



Organizing Photos to Keep Your Memories Alive

By Jacquie Ross, [CastAway the Clutter!](#)

Do you have boxes and bags of old photos that never found their way into albums? Photographs are definitely one of the best ways to preserve memories, but can also become another pile of clutter if there is no organizational plan.

Electronic organization of digital photos:

Today, most of us have moved to digital photos, but this has not necessarily ended the chaos. Disorganization on the computer can be just as frustrating as disorganization in our physical space, because at the end of the day, you want to be able to find your photos when you need them. However, it's a little easier to organize digital photos. Begin by creating folders by year, person or occasion and move individual photos to the appropriate folders.

Digital photographs will take up a lot of hard drive space, so you may wish to use a portable hard drive just for your photos. Whether you do or not, be sure to keep a back-up copy somewhere. There are many online storage options too, if you prefer not to keep any on your hard drive.

Hard copy photo organization tips:

1. When you're ready to begin sorting through the backlog of old photographs, you'll want to have a few tools handy, including, but not limited to:
 - Containers, bins or large envelopes for sorting and categorizing
 - A trash can to discard duplicate copies
 - Photo albums, photo boxes or scrapbooks with acid-free pages and/or inserts
 - Scrapbooking supplies, if applicable.
2. Schedule some time to do a quick sort. If you have years' worth of photos, you might want to start by sorting and organizing by year. If it's only a year or two, you will quickly be able to remember each photo and can sort by occasion or person, e.g. birthday parties by child, vacations, events, etc.
3. Keep only the best of the best. It's ok not to keep every single photo. If you have several shots of one person at the same event, pick the very best and get rid of the rest. It may feel a bit weird to throw away "good" photos, but it can be boring to look through a bunch of similar poses of the same person, so just pick the best.
4. For organizing projects that will take a while, consider storing them temporarily in envelopes and label each clearly with a marker, so that you know where you are when you have time to do a bit more sorting. Containers take up a lot more space, so it also depends on where you will be storing your photos when you're not working on them.
5. Plan to set aside a few of your favorites for display purposes. You can display in a traditional photo frame for the wall or table top. Plus, there are many other unique ways to display photos. Decorating magazines or Pinterest can help you come up with some other ideas.

Finally, for hard copy photos that would be devastating to you if they were destroyed in a flood or fire, get extra copies made now and store the back-up copies either in a fire proof safe or safety deposit box, or both. Or, better still, have your hard copy photos scanned into a digital format and save "in the cloud".

About the Author: Jacquie Ross is a Certified Life and Family Coach, Professional Organizer and award winning owner of CastAway the Clutter, a Maryland professional organizing company. CastAway the Clutter organizers help busy homeowners and organizationally challenged individuals with decluttering and organizing any area of their home, including photos and memorabilia and time management. Learn more at www.CastAwaytheClutter.com, or contact them directly at 410-615-0320. Other ways to stay in touch: www.Facebook.com/CastAwaytheClutter | www.FamilyMakeoverMaven.com