

ORGANIZE YOUR PHOTO COLLECTION *in 3 Simple Steps*

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Summer is a great time to revisit your photo collection, if only to add more fun memories to it! Many people get overwhelmed by the thought of organizing their backlog of pictures, but corralling your collection doesn't need a huge investment of time. If you don't already have a working system for tracking and storing your photos and memorabilia, these simple strategies will help you organize your collection and make it easy for you to maintain it over the years.

Stylish File Totes

Designer Desktop

Fun File Folders

Overall Organization

Office Candy

OfficeCandy.com

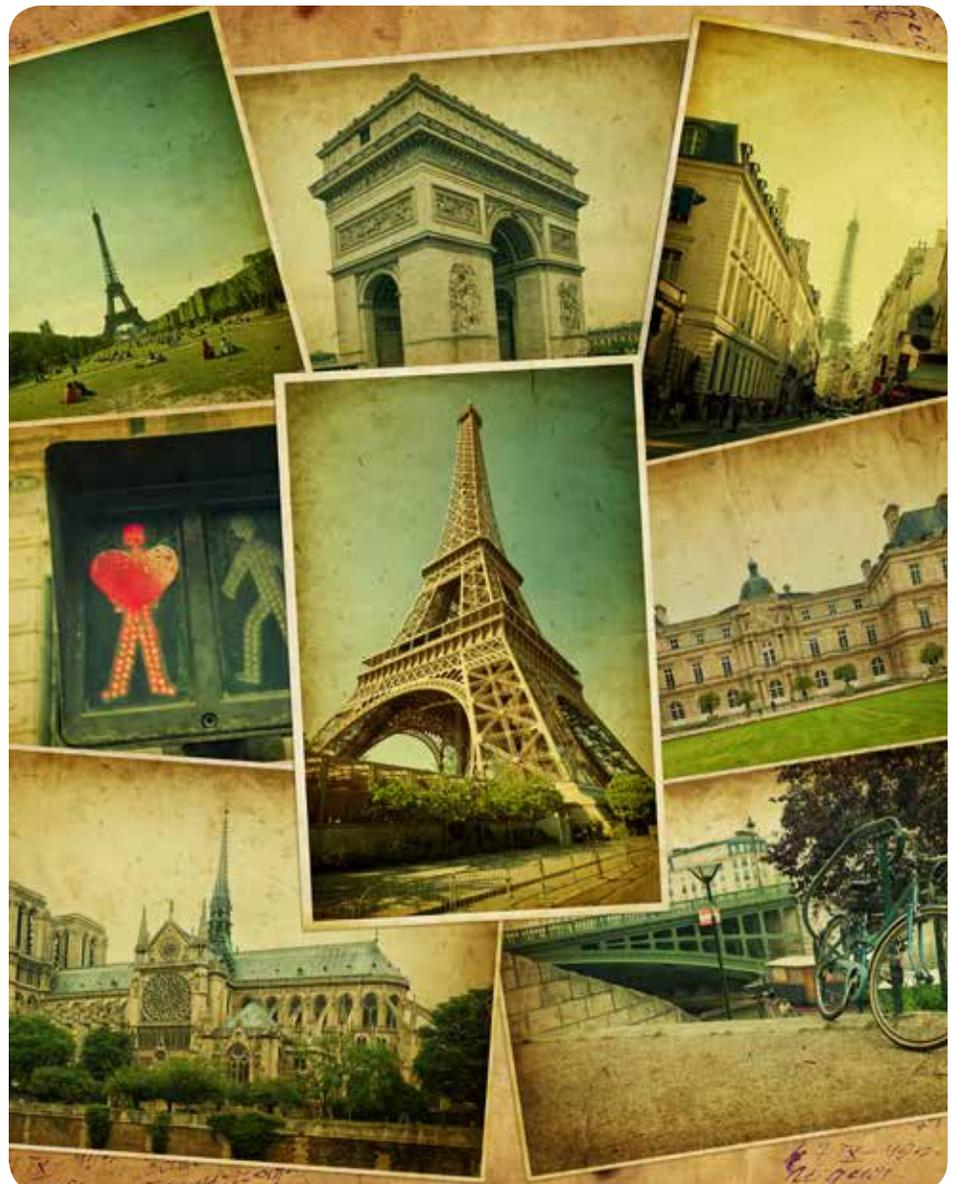
Planning a photo project is a good motivator for organizing your photo collection. These could include a child's school-end album, a family album (mid-year is a good time to start these scrapbooks) or a small gift album for brides, hostesses or aging relatives. Also, if you have a special project in mind such as a celebration album, photos will be more easily accessible to get the job done.

STEP 1: GATHER YOUR COLLECTION

Regardless of photo project plans, it's important to keep photos and related memorabilia (including media) in one place.

A designated home makes it easier to get photos put away and for others to access and retrieve items when needed. If you already have your photos collected in one location, great! If not, follow this easy approach:

- Plan a day when you have at least an hour to spend on this first step. Write it on your calendar so you commit the time and prioritize this important project.
- To make the best use of this time, make a quick list beforehand of places in your home where you store (or stash) photo albums, home movies, boxed photos and loose photos.



- Designate a collection spot in your home (even if only temporarily) and start gathering!

- Quickly retrieve all collections from the places noted on your list (and stay focused so as not to be distracted by other things you find).

- Bring items to your gathering spot (folding table, corner of room, closet shelves, book case) so you can assess the full inventory.

- Make sure your collection spot won't impede other functions in that space.

STEP 2: SORT PHOTOS BY THEME

The easiest way to begin sorting your photos is to select a theme and use it consistently as you sort. Some examples include sorting by year, subject (person), or event (trips, etc). In my experience, sorting photos chronologically offers the most flexibility, is easier and allows for further categorization at a later time (by subject or period), if desired.

- Use a large surface such as a table, desk or section of floor for staging your sort.

- Start with your loose photos and, working quickly, create piles in chronological order.

- Place a Post-It note or index card labeled with the year in front of the pile for easy identification.

- If sorting photos by individual year is difficult (date unknown), sort by decade as an alternative. Create a pile for photos with unknown dates for review at a later time.

- Continue this process with the remaining collected photos.

Entire albums can be reviewed for dates and labeled on the outside with post-it notes or other adhesive label. Keep photos in albums except for those that show signs of deterioration (yellowing pages). Photos from these albums should be removed to prevent further damage.

STEP 3: CONTAIN PHOTOS TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE

Protect your photos from exposure to light, dust and humidity by using products designed to maintain the photo quality and to keep them organized.

Photos sorted and documented by theme can be safely stored in many ways given the variety of archival products on the market today.

PICTURES WE DIDN'T TAKE BEFORE DIGITAL CAMERAS

With only 24 exposures on a roll of film, these would just be a waste



- Use acid-free photo, document or media boxes sized for your pictures.

- Use PVC-free clear plastic photo sleeves, envelopes or expandable accordion files (letter or legal size) for large-size photos, memorabilia or negatives.

- Label all containers or subdivided tabs with the year or subject for easy reference and retrieval.

- Avoid storing boxed photos and memorabilia in areas of your home that experience temperature fluctuations, such as attics, basements and garages.

- Keep your collection stored in hallway, bedroom or office closets or on storage shelves located in main living areas or finished storage areas to reduce exposure to humidity and moisture. **GO**