Android phone: Cloud backup and photo sharing

Use your free Google account to backup your files, photos and videos.

Your Google Account comes with free cloud services that let you back up your files, photos and videos, and sync them across different devices.

Your Google Account also comes with lots of free software, such as a word processor, spreadsheet and calendar, as well as the Google Assistant voice assistant.

What you will need

Before you begin the course, check that your phone is fully charged, and has the latest version of its operating software.

You'll need an internet connection over home Wi-Fi or via mobile data, and you'll need to be signed in to your Google Account using its email address and password.

Remember, there are lots of different brands of Android phone, and they all do things slightly differently. Some of the screens on your phone might look a little different to those on this tip sheet, but you should still be able to follow along.

Your secure Google Account provides access to free cloud services

How to back up and share photos

Let's look at how to back up your photos to the cloud and share them with friends and family.

1. Swipe up from the bottom of the screen to show all your apps.
2. Find the **Photos** app and tap the icon to open it.
   It's important to open the Photos app, not your phone maker's Gallery app. Some Android phones might call their Gallery app Your Photos. Check you are opening the Photos app only.

Be sure to open the Photos app, not your tablet maker's Gallery app

3. If this is the first time you've used the **Photos** app, you will need to give it permission to access photos and other files on your phone. This is necessary for the app the work properly, and is safe to do. Tap **Allow**.
4. The next screen asks if you want to back up the photos and videos on your phone to your **Google Account**. Tap **Turn on backup**.
5. Now choose the quality at which you store your photos. If the **Original** option is not already highlighted, tap it so that the box around it becomes blue.
6. The next option, **Back up over mobile data**, can use up your data allowance and be expensive, so check it is set to off. The switch should remain grey.
7. Tap **Confirm**.

Your phone may then offer a slideshow about what you can do with **Google Photos**. You can tap **Next** in the bottom right corner to see the information, or tap **Skip** to move onto the next step.

Using the Google Photos app

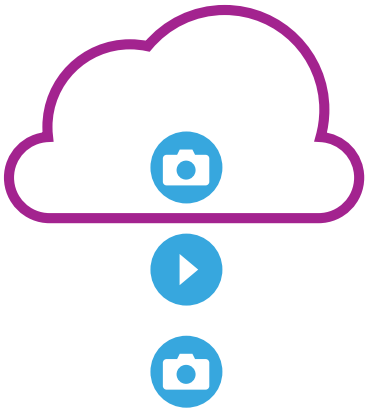
The **Google Photos** main screen appears, showing your photos and videos. You'll also see your **Google Account** profile icon in the top right.

If it has a blue line moving around it, the photos and videos on your phone are being backed up to the cloud.

To check your photos are being backed up:

1. Tap on your profile icon.
2. A box will pop up with some information that helps you manage Google Photos. The box will show that your photos are **Backing up**.

Once you have backed up your photos, you'll be able to access them by signing in to your Google Account from any device. You can see how this is done using your Windows desktop or laptop computer in the **Sharing photos and location with the cloud** courses.



Google cloud storage backs up photos and videos in the Google Photos app on your phone

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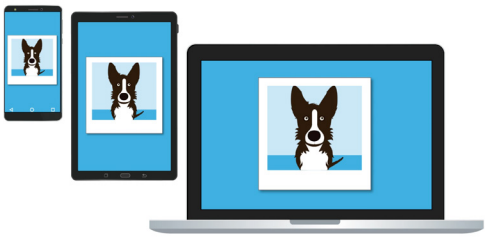
Useful information in the Google Account window

You can always tap your **Google Account profile icon** to access useful information.

Account storage shows you how much space your photos and videos take up, in the cloud. Your Google Account comes with 15 gigabytes of free cloud storage, and when this runs out you will need to purchase more or delete some photos, or other files from the cloud.



Google cloud storage lets you access your backed up files from other devices

1. Tap on **Account storage**. A new page opens titled **Back up & sync**.
2. Check that the **Back up & sync** switch is blue, which means it's on. This means that every time you take a photo or video using your phone, the **Photos app** will back them up to your Google Account cloud storage.
3. To stop backing up your photos and videos, you can tap the switch so that the button becomes grey.
4. Below this are your name and Google Account details, and a button you can tap to purchase more cloud storage.
5. Tap the **Back** arrow to return to the Google Photos pop-up box.
6. Below **Account storage** you might see something like **Free up space**. Tap the **Free up** button to open a new screen with information about how to safely remove photos from your phone to free up space on your device. In this case, if your phone is not connected to the internet, you won't be able to see the photos that are stored in your cloud account.
7. Return to the Google Photos main page by closing the box. Tap the **cross** in the top left of the screen.

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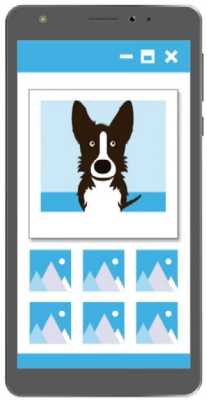
How to share photos with friends and family

You can use the cloud and your phone's messaging app to share photos with friends and family by sending them a **link**. A link lets you share files that are too large to attach to a message, such as multiple photos and videos.

1. From the Google Photos main page, choose a photo to share by tapping and holding your finger on the photo until a blue tick appears in the photo's top left corner.
2. The other photos now have a pale white circle in their top left corner. Tap photos to give them blue ticks and add them to the link you're about to share.
3. At the top of the screen, tap the **Share** icon, which is three circles connected by lines.
4. The **Share panel** appears with different options for sharing your photos. Scroll the panel until you see an icon labelled **Create link**.



Others can view your shared photos on their device by tapping on the link in your message

5. Tap the **Create link** icon and wait until you see a coloured bar labelled **Link copied**. **Share it in an app**.
6. To share the link using your phone's by tapping the **Messages icon** in the **Share panel**.
7. Your **Contacts** list opens, so you can choose who to send the link to. You can search for a specific name or enter a mobile number.
8. A new message appears with the link already copied into the message body.
9. You can add a personal note after the link if you like, but make sure to press the **Space bar** first so your note doesn't mess up the link!
10. Finally, tap the **Send** button.

    When your friend or family member receives the link, they can tap it to open their smartphone's web browser and see the photos you shared. If they are signed in to their own Google Account, they can also comment on your photos and download them to their device.

11. Tap the **Home** button to return to the Home screen.