

Moving Photos & Videos Off Your Phone

let's make this simple

Six beginner-friendly ways to get your photos and videos onto your computer, each on its own simple page. Find the one that fits your phone, and follow along.



Six ways, *one* you'll love

There's no single "right" way to move your memories. Skim the list, find the one that fits your devices, and turn to its page. Each method stands on its own.

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- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| 01 | iCloud.com
Download straight from the web, great on Windows | ● Page 03 |
|----|---|-----------|
-
- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 02 | AirDrop
The fastest hop from iPhone to Mac | ● Page 04 |
|----|--|-----------|
-
- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 03 | Google Photos
Automatic backup you reach from anywhere | ● Page 05 |
|----|--|-----------|
-
- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 04 | SSD Drive
Built for big video files and creators | ● Page 06 |
|----|--|-----------|
-
- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 05 | Flash Drive
Simple, offline, budget-friendly | ● Page 07 |
|----|--|-----------|
-
- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 06 | USB-C or Charging Cable
No Wi-Fi, no cloud, just plug in | ● Page 08 |
|----|--|-----------|
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- Not sure where to start? The last pages answer the questions everyone asks, and tell you which method is easiest.
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Method one

iCloud.com

01

Already saving photos to iCloud? Then they're waiting for you on the web, no cables required. Lovely on a Windows computer.

An iPhone

iCloud Photos turned on

Your Apple ID

A computer that's online

FIRST, TURN IT ON (ONCE)

Settings > Your name > iCloud > Photos >
iCloud Photos

THEN, ON YOUR COMPUTER

- 1 Open a web browser and go to **iCloud.com**.
- 2 Sign in with your **Apple ID**.
- 3 Click **Photos**, then open the album you want.
- 4 Select your photos, then click **Download**.
- 5 They'll save into your computer's **Downloads** folder.

IF IT ARRIVES AS A ZIP

A ZIP is just a tidy folder for the trip. **Windows:** right-click > Extract All > Extract. **Mac:** double-click it and you're done.



SELECTING MORE THAN ONE

Click the first photo, hold **Shift**, then click the last. Everything in between comes along. To grab the whole album:

WIN **Ctrl + A**

MAC **⌘ + A**

BEST FOR

Windows users

Choosing specific photos

Organizing albums first

GOOD TO KNOW

- Apple gives you 5GB free, plenty for photos, tight for lots of video.
- The very first sync can take a while. That's normal.

Method two

AirDrop

02

The fastest little hop from iPhone to Mac. No cables, no cloud. The files simply fly across the room.

An iPhone

A Mac computer

Wi-Fi on

Bluetooth on

SEND THEM OVER

- 1 Open the **Photos** app and select what you'd like to send.
- 2 Tap the **Share** button.
- 3 Tap **AirDrop**, then choose your **Mac**.
- 4 On your Mac, click **Accept**.
- 5 They land in your **Downloads** folder.

GOOD TO KNOW

AirDrop works **Apple-to-Apple** only: iPhone to Mac, not to a Windows PC. It also sends straight to **another iPhone or iPad**, so it's perfect for sending photos to your kids or a friend. Large videos take a little longer, so keep the devices close.



BEST FOR

Fast transfers

Mac users

Sharing with family

Smaller batches

GOOD TO KNOW

- Both devices need Wi-Fi and Bluetooth switched on.
- Keep them near each other until the transfer finishes.

Method three

Google Photos

03

One free app quietly backs up every photo, then hands them back from any computer, anywhere you sign in. Identical on iPhone and Android.

iPhone or Android

A Google (Gmail) account

The Google Photos app

A computer that's online

FIRST, TURN ON BACKUP (ONCE)

- 1 Open the **Google Photos** app on your phone and sign in with your Google (Gmail) account.
- 2 Tap your **profile picture** at the top right, then **Photos settings > Backup**.
- 3 Make sure **Backup** is switched **on**. Nothing reaches your computer until it is.
- 4 Leave the app open on Wi-Fi until it says **Backup complete**.

THEN, ON YOUR COMPUTER

- 1 Go to **photos.google.com** and sign in.
- 2 Hover over a photo and click the **round checkmark** to select it.
- 3 Select more, then click the **three dots** at the top right.
- 4 Click **Download**. They save to your **Downloads** folder.



