

Scanning Your Photos

If you have a computer with a photo scanner and a CD burner, and you are willing to put in some time, you can save some money and shorten the schedule for completing your Photo Memory Video. Or, if your photos are taken with a digital camera, with just a small amount of effort, you can have the same benefits. To receive the Digital / Pre-scanned Photo Discount, you need to provide all of your photos to us on a CD according to the following guidelines.

1. Scan at high resolution.

If we scan your photos, we will scan them at 1 megapixel resolution for the Basic, 2 megapixel for Basic with pan and zoom and Silver packages, 3 megapixel for the Gold, and 4 megapixel for Platinum. We recommend you scan at least at 2 megapixels. However, we will use whatever resolution you provide. Just be aware that with some of the effects, a lower resolution photo may begin to look blocky.

This chart will help you set your scanner for the appropriate resolution. If your scanner software does not allow exactly the choices shown, choose the next higher one it supports. For example, if you are scanning a wallet at 2 megapixel, and you have the choice between 400 dpi and 600 dpi, use 600 dpi.

Original Photo Size	Scanner setting			
	1 megapixel	2 megapixel	3 megapixel	4 megapixel
wallet	350 dpi	500 dpi	600 dpi	700 dpi
3½ x 5	250 dpi	350 dpi	400 dpi	500 dpi
4 x 6	200 dpi	300 dpi	350 dpi	400 dpi
4 x 7	200 dpi	250 dpi	350 dpi	400 dpi
5 x 7	150 dpi	250 dpi	300 dpi	350 dpi
8 x 10	100 dpi	150 dpi	200 dpi	200 dpi

When you scan your pictures, make sure the picture is oriented on your scanner bed correctly for vertical or horizontal pictures, since rotating the picture after scanning will somewhat reduce the quality of the image.

2. Keep it clean!

The enemy of high-resolution photo scans is dust and fingerprints. Be fussy. Be very, very fussy. Keep a soft cloth handy to gently dust off your photos before scanning them. Keep the glass of your scanner clean and free of fingerprints and dust. The scanner can't tell the difference between fine detail in your print and the specks of dust. Dust that is not noticeable when you view the print will be very noticeable when the photo is projected on a 3x4 projection screen.

3. Use best-quality JPG.

Save each scanned image as a JPG (also called JPEG) image. Most scanner applications or photo editing software will ask you about the "quality" of the JPG image, where higher quality files are larger. The actual names the software gives you to select from varies with the software, but select the highest quality setting / largest file size the software allows. Remember, with compressed digital photos, resolution does not tell the whole story. A two megapixel photo compressed for small file size will still look bad.

Do not further process or edit your scanned images, unless you know what you are doing. JPEG compression is a "lossy" compression, meaning that every time a JPEG image is decompressed for manipulation by a photo editor and then recompressed to resave it, some of the quality of the image is lost. The best results are generally obtained by providing us with the raw scanned image. Remember, we include as a standard part of our services correcting color tint or color cast on old photos, and improving the color saturation of faded photos.

4. Number your files with your picture number.

Refer to the *Photo Memory Video Preparation Guide* on this web site for the discussion of how to number your pictures. Just use the same scheme for numbering your files, only make everything a 4 digit number. For example, picture 23 would have file name 0023.jpg. If you used letters to add pictures between other pictures, do the same here – just add the letter to the end. For example, picture 23a would have file name 0023a.jpg. Your pictures are properly named if, when you tell Windows to sort the files by name, it will list them in the order you wish them to appear in your Photo Memory Video.

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5. Burn the images to a CD-R.

Using your CD burning software, burn your images onto the CD-R and you're done.

6. A note about digital cameras.

Digital cameras will produce JPG images at whatever resolution setting you used with the camera. We will use your digital images "as is" so long as you name the files according to our guideline. Just remember, as with scanned photos, we have limited options for improving the quality of low resolution or highly compressed digital pictures. Some high quality digital cameras produce TIFF images. If yours does, do not convert them to JPEG. Provide us with the original TIFF image.

7. Mixed pre-scanned / digital camera pictures and regular photos.

If you scan part of your pictures, or only part of your pictures are taken with a digital camera, we will give you a partial discount based on the number of photos we scan versus the number you provide to us on CD.

8. A note about photo CD services.

Some of these services produce very good results for an amazingly low price. But, some of them produce nearly unviewable images. We have seen photos placed crooked on the scanner bed, blurry scans, highly compressed images, and even nearly unusable low resolution scans in the 0.3 megapixel or lower range. Ask about how your images will be scanned to be sure the lab will produce an image that you will be pleased with.