**Saving and backing up photos**

**Phase I – Getting Ready**

1. First you need to decide where you will save your photos. It is generally recognized that if your photos are important to you, you should have them saved in multiple locations. You will need two hard drives or one hard drive and one “cloud” storage location (like MS OneDrive or Google Drive, etc). Three locations is safer (but probably more expensive) than two.

Personally, I prefer to have all of my photos backed-up onto **two** expansion or desk-top hard drives. I think this is an economical way to store them, and I am in control of how, when and where they are stored.

2. Decide on a scheme for organizing your photos. This does not need to be elaborate or complicated, but it should allow for growth.

Personally, I use multiple, nested folders. By nested I mean that the top level folder will simply be “Photos”. Under that main folder I have many folders named by location (for example, Brookside, Blackwater, Ocean City, Williamsburg, etc.) under each of those folders I have a folder for a specific date, for example:

Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2024 Dec 12 and

Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16 etc.

3. Create folders for your photos. Remember that you will be adding new folders as you take new photos, so don’t worry about the list being exhaustive, just get started. It’s OK to have some folders by location, some by people’s names, and some that are just miscellaneous.

If you are just starting to get organized, look at your photos and ask yourself, “if I were looking for this photo, where would I look? What would I name the file location? And then create a folder (or a series of folders). Logical organization may be by date, by location, by person or family, by product or any other method that makes sense to you.

**Phase II – Filling the folders**

1. Connect your phone or camera to your computer using the USB cord.

2. Connect your hard drive to your computer using its special purpose USB cord (I leave both of my extension hard drives connected to my desktop computer at all times).

3. If it does not open automatically, open the “File Explorer” by clicking the folder icon.

4. Create several of the folders you determined to use in step 2.

* Right click on the hard drive’s folder icon
* Select add new folder
* Give the folder a name
* Unfortunately, you have to add the new folders one-by-one. But you don’t need to add them all at once.

5. Navigate to your phone in File Explorer. You should see an icon in the main panel named Internal Storage. That is the internal storage of your phone (if you are downloading from your camera it will be much the same, look for a folder that says storage or photos).

* Double click on the icon labeled Internal Storage, that should open several folders in the main panel.
* Double click the folder icon labeled **DCIM**. That should be where your phone has been storing the photos you have taken. If you don’t see any (or you think there are more) click on the folder icon labeled “pictures”.
* You may also need to repeat this procedure if you have pictures stored in OneDrive or Google Drive or elsewhere.

6. Select the images you want to copy or move to your hard drive. Move them a few at a time, and select those that go into one folder. For example, If I see several pictures I recently took at Williamsburg, I will move **just those pictures** to the folder E: > Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16. Then I will select more pictures and move them to a folder (perhaps all the pictures I recently took at Brookside Gardens – copy or move them to Photos > Brookside > Brookside 2025 March 3).

* Should you **copy** picture to the back-up hard drive or **move** the photos to the hard drive? The answer depends on a couple of things:
  + If you are just getting started, I suggest you **copy** photos to the new back-up hard drive. That will leave a copy (the original) on your phone, just in case. You can go back and delete them after you back-up your hard drive to a second hard drive (or cloud storage) and tested to be sure you can find, open and retrieve your photos.
  + If you know you want to show the pictures to your friends soon (before you have a chance to edit them) you should leave them on the phone so you can show them to your friends. After you edit your photos and upload them to social media or to a slide-show or gallery app, you can delete the photos from your phone.
  + In the long run, the object is to keep the number of photos on your phone to a minimum, unless they are in a slide-show or gallery app. And if that App is a Cloud Storage based App (like Flickr or Facebook), you don’t need them on your phone anymore.

7. Continue selecting and moving your images from your phone until you have copied or moved all of them.

**Phase III – The Security or Safety Back-Up**

1. Once you have copied or moved all the photos from your phone (or camera), copy the folders to your **second hard drive** or Cloud Storage location. You should be able to drag the folders from the one hard drive to the second hard drive (and copy them folder by folder, not file by file).

2. You may want to consider purchasing software that will help you run an incremental back-up. Personally, I use Vice Versa Pro version 6. See <https://www.tgrmn.com/?from=vvpro60>

An incremental backup only copies new or modified pictures (or other data) since the last backup. For example, if you took a full backup on Sunday, your incremental backup on Monday would only copy changes since the Sunday backup. On Tuesday, it would only copy changes to the backup image file since the Monday backup. I have used Vice Versa for over 10 years with great success. The software does not compress or modify the files, it simply makes a copy of new or modified picture files (and/or other data files).

3. Cloud storage has the additional advantage of being in a different physical location. The down-side of my system of using two expansion hard drives is that if I had a fire or flood in my condo, both drives (that sit side-by-side on my desk) could both be damaged.

**Phase IV – Back-up Frequently**

So you have your pictures saved in two places, now what? Keep up the good work! When you edit your images, save the edited image in the same folder or a sub-folder.

1. When I want to edit photos, I open them from my expansion hard drive E: The image might be in the folder E: > Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16

2. When I first get started with the editing process, I create a new sub-folder named:

E: > Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16 > Best

3. I open the original picture from E: > Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16 in Photoshop and crop, straighten, adjust brightness, shadows and highlights, adjust the colors slightly if necessary, and then save the original (which might have had the name “5D4\_1675”) but I give it a new name, and I save it in the new “Best” folder

E: > Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16 > Best > Governor palace 1675.jpg

4. When I am finished editing all the photos I will run a back-up to the second expansion hard drive.

I navigate to E: > Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16 and COPY that folder to the second hard drive F: > Photos > Williamsburg > Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16

By default, the computer will copy the subfolder “Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16 > Best” and by default that will include all the edited images, including Williamsburg 2025 Dec 16 > Best > Governor palace 1675.jpg

I now have all the photos saved in two places.

Or, I just run an incremental back-up using Vice Versa Pro and that will back-up all the new or modified files and pictures.

I run a back-up after every photo editing session.