

# How to keep your old videos, music and photos safe forever

By Francis Navarro, Komando.com, October 20, 2017

We all know by now that technology always marches on and media formats always come and go. If you're like me, you probably have a whole library of old cassette tapes, vinyl records, photographs, slides, film and Polaroid snapshots gathering dust somewhere.

Wouldn't it be nice to bring all these analog memories to the digital age? Not just for nostalgic reasons, mind you, but for preservation too.

The magnetic tape on VHS and cassette tapes will rot over time, your old photos will fade away and vinyl will eventually warp and crack. If you can convert them to digital formats now, then they'll have a better chance of surviving the test of time.

Plus, by digitizing them, you can readily access all your throwback memories through your portable gadget if you wish - anytime, anywhere. Who wouldn't love that, right? So if you want to preserve your old movies, music, and photos forever, here are some tips that can help you along:

## VHS MOVIES

### 1. COSTCO

Costco offers a digital transfer service through its Photo Center. You can transfer several types of videotapes to DVDs including VHS and S-VHS, Beta, VHS-C, Hi8, Digital 8, 8mm and MiniDV.

The service includes two personalized DVDs with intelligent chapters, personalized themes and custom music. Each transfer begins at \$19.99 and each DVD can hold up to two hours of video. If the footage on your tape exceeds the two-hour limit, the content will be split onto two DVDs and you'll be charged as if you'd placed two separate orders.

You can place your order using Costco's website and drop off your tapes at your local store. When your DVDs are ready, simply pick them up and take them back home to enjoy. Just make sure the footage you provide them is not copyrighted material.

Every transfer you make also comes with your own private online account at no extra cost as long as you remain an active user. This online account lets you view your transferred videos from any computer or device. To keep your account active, you must view or share videos at least once per year.

Costco's digital transfer service is not limited to videotapes. You can also transfer film reels, 35mm slides, photo prints and memory cards to DVDs.

### 2. WALGREENS

Walgreens is another retail location that offers a digital transfer service. With Walgreens Photo, you can transfer videotapes, movie films, HD videos and photographs onto DVDs.

The pricing for Walgreen's service is complex. DVDs cost \$24.99 per videotape, plus an additional \$9.99 for the DVD itself. If you'd prefer to have the final footage in Blu-ray format, the cost is \$20. Movie films cost \$19.99 for 50 feet of film, plus \$9.99 per DVD and are only accepted in 8mm, Super 8 and 16mm formats.

Walgreens also offers cloud storage for a monthly fee of \$4.99. This service allows you to share or watch your films with anyone, anywhere, at any time. If you're on the fence about whether or not the cloud is worth it, your first order includes a one-month free trial.

### 3. WALMART

Walmart also offers a DVD transfer service. Videotapes, movie film, photographs and slides, and digital media can all be transferred to DVD.

Like Costco, Walmart places a two-hour limit per DVD. The cost is \$24.96 to transfer one VHS tape, which makes it the more expensive option. However, transferring movie film is cheaper at Walmart than it is at Walgreens. The first 100 feet of film costs \$24.96, and you'll be charged \$.20 per foot thereafter. Additional DVDs cost under \$9.96 and additional Blu-rays cost \$13.96.

If you're still not ready to part with your old VHS tapes, Walmart also offers a special service to repair any that are damaged. This service costs \$19.96.

## CASSETTES AND VINYL RECORDS

If you have a collection of cassette tapes and vinyl records that you would want to digitize, you have tons of do-it-yourself options. As long as you have the time and patience to record your tracks in real-time, it's a relatively simple process.

First off, you need a record player or tape deck, of course. On the back of these appliances, look for red and white connectors named "Line Out." Conversely, on your computer or laptop, look for a "Line In" or "Microphone" port. On most systems, it will look exactly like a regular 3.5mm headphone port so make sure you use the right one.

Now, if your computer does have the appropriate 3.5mm input port, you'll need a cable called an "RCA to Aux" or "RCA to 3.5" cable. Just match and connect the white and red connectors to your player and plug the other end of the cable to your computer's line-in port. That will take care of the hardware part.

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For software, you can use this free program called [Audacity](#) to record your music to your computer. Just open Audacity, hit record then press play (or drop the needle) on your analog player to start the real-time transfer.

With Audacity, you can edit, split, trim and even enhance your recordings so it's a must-have program for saving your old format tracks in digital form forever.

Alternatively, some newer cassette and record players have built-in USB outputs that you can connect straight to your computer via a USB cable. For budget options, check out the Reshow USB Cassette Player and the 1byone USB Turntable, both available at Amazon.

### **Reshow USB Cassette Player**



### **1byone USB Turntable**



## **PHOTOS**

### **1. IN-STORE PHOTO SERVICE**

Costco, Walmart and Walgreens have photo and slide conversion services. After you've gone through your photos, bring the ones you'd like to digitize to each store's photo center. A sales clerk will go over prices and packages with you. You'll leave your photos there and the store will call you when you can come back to pick up a DVD with your images. These three companies also convert VHS tapes to DVDs.

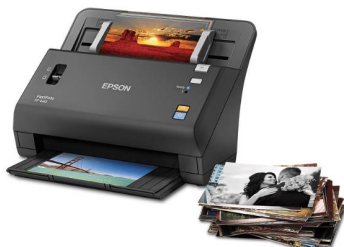
If you'd rather shop at a small business, check out your local photo store

### **2. MAIL-IN PHOTO SERVICE**

If you're not very mobile then mailing your photos to a service that operates online may be a better option. You can send your photos or slides to services iMemories, ScanMyPhotos and FotoBridge; they mail you a DVD with all of your images and they return the original photos too.

iMemories is running a limited time offer that charges 49 cents per slide or photo. Scan My Photos has a prepaid box option; you pay a flat rate of \$145 to digitize a box of photos and \$196 for a box of slides. The box is 11" x 8.5" x 5.5" and it can hold about 1,800 photos or 450 slides. FotoBridge has several different price points for packages that start at 250 photos or slides and goes all the way up to 10,000 photos or slides. It's \$99.95 to digitize 500 photos and \$189.95 for 500 slides.

### **3. DIY WITH SCANNER**



If you prefer do-it-yourself projects and you want to digitize hundreds or even thousands of photos, then this might be your best bet. The Epson FastFoto High-Speed Photo Scanning System can scan thousands of photos at a rate of one photo per second (at 300 dpi), making it the fastest photo scanner in the world. You can even use it to restore old photos, organize your collection, and share the memories on social media.