

ORGANIZING

Organizing your printed photos (Part 2)

At the end of my last article, "How to Organize Your Printed Photos," I promised that my next article would discuss organizing digital photos. I lied. Sort of. I've been learning so much from the Association of Personal Photo Organizers' free Save Your Photos Summit that I



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wanted to add some additional tips. You can get all of these resources free at this link: <https://www.photoorganizers.academy>. Even if you don't have time to organize your photos now, if you sign up for the summit, you will have lifetime access to the materials. So go sign up (after you read this article, of course!)

If you didn't read the last article or need to review just a bit, you can read it on my website at <https://beshipshape.com/blog/>. This article will expand on the last article and add some new information.

Step 1: Gather all your photos into one space. If possible, choose a room where photos can be left out during the organizing process.

The APPO Summit listed a few places to search for your photos that you might not have thought about: albums, frames (don't forget to look behind the front one!), photo boxes, scrapbooks, wallet, relatives' homes, bins, on the refrigerator, in various drawers, closets, within the pages of books like the family Bible, under furniture, undeveloped film, unpacked boxes, memory box, hope chest, safe, file folders, secret hiding spot, attic, garage, storage unit, yearbooks.

Photos that are still in frames take up a lot of space. Even if it's a great photo you plan to keep, unless you plan to display it again in that frame or use that frame to display another picture, you're better off removing the photo from the frame.

Step 2: Decide on your end goal(s). What do you want to do with your printed photos? There are so many possibilities. Really think through this goal before you begin, because it will guide the whole process.

Step 3: Start sorting through your photos. I love the way the APPO Summit describes this process by using the ABC model. Separate your photos into A, B and C categories as you sort. You may want to wear cotton gloves as you sort to prevent damage to your photos, especially if you are working with older photos.

A photos are the cream of the crop.



AUDRA STEADMAN

What about albums you've already created with older, non-photo-safe materials? The only way you can guarantee the long-term survival of your photos is to transfer them into photo-safe albums and boxes.

They are album- or frame-worthy photos that tell a story or bring back a treasured memory. You would mourn the loss of these photos. You will be using the A photos to create the end goal you decided on. As you sort, you may end up with more than one A pile. For example, if you are creating themed albums or boxes, you may have a "Vacations" pile and a "Holidays" pile.

B photos are not necessarily the best of the best, but you aren't ready to part with them. These are good candidates to be kept in a photo-safe box, possibly grouped into categories.

C photos are ones that need to be tossed into the trash can. C photos might include

duplicates, blurry or poor-quality photos, photos that you can't remember who/what is in them, etc.

Step 4: Scan your best photos. For your A photos (and perhaps your B photos as well), you definitely need to have digital copies. I have heard way too many horror stories of priceless printed photos being destroyed by fire, flood or other catastrophic events. Don't let this happen to you! Also, it is much easier to share photos if you have a digital copy of them. If you have a lot of photos to scan, you may want to outsource this task. I used Bays Media in Johnson City for this task because I didn't want to send them off, and I was very pleased with their service.

Step 5: Create your desired project(s). With your end goals in mind, use those A photos to create your project(s).

Choose supplies made specifically for protecting photos. Whether you choose physical albums, boxes or folders, you should definitely use photo-safe supplies. Look for these terms: acid-free, lignin-free, PAT tested, and buffered. Additionally, photos need to be stored in a temperature- and humidity-controlled environment. Remember, you want these photos to last so that future generations can enjoy them.

Document information about the pictures as you go. You may know by looking at a photo that it was taken at your middle child's kindergarten graduation, but you will eventually forget that, and others that view that same photo won't know that information. I highly recommend that you figure out a way to include a few details, whether through written notes on the back of the photo using a photo-safe writing instrument, a note attached to it or beside it, or an audio or video recording. Our photos tell stories, and if you can include the story with the photo, it makes that photo all the more valuable.

Step 6: Consider other photo safety issues. What about photo albums you've already created with older, non-photo-safe materials? What about photos that are already organized into non-photo-safe containers? This question is one that I've thought about a lot since I have shelves full of these albums that represent many many hours of work.

You'll have to make your own judgment call about this question. The only way you can guarantee the long-term survival of the photos is to transfer them into photo-safe albums and boxes. It is a laborious task, and you may not personally benefit from the work. But you can be reassured that you have done all that you can to assure their safety.

I hope that you have found this article helpful and that you are now motivated to begin organizing your photos. Remember, sign up for the free APPO Save Your Photos Summit if you haven't already. Organizing your printed photos may be a big project, but it is worthy of your time. Happy organizing!

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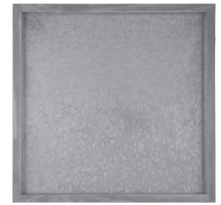
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