SELECTING MORE THAN ONE

Click the first photo, hold **Shift**, then click the last. Everything between comes along.

BEST FOR

iPhone or Android

Automatic backup

Reaching files anywhere

GOOD TO KNOW

- Google gives you 15GB free, shared across Gmail, Drive & Photos.
- Large downloads may arrive as a ZIP folder. That's normal.

Method four

SSD Drive

04

A little pocket drive that holds everything. The creator's choice when the videos are big and the Wi-Fi is slow.

A portable SSD

A cable that fits your phone

The Files app

ON YOUR PHONE

- 1 Plug the SSD into your phone. Tap **Allow** if it asks.
- 2 Open the **Files** app and find your photos or videos.
- 3 Tap the **three dots**, tap **Select**, then tap each item, or drag a finger across several.
- 4 Tap **Move** or **Copy**, choose your **SSD**, then tap **Move Here**.
- 5 Let it finish before you unplug.

ON YOUR COMPUTER

- 1 Unplug the SSD and plug it into your computer.
- 2 Open the drive and your files are right there, ready to use.



WHY AN SSD?

SSDs are faster than flash drives and built for large video. They cost a little more, and for content work, they're worth it.

BEST FOR

Large video files

Content creators

Fast offline storage

GOOD TO KNOW

- No internet needed. Everything stays on the drive.
- Faster than a flash drive, at a higher price.

Method five

Flash Drive

05

*The simplest, most affordable way to move files offline:
no accounts, no internet, no fuss.*

A phone-compatible flash drive

Its app, if one is needed

ON YOUR PHONE

- 1 Plug the flash drive into your phone. Open its app if one pops up.
- 2 In **Files**, tap **Select**, then tap each photo or video, or drag a finger across several.
- 3 Tap **Move** or **Save to Drive** and choose the flash drive.
- 4 Let it finish, then safely unplug.

ON YOUR COMPUTER

- 1 Plug the flash drive into your computer.
- 2 Open the drive folder and your files are there.

BEST FOR

Smaller batches

Simple offline storage

Budget-friendly



FLASH VS. SSD

Flash drives are smaller and cheaper, in sizes to suit any budget. They're a touch slower, perfect for smaller batches.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Cheaper than an SSD, with storage sizes that vary.
- Slower than an SSD, best for a handful of files.

USB-C or Charging Cable

No Wi-Fi, no cloud, nothing to buy, just the cable that's already in your bag.

Your iPhone

A computer

A cable that transfers data

PLUG IN

- 1 Connect your iPhone to the computer with the cable.
- 2 Unlock your phone, tap **Trust This Computer**, then **Allow Access**.
- 3 Keep your phone **unlocked** the whole time.

ON YOUR COMPUTER

- 1 Open **File Explorer** and find your iPhone under **This PC**.
- 2 Open **Internal Storage > DCIM** to see your photos.
- 3 Select what you want and drag it onto your computer.



SELECTING LOTS AT ONCE

Click the first file, hold **Shift**, click the last, or grab everything:

WIN **Ctrl** + **A**

MAC **⌘** + **A**

ON A MAC

Open the **Photos** app or **Image Capture** instead. Your iPhone shows up there to import from.

BEST FOR

No Wi-Fi needed

No cloud needed

Free with a cable you own

GOOD TO KNOW

- Your phone must stay unlocked the whole time.
- Photos are sorted into folders by date.

After the download

Finding Your Files

Downloaded everything? Here's exactly where it lands, how to open it, and a tidy way to keep it.

— WHERE DOWNLOADS GO

Almost everything saves into one folder, called **Downloads**.

WIN File Explorer > Downloads

MAC Finder > Downloads

— CAN'T FIND THEM?

Search your computer for the file's name, or for **Downloads**, **ZIP**, **JPG**, or **MP4**.



— OPENING A ZIP FOLDER

A ZIP is just a compressed folder. Nothing's wrong, you simply open it first.

- 1 **WIN** Right-click the ZIP, then **Extract All > Extract**.
- 2 **MAC** Double-click it and a normal folder appears.

