

1. Upload your photos to your computer

Using the most basic digital or smartphone camera, you can shoot thousands of photos, dump them onto a computer, and then shoot thousands more. In seconds, you can edit a photo series in ways that would take days to develop in the darkroom. But our images are usually stored on our various devices, often leaving duplicates to sort through.

Compound this mess with old photos stored in albums and shoeboxes. It's best to digitize these before time takes its toll. [Click here for the easiest way to scan and save your old photos.](#)

Organizing digital photos takes time and patience, but just follow a few simple steps, and everything should fall nicely into place.

This should always be your first step. Even in this cloud-based era, most people have a desktop or laptop that serves as their primary computer, and you should dump your images here first.

Mac: The go-to program for Mac is simply called Photos, and it comes for free with macOS. Photos works the same way on any Mac device you have, and the photos can also save easily to iCloud. Once you've attached your camera or inserted a memory card, go to **Files** >> **Import** and you should be in business. Photos downloads images directly into the program.

Windows: Unlike Mac, Windows doesn't have a standard photo editor that everybody uses, but there are plenty of free and powerful options. Microsoft does offer their free Photos app.

With Microsoft Photos, you can easily import your photos and videos from your camera or phone. You can edit your photos with a wide range of

editing tools and create fun slideshows. [Click here to get the Microsoft Photos app for Windows 8.1 and Windows 10 now.](#)

If you're passionate about photography, you probably love editing photos as much as you love taking them. Photoshop is one of the best editing programs out there, but it's also expensive. [Click here for a free alternative that doesn't skimp out on the features you want.](#)

2. Don't be a photo hoarder

It's a rule: Trigger-happy photographers end up with countless bad pictures. They snap away, not caring about framing or the Rule of Thirds because they're just hoping that one of those shots ends up perfect.

Luckily, you can delete those extra shots, especially the ones that tested the exposure or are obscured by the shooter's thumb. In fact, you *should* delete them, not just because they're embarrassing but because they clog your hard drive with needless images and make your albums harder to organize.

3. Use face recognition

If you're using Apple Photos, the face recognition feature is extremely easy to use. Just go to "Faces" and find the row of "Suggested Faces." Double-click on any of the people you see, and you can confirm or deny which faces belong to that specific friend or family member. This is an easy way to create albums based on people who are close to you.

Apple doesn't have the monopoly on face recognition, but many Windows programs require an extra step or even an additional plugin.

Tip in a Tip: Whether you're attending a wedding, birthday party, family reunion or another special event, one of the best things is sharing the photos you've captured. Rather than email your photos back and forth to each other, [click here for a much better method.](#)

4. Add keywords and tags

Looking for a document is easy. You just type its title into your finder, and the document should appear. But images are harder to sift through. How do you make your photos searchable? Change their metadata.

Metadata is basically the hard information that is embedded in every photo, such as the date and location that it was taken. Many photos document the type of camera, lens, and exposure, as well. Adding keywords and tags make your photos easier to track down. If you've visited the Grand Canyon on several occasions, you can tag all of these with "Grand Canyon," and you'll be able to track them all down, even if they're located in different folders.

In Photos, you just click a picture and then hit the **"i" icon** at the top of the screen. A small window will show you the metadata, and you can instantly add keywords and tags.

When looking at a photo file's name, you can usually right click for "info." This will reveal the photo's metadata, and you can add specific tags there.

5. Create files that are easy to identify

Putting together files is an art because you have to anticipate what photos you'll be seeking in the future. Keywords help enormously, but sometimes you want to find a whole batch of photos that aren't exactly related.

You know yourself well, and you know how you'll end up looking for things. You'll likely end up putting all the photos from your Cancun vacation in a file marked "Cancun," and if you travel a lot, the "Cancun" and "Virgin Islands" and "NYC" photos will all end up in a file called "Travel," and so on.

6. Save the images online

Even if you have plenty of gigabytes available, you'll want to back up the pictures that you have online. Here are a few ways.

Apple: When you sign up for iCloud, you automatically get 5GB of free storage. If you use all of your iCloud storage, you can buy more starting at 50GB for \$0.99 a month. To see how much iCloud storage you are using, go to Apple menu >> System Preferences. Then, select iCloud to view your total and available storage.

Google Drive: This virtual storage site comes with every Google account. Once you open your Gmail, find the features icon in the upper right-hand corner (it looks like nine interlocking squares) and find Google Drive. This will grant you 15 GB of space, which is the equivalent of about 1,500 high-res photos of 10 MB each.

Alternatively, use Google Photos that's specifically designed for images. When uploading select "High Quality," and you have unlimited photo storage. These images can be no more than 16 megapixels in size.

Amazon Photos: Among the many perks of an Amazon Prime membership, you get Prime Photos, which provides unlimited photo storage. The service also offers its own app, which can help you organize your photos on the go. Remember, a Prime membership costs \$99, so it's far from free. But aside from its capacity to organize, Prime Photo is also compatible with Alexa, so you can give commands like, "Play a slideshow," and "Show me photos of Jane."

Tip in a Tip: Like most people, you probably signed up for Amazon Prime for one reason. Maybe it was the free shipping. Maybe it was the streaming videos or the free music. But even now, several years after Amazon Prime was founded, few people know the full breadth of their membership perks. [Click here for a master list of everything you get with your Amazon Prime account.](#)

Flickr: I'm very suspicious of Flickr. Yahoo owns the site and it's been having epidemic security problems lately. But Flickr helped create the online photo phenomenon, and it's still a high-quality venue with lots of sharing options. Flickr offers 1TB of storage, which is a colossal amount of space. Like Google Photos, you can easily create physical portraits, photos on canvas, and photo books.

Bonus: Scan your photos

Do you have old-fashioned physical photos you want to digitize? In the Komando offices, we trust Epson for all of our scanning and printing needs. Their FastFoto High-Speed Photo Scanning System can scan thousands of photos at a rate of one photo per second (at 300 dpi), making it the fastest photo scanner in the world. You can use it to restore old photos, organize your collection, and share the memories on social media. [Click here to learn more about the Epson FastFoto Photo scanner.](#)

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