

By Pamela Wiggins, About.com Guide

You can learn how to store old photographs so they will last for generations to come. This means more than sticking them in a photo album, but it's easy to accomplish by following these helpful step by step directions.

### Here's How:

1. Take your photos out of "magnetic" or peel and stick albums. The materials they are made of - ordinary plastic, glue and cardboard - will damage photos over time. If you do decide to use a commercial photo album, look for one labeled "acid-free."
2. Remove any glue, tape, staples, rubber bands and paper clips that might stain, scratch or dent photographs before placing them in an acid-free album, storage box or frame (see more on framing in step 6). Only clean, dry metal boxes or cardboard boxes labeled "acid free" should be used for storing photos.
3. Be sure to label the back of the photo gently with a permanent marker. Include the names and ages of those in the photo along with where the photograph was taken. This will help those who inherit your photographs identify them. Do not use a ballpoint pen to write on the back of photographs. The pressure of the pen may damage the photo and the ink will likely fade over time.
4. To store photographs individually, place them in plastic sleeves void of PVC, which can be purchased at photo supply stores. Plastic sandwich bags are a good, inexpensive alternative to plastic sleeves if special supplies aren't in your budget.
5. Store large quantities of photos by layering them between sheets of acid-free paper in metal or acid-free cardboard boxes. Large photo archive boxes can be easily stacked in a cabinet or closet.
6. When framing, use acid-free mats to keep photos from touching the glass and acid-free backboards to avoid deterioration of the image. If you are having a photograph professionally framed, be sure to tell the framer you want acid-free materials. They are more expensive (but worth it), so they won't use them automatically.
7. If you are framing a precious photograph, consider having it duplicated before placing it under glass just in case it fades over time while on display.

### Tips:

1. Wood and wood products, like cardboard and paper, harm photographs and should

only be used if labeled "acid-free."

2. A good rule of thumb is storing photos where you are also comfortable; not too hot, cold, wet or dry.

3. Keep photos out of attics, garages and basements where they'll be subject to extreme temperature fluctuations and excessive humidity.

Source: <http://antiques.about.com/cs/photographs1/ht/StoringPhotos.htm>