



PHOTO SORTING DO'S & DON'TS

SORTING DO'S

Immediately toss any pics that are not keepers. Ask yourself the following questions. A photo that fails any of the questions above should be discarded:

Is the print under/over exposed?

Are you and/or the subject in focus?

Are you and/or the subject completely in the frame?

Are you and/or the subject obscured by anything (thumbs, straps, signs, etc.)? Is any part of the image obscured by anything?

Is it flattering? If it's not flattering, is it amusingly or uncomfortably unflattering? Spinach in the teeth might be ok, runny make up following a fight, less so.

Going further, is it a photo you would rather not remember?

Would you be embarrassed for anyone else to see this image?

Do you know everyone, or anyone in the photo?

Do you care about everyone, or anyone in the photo? Really think about pictures of exes. I'm not a fan of cutting people out of a photograph to reflect the way you've cut people out of your life. Toss the whole thing instead. One client took great pleasure in shredding pictures of his ex – it was very liberating for him.

Are you keeping the photo because you're afraid of ...? What? Say it out loud – name it, know it.

Will you ever want reprints of this image? Would anyone else?

If it's a close duplicate of other shots, is it superior or inferior?

Do you have an immediate emotional response to the photo or is it just a picture?

If your photos are going in boxes, sort them directly into those boxes. No need to touch them twice.

If your photos are going in albums or scrapbooks, in addition to sorting them by category or event, sort them into groups destined for each album or book. Then create test layouts to play with design before the glue comes out and you're committed to a permanent arrangement.

When sorting, record an identifying description on the back of each photo, i.e. date taken, key subjects or people in the photo.

When sorting, separate out favorite pics to display as you come across them, likewise segregate pics (duplicates, etc.) earmarked for friends or family.

STORAGE DO'S

When purchasing photo boxes, buy several at a time. This keeps the look uniform and gives you room to grow.

Store negatives separately from prints as negatives can release acidic gases that will damage nearby photos.

Store negatives with each other, clearly labeled, protected in the same way as photos.

Store all photo and negative boxes away from light and heat.

As soon as prints are developed, transfer them from photo-center packaging to protective acid-free envelopes.

Immediately and clearly label each new envelope with dates and concise, specific descriptions. Do not save this task for **someday**. An example of accurate and specific labeling would be:

'September 2004, Marybeth's Wedding' or 'June 2002, Alaskan Cruise.'

Each labeled envelope should then be stored with its brothers and sisters, grouped by their common category.

When establishing categories, be specific enough so that you'll be able to find photos and general enough that each category contains more than one image.

If using photo boxes, use acid-free tabbed dividers to further organize into subcategories, i.e. 'Family Gatherings' or 'Trips' or 'Friends.'

CARE & MAINTENANCE DO'S

Keep film negatives. Just because the developer ALSO provided a disc of images, negatives of images you'd like to retain should not be tossed. Carefully clip negatives and separate them by subject, like the photos themselves. Just because they were shot on the same roll doesn't mean that the images have any other relationship to one another.

Oils from skin can degrade photos and negatives, so handle pics by the edges only. Clean white cotton gloves offer added protection.

These plastic products are currently considered safe for contact with photos: Polypropylene, Polyethylene, Mylar, Tyvek, and Cellulose Triacetate.

When writing on photos, always use a light touch, and only use an acid-free, photo-safe pencil or pen.

Keep a box organized with all your photo supplies: acid-free glue sticks, labels, markers, and corners. Acid-free, acid-free, acid-free! Having them handy and on hand means you're more likely to actually use them.

Sort each roll as they are developed to avoid ever ending up with an unmanageable pile of photos again.

Set aside any reprints or enlargements you want, and keep together with negatives or discs in one location to be completed on your next errand run.

SORTING DON'TS

Do not start a big sort on the dining room table (or other multi-use surface) and then leave the photos cluttering that surface. If you don't have a space in your home that you can dedicate to a sizeable project, then only spread out enough photos to sort through in one sitting. This may take a bit longer, but you won't become anxious or agitated any time you want to use the dining room table and find it otherwise occupied.

STORAGE DON'TS

Never use manila envelopes, file folders, film developing envelopes, plastic baggies, corrugated boxes or shoeboxes to store photos.

Never use "magnetic" photo albums – the glues used are bonded onto the pages and will damage your photos after minimal contact.

Acid, lignin and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) will ruin photographs. Make sure that any storage option you choose (photo box, album, scrapbook) is labeled as acid-free, archival safe, lignin-free and is not made of PVC.

Do not store photos in any space where temperatures and humidity fluctuate.

CARE & MAINTENANCE DON'TS

Nothing (adhesives of any kind, paper clips, rubber bands, etc.) should come in contact with photos, unless specifically designed and identified as safe for photos.

Photos should not come into contact with wood or engineered wood products (plywood, chipboard, etc.), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), or porous marking pens.

Never hang framed photos on a wall that gets direct sunlight – your photos will fade. Or use blinds, shades or drapes to control the light.