

find the time

manage your memories

Looking through old photos and writing about them can make you feel happier, research suggests, but what if finding Mom's wedding snaps involves hours of poring through overstuffed boxes? Put in the time organizing your pictures now with tips from certified photo organizer Caroline Guntur, and you'll create more moments to actually enjoy them—and make more memories.

BY MELISSA DALY



START NOW: EDIT ON THE FLY

SPEND: 15 MIN
SAVE: 30 MIN-2 HR

Practice “micro-organizing”—whenever you need to kill 15 minutes, sift through your camera roll and nix all but the best. Took 14 selfies before hitting Instagram gold? Trash the outtakes before you post. When stopping to edit would mean missing the action, “heart” your favorite shots immediately. You'll save hours *and* storage space with fewer files to wade through on the back end when you're searching for that awesome shot.



BUT FIRST, BACK UP

SPEND: 1 HR
SAVE: 2 HR-2 DAYS

To truly safeguard all

your images, use the 3-2-1 method touted by the US government's Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT): Maintain *three* copies of each photo, store them on *two* types of media, and keep *one* copy off-site—in case of fire or flood. This will take you an hour to set up, but it means never spending days asking your son's wedding guests to send you copies of those precious shots you lost.



CREATE A ONE-STOP MEMORY SHOP

SPEND: 2 HR
SAVE: 3-5 HR

Hate opening 15 folders on three devices just to find the one photo you want? Establish one place to gather and organize all your images. Next, consider how you will want to look up old

photos years from now. Set up a system with folders that separate pics first by major category then by occasion, date, location, or person as needed. Name each individual image file within a folder using a consistent protocol that makes it searchable and identifiable. “Consider keywording your files for easy retrieval,” Gunter suggests. Put in two hours now and you'll save time and aggravation later.



SCHEDULE MAINTENANCE

SPEND: 15 MIN
SAVE: 30 MIN-2 HR

Now that your memories are safe and organized, stick with it! Make a weekly date to transfer everything new from your devices to your digital photo hub; pair the task with something you already

do regularly, so you're less likely to flake.



OPEN THE SHOEBOX

SPEND: 2 HR
SAVE: 3 HR-1 DAY

That perforated black-and-white print of your mother on her first day of school may be delicate, but your digital files are in more immediate danger of being destroyed in a computer crash. Deal with those first as described above, then dust off your boxes of old prints. Your order of operations:

1. Organize No need to scan both copies of your 1986 roller-skating party; save time by first weeding out duplicates to send to family and friends, and grouping prints in a similar manner to those in your digital files.

2. Digitize JPEGs can be

deleted, but prints are vulnerable to wear and tear. Scan all keepers at a resolution of 300 dpi or higher (most pros will recommend 600 dpi) and add them to your digital filing system.

3. Preserve Protect your priceless originals by sorting them into folders and boxes that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (or PAT; check the label or manufacturer) to be sure they don't contain acids that can deteriorate prints over time. Now you can spend time looking at photos instead of searching for them.



ENJOY!

Finally, spend that hard-earned time! Don't let your perfectly organized pics languish in a corner of your hard drive. Share them with family and friends. ☑

EXPERT: Caroline Guntur, certified photo organizer and personal historian, owner of The Swedish Organizer, LLC.

PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY; ILLUSTRATIONS: ALI ALI/THE NOUN PROJECT (PENCIL), THOMAS KNOPP/THE NOUN PROJECT (CLOUD BACKUP), FRANCESCA ARENA/THE NOUN PROJECT (BRAIN), PIXEL LAB/THE NOUN PROJECT (CLOCK), MIKE ASHLEY/THE NOUN PROJECT (BOX), PHAM THI DIEU LINH/THE NOUN PROJECT (HAPPY FACE).