

Digital cameras and cell phones make taking pictures amazingly easy--however, it is also incredibly easy to end up drowning in the volume of pictures you take, to the point that you have no idea what pictures you even have, and couldn't find a specific picture in under half an hour.

Although it may initially take time, once you've set up an organizational system, it's relatively easy to maintain, and might even let you use some of those better pictures you've taken.

My personal organization system is a series of nested folders. I have a folder for each year, then within the year folder, I have subfolders for categories like family, friends, or state parks, then within those folders I have pictures separated into folders by the date.

Here's an example of my organization:

- Digital Images

-2019

-2018

-2018 Family

-2018 Friends

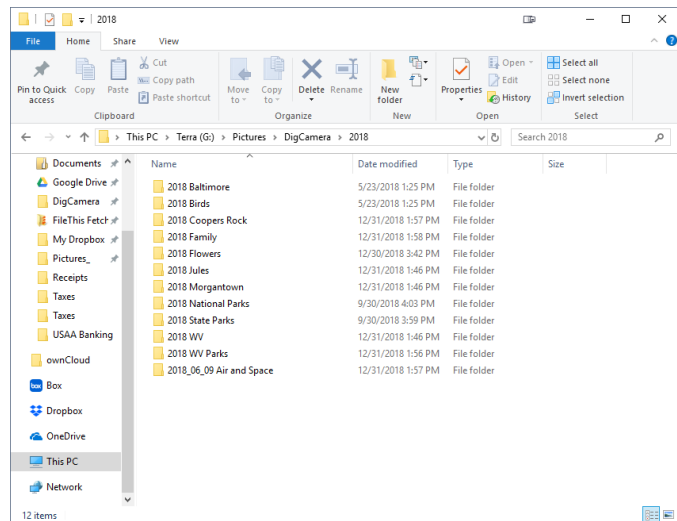
-2018 WV State Parks

-2018-05-17 Coopers Rock

-2018-07-01 Babcock

-2018 WV National Parks

-2017



How you organize doesn't particularly matter; what matters is finding a system that works for you and sticking with it.

It also helps to rename your pictures. You can usually use programs like Adobe Lightroom or the software that came with your digital camera or even a third party program like Bulk Rename Tool. I recommend yyyy-mm-dd format as part of your naming convention, since that automatically orders your images by date taken. My personal naming convention includes the date and the event. FREX: 2018-12-25_Christmas_001

Online photo storage is also useful. Google and Apple both have systems that come your accounts. My personal choice is the service [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/). I upload my "good" pictures to the Flickr site, and then those pictures can then easily be shared with family and friends, which including embedding into websites and sharing on Facebook and Twitter.

More importantly to me, Flickr allows me to apply a [Creative Commons license](#) to every image I upload. In short, this means someone can't take my image and use it for themselves to make money.

Moving photos from your phone to your computer

There are multiple ways to move photos from your phone to your computer; what works best depends upon what devices you have.

With Apple devices, you can use iCloud, however, images on cloud services generally exist on both the server AND locally on your devices, so if your device is low on space, you'll need to MOVE the images to a different location on your computer.

With Android devices, you can use Google Drive to copy files to your computer. If your device has a micro SD card, you can skip the cloud services all together. Copy the images onto the card, then transfer the images to your computer with a micro SD card adapter and an SD card reader (some laptops have a built in SD card reader).

Printing photos

If you own a newer photo printer you can usually print images directly from your phone or computer to the printer.

Be aware that photos that look good on the tiny screen of your phone or digital camera may actually be blurry when viewed on a larger screen or printed out, so take the time to view your photos on a larger screen **before** sending them to print. You'll want to check the resolution at which your images are saved when shooting, and choose the highest resolution available if you plan on printing your pictures.

You can also take your images to images to a big box store on your mobile device or USB drive to be printed.

Creating photo books

If you have a lot of pictures, you might want to consider creating a photo book. Online services allow you to do this, as do many big box stores. As with printing individual pictures, you will want to carefully check your images before sending your book to print-many cell phone pictures are not high enough resolution or quality to print cleanly and clearly.

I create a book every year of/for my niece, for her parents and grandparents. Not only does it allow me to use a variety of pictures to show how she changed over the year, but it also fits neatly on the bookshelf (unlike the three-ring or spiral bound sticky page books that were popular when I was a kid (and that often ruined the pictures put into them.))

Some of the more popular book printing services are:

[Adoramapix](#)
[Mixbook](#)
[Picaboo](#)
[Shutterfly](#)
[Snapfish](#)

Here's [a site with a pretty thorough comparison of some of these options](#).

Clean-up

One other important thing. Take the time to go through your pictures and delete the blurry or out-of-focus or generally horrible ones. If you do this on a regular basis, it won't get to be quite so overwhelming. If it's already reached the point of overwhelming, you now have a task for when you're waiting in doctor's offices or any other boring waiting room. You can even do it while [listening to podcasts](#)!

So there are some things you can do to take pictures AND enjoy them!

~Michelle

Google Terms

Resolution
DPI
SD card
MicroSD card
Cloud services