

Tips for Organizing Your Photos

Time Required

Approximately 200 photos per hour may be sorted into categories, then subcategories, favorites for albums
Approximately 600 to 700 photos per hour may be placed in album after sorting, eliminating duplicates, etc

Supplies Needed

Decide how photos will be stored. Options include:

- Photo storage boxes with dividers
- Photo Albums
- Scrapbooks
- Frames
- Computer or CD files or separate hard-drive
- On-line photo storage
- Or combination of these

Note: archival quality or acid-free materials are recommended for long term storage of photos.

Also: large surface for sorting, sticky notes, pen, photo-safe pen

Organizing Printed Photos

Recently processed photos:

Sort and discard undesirable shots, give away duplicates or store as explained below. Immediately place photos in albums or photo storage box. If storing in box:

Leave photos in their original envelopes or put into archival quality 5x7 plastic storage sleeves and label top right-hand corner with a sticker and a few key words and date. If envelope contains more than one event or topic, separate items on the label with a slash. Store chronologically in photo storage box, divided into categories, if desired.

Consider discarding negatives as photos may be scanned and copied as needed. If negatives must be kept, store in labeled envelopes or archival storage sleeves with the index prints in photo storage box or in three-ring binders in sleeves specially designed for negatives, and label.

Large backlog of unsorted pictures:

1. Set aside an hour or so on a regular basis, have supplies handy. Decide on categories to sort backlog of photos into. Possible categories could include
 - By decade, then by year, season or month, if desired.
 - Childhood pictures
 - Ancestry Pictures
 - Events or Vacations
 - By Person

2. Write category names on sticky notes, place in rows on table. Sort pictures into categories, discarding any obviously poor shots.
3. Starting with smaller categories, sort into sub-categories if desired and label photo box dividers accordingly. Throw away dark, blurred, damaged or undesirable photos (unless they are the only record of an important event, time or person in your life). Decide whether to keep, give away or discard duplicates and additional almost identical shots. If keeping, place in labeled envelopes in photo storage box within the categories you've chosen. If time permits, choose the best photos for highlighting in albums, put in envelope labeled "Favorites for Albums" and file under corresponding categories.
4. Continue sorting major categories into subcategories, if desired, as described above until all of your photos have been sorted through and filed in categories in labeled photo boxes.

Your photo collection can be stored this way indefinitely, adding new pictures in chronological order in labeled and dated envelopes or you can choose to display chosen pictures in albums, scrapbooks or picture frames. You may want to label any pictures removed from the system with the category and date for later reference using a ph-neutral pen (sold in photo and craft stores).

Albums and scrapbooks may be labeled by date, event, person, etc. Important pictures may also be scanned and saved on photo CDs or shared on personal websites. Consider keeping extra discs of important photos at an alternate site, in case of fire, flood, etc so you may reprint them.

Enjoy!

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