

The Back Up Rule of Three



PRESERVING YOUR FAMILY MEMORIES

A Publication of Family Memories Matter LLC

How It Works



Priceless picture of my grandmother and great aunt

Family Memories Matters recommends that all clients use The Back-up Rule of Three for preserving important photos and memorabilia. A professional photographer named Peter Krogh originally developed this practice to protect his photos, but it has become the standard for many in business, archives, and family history.

The Back-up Rule of Three dictates that you should:

Rule #1: Have at least three copies of your data (photos, treasured letters, videos or audio recordings)

For example, I have this treasured old photo of my grandmother (left) and great aunt. I keep 1.) A physical print 2.) A scanned copy on my computer 3.) A scanned copy that is backed up *off site* by a computer back-up service like Backblaze or Carbonite. (This does not include cloud syncing services like iCloud or Google Drive.)

Rule #2: Store the copies on at least two different media types

For example, I have letters my grandmother wrote to my father in college. Here is my back-up plan: (Still a work in progress!) I keep 1.) Original letter 2.) Scanned letter on my computer hard drive 3. Scanned letter on a thumb drive that I keep off site (or mail to my sister).

Rule #3: Keep at least one of those copies off site

The biggest threats to our family memorabilia tend to be water, fire, and technology failure. So, let's say your home catches fire – your physical copies and hard drive may be lost. What will be safe is the copy off site.

Hot Tip:

One final note on storing photos and memorabilia in your home: They should be stored in the same type of environment you like to live in. Attics and basements often have large temperature and humidity fluctuations that will damage your materials over time. A closet in one of your main living areas might work, but avoid areas immediately below plumbing lines and, in general, try to keep boxes at least a few inches off the floor.

Take a Deep Breath

None of us have ALL of our photos and memorabilia backed up three times. Prioritize your most important treasures first and then customize your plan to your needs.

If you are not tech savvy, make at least three physical copies and send some copies to relatives you trust for safekeeping. You can also get scans done at reputable photography shops. (Look for shops that scan materials on their premises and don't send it out of the building).

Increase Your Odds

There are **no guarantees**, no matter how perfectly you follow The Rule of Three.

Your goal is to **increase your odds** that family treasures will be available to the next generation.