— NAME IT SO YOU'LL FIND IT LATER

Rename the new folder something you'll recognize: a date plus a few words works beautifully. To rename: **Windows**, right-click > Rename. **Mac**, click the name, then type.

2026-04 · Spring Trip

Grandkids · Birthday

Client · Skincare Shoot

Good to ask



Questions, Answered

The little things everyone wonders about, sorted out in a sentence or two.

Why won't my phone show up?

Usually it's simple: the phone is locked, you didn't tap **Trust This Computer** or **Allow Access**, or the cable only charges (not all transfer data). Keep the screen on and unlocked, and give it a moment.

How do I select many at once?

On a computer, click the first, hold Shift, click the last. On your iPhone, tap **Select** and tap each one, or drag a finger across several.

WIN **Ctrl + A**

MAC **⌘ + A**

Why is it taking so long?

Big videos and thousands of photos simply take time, more so on slower Wi-Fi or with cloud backups. Leave the phone plugged in, Wi-Fi on, and let it finish. Overnight is perfectly fine.

Where did my photos go?

Almost everything saves into one folder, called **Downloads**, and many people simply don't know where to look. Here's the path on each computer.

WIN

File Explorer



Downloads

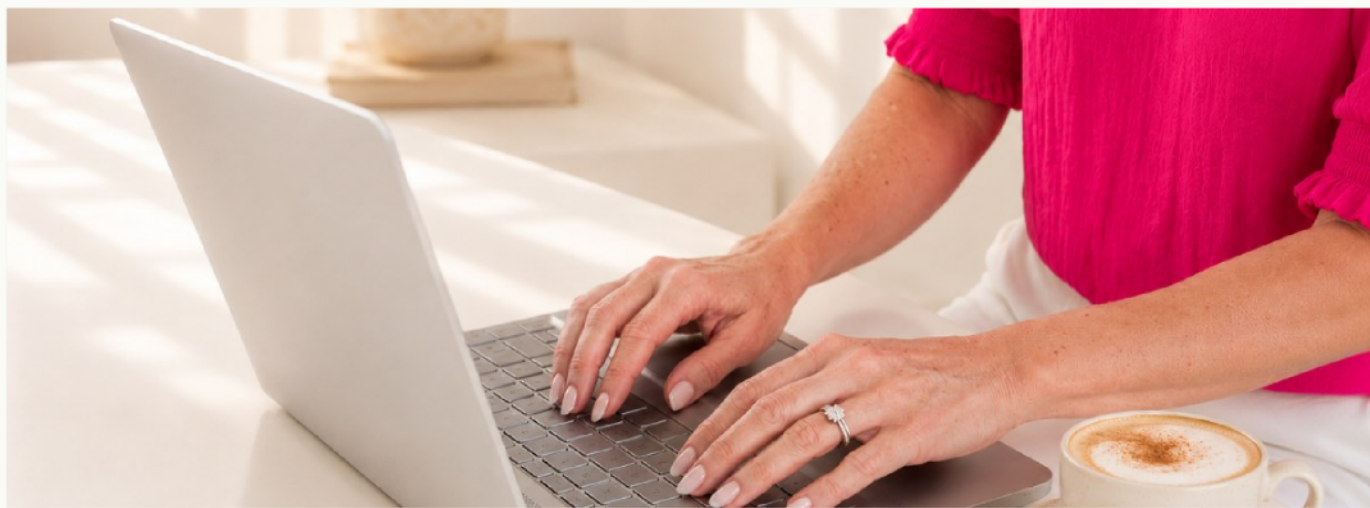
MAC

Finder



Downloads

Can't find them? Search your computer for the file's name, or for **Downloads**, **ZIP**, **JPG**, or **MP4**.



If you only remember one thing Which Is Easiest?

There's no wrong answer, but here's the short version, for when you just want to pick one and go.

Easiest overall

iCloud.com

Google Photos

Fastest for Mac users

AirDrop

Best for large video files

SSD Drive

Best offline option

USB Cable

SSD Drive

Lowest cost

USB Cable

you've got this

Pick one method, follow its page, and your memories are safe on your computer.

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