it was taken, rather than when it was scanned.” **Kristy Holch**, consumer technology analyst

Better Homes and Gardens.

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Innovation Issue!

100+
Smart
Ideas
to Make
Your
Life
Easier

a slice of spring

6 Creative Cakes for Spring Parties

Easy-Plant
Container
Gardens

Get Grilling!
5 Tips for
Top Flavor

Great New Gear
for Kitchens

Pastel Hues
with Grown-Up
Appeal

Display Until May 15, 2012



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