

How to Free up Space on Your iPhone and Android Phone

by Suzanne Kantra on July 09, 2020

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With all of the photos and videos we take, many of us run out of space. And, it usually happens at the worst possible time — baby's first steps, a celebrity sighting, hilarious pet antics. So, follow our simple steps to ensure you always have room for that next important shot.

1. Back up your phone to the cloud

If you don't have the time or patience to sift through old photos and videos or if you want to keep all your media files, back them up to a cloud storage service and delete those you don't want locally on your phone. With cloud storage services, like [Dropbox](#), you can choose to have your photos automatically backed up whenever you have access to WiFi, so you can have a full-resolution copy.

If you use an iPhone, the process is automatic if you've enabled the iCloud automatic backup service (Go to Settings > Apple ID > iCloud > Photos and toggle on iCloud Photos. Then select Optimize iPhone Storage. This keeps a lower resolution version of your photos on your phone and full resolution in iCloud. Then go to Settings > Photos > Cellular Data and turn off Cellular Data and Unlimited Updates to ensure you don't go over your data plan.)

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For Android and iPhone users, consider [Google Photos](#) (for [iOS](#) and [Android](#)) which can be set up to automatically backup photos and videos over WiFi. To keep full-resolution photos, make sure you select Original as the image quality. Go to Settings > Back up & Sync > Upload size > and select Original. Google Photos also has a [Free Up Space](#) feature that deletes photos you've already back up to the cloud.

2. Back up your phone locally

To avoid the cost and limitations of cloud storage, back up your files to your computer. Of course, the downside is that you can only do this when you have access to your computer through a wired or wireless connection.

If you own an iPhone and a Mac, you can use iTunes, iPhoto, the Photos app or the Image Capture app to save copies of your media files to your Mac. See Apple's [step-by-step instructions](#) on how to go about it. You can also use AirDrop to transfer files without having to connect your phone to your computer via USB cable. Apple has a page of [instructions](#) on how to accomplish that.

If you use a Windows PC, you can still also use iTunes; the [steps](#) vary according to your version of Windows.

If you use an Android device, connect your phone to your computer via a USB cable. Your Windows computer should detect your phone as a mass storage or media storage device, and you will be able to drag and drop your photos and videos from your phone to a folder on your PC. If you have a Mac, install the free [Android File Transfer](#) app on your Mac and then you can drag and drop files onto your Mac.

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3. Delete old email attachments and downloaded files

While it's great to be able to read documents attached to your email and see photos in your messaging app, often you don't need to keep them long term. It's easy to find and delete these old files.

For iPhone, go to Settings > General > iPhone Storage. There you'll see options to turn on Auto Delete Old Conversations and review large videos and email attachments. If you don't see these options, select "Show All" next to Recommendations.

For Android, open your app tray and select the Downloads app. To delete a file, touch and hold the file and then select Delete.

4. Uninstall apps you don't use



While photos and videos are the usual storage hogs, apps (particularly games), can also consume storage space. It's best to remove apps you don't use often.

On the iPhone, go into Settings > General > iPhone Storage. You'll see a list of apps sorted by the amount of storage space used. When you select an app, you'll have the option of deleting it. Or, you can long-tap on the app's icon and tap the X overlay to delete the app and all of its data. You can also choose to automatically offload any apps you haven't used in a while. Go to Settings > iTunes & App Stores and toggle on Offload Unused App. This will remove the app but leave the data behind, in case you want to reload the app at a future date.

On Android, go to Settings > Storage > Free up space. To delete an app, tap the empty box to the right to select and then tap Free up.

5. Add storage to your phone



If you own an Android phone with a memory card expansion slot, invest in a microSD card, and move some of the files from your phone's built-in storage. We like the [SanDisk Extreme Pro microSDXC](#), which comes in 64, 128, 256 and 400GB (starting under \$25, check price on [Amazon](#)). To move files around, you can use a file manager app. Most phones come with their own file managers. If yours doesn't, or if you want a more flexible app, install the [ES File Manager](#) (free in Google Play). You can also purchase an external drive like the [SanDisk Dual Drive M3.0](#) (16GB - 128GB starting under \$10, check price on [Amazon](#)), which you can plug directly into your phone's microSD and computer's USB or a [SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive USB Type-C](#) (16GB - 256GB starting under \$15, check price on [Amazon](#)) which plugs into your phone's USB-C and your computer USB.

Also available at [B&H](#) (\$21.99), [Newegg](#) (\$21.99) and [Walmart](#) (\$22.49).

Also available at [Walmart](#) (\$6.79), [eBay](#) (\$7.99).

Also available at [eBay](#) (\$18.99).

You can't add a memory card to an iPhone, but you can purchase a flash drive to plug into your iPhone or iPad to offload photos and plug into your computer. We like the or the [SanDisk iXpand Mini Flash Drive For Your iPhone](#) (32GB - 256GB starting under \$25, check price on [Amazon](#)) which into your iPhone or iPad.

Also available at [eBay](#) (\$30.85).

6. Shoot lower resolution videos

Many of today's higher-end phones can capture videos in 4K resolution. These high-resolution videos are clearer and have finer detail, especially if you view them on a 4K-capable TV or monitor. But, higher resolution video takes up a lot more storage space than HD or full HD videos. If you don't need 4K videos, set your camera to capture images at a lower resolution in order to save storage space.

7. Make saving space a habit

Clear out space on your smartphone regularly to save yourself from the disappointment of running out of storage at times when you need it most. Stay lean and mean so you're ready to enjoy your phone's features at a moment's notice. And, if you're running out of space on your computer, check out our tips on [how to clean out and organize your computer](#).

Updated on 7/9/2020 with new storage options.