

Transferring Video from Tape, DVD or Camera to Your Computer

The procedure for archiving digital video is the same as for any other digital content:

1. Locate the files
2. Gather them into a single folder on your computer
3. Backup that collection
4. Migrate the collection approximately every five years to new media.

In the course of locating the files, step 1, you may need to transfer the video files off a camera, tape or DVD and onto your computer as soon as possible.

DVDs

To transfer the video files off a DVD that does not have copy protection:

- Insert the DVD into a computer and don't play the contents. If the video starts to play, stop it.
- Look inside the DVD contents as you would look inside any storage device. Typically the files appear to be organized as in Example 1.

NOTE: Media must not be copyright protected. You must have the right to copy the contents.

Open the folder that contains the video files (titled "VIDEO_TS" in example 1).



AUDIO_TS

The video files may be labeled with a VOB file extension, which stands for Video Object. (See example 2.) The video files will be the largest files in the directory.



VIDEO_TS

Example 1. File contents of a DVD

1. Create a folder on your computer for the video files. Give it a descriptive title to help you locate the video files again.
2. Copy the VOB files from the DVD to the video folder. If you aren't sure which files are the video files, copy everything.

VTS_01_3.VOB	1,048,404 KB	VOB File
VTS_01_2.VOB	1,048,404 KB	VOB File
VTS_01_1.VOB	1,048,404 KB	VOB File
VTS_01_4.VOB	353,080 KB	VOB File
VIDEO_TS.VOB	52,894 KB	VOB File
VTS_01_0.IFO	48 KB	IFO File
VTS_01_0.BUP	48 KB	BUP File
VIDEO_TS.IFO	12 KB	IFO File
VIDEO_TS.BUP	12 KB	BUP File

Example 2. Video folder contents from DVD.

NOTE: Never modify the original video file. Make a copy and modify only the copy.

Videotape

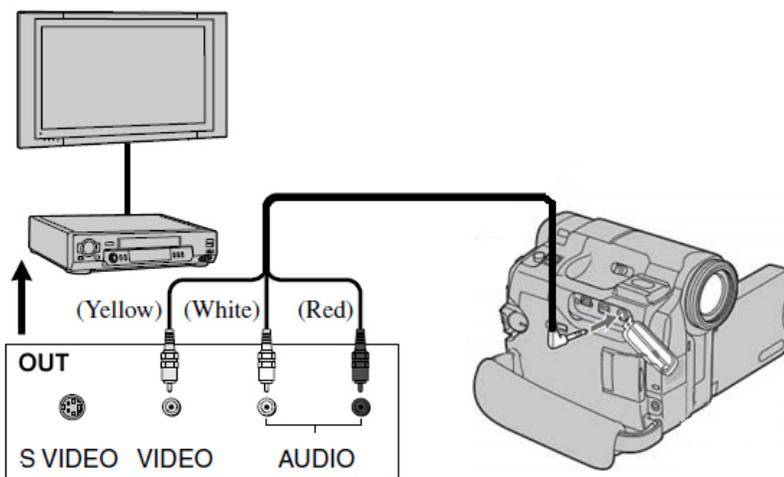
Analog videotape is fragile and could become unplayable after a few years. The more you play the tape the more you wear it down and the greater the risk of losing access to your video. And when you make copies of the videotape, each successive copy (copies of copies) has increasingly poorer image and sound quality. This is called “generational decay.”

The following methods presume you are using a VHS tape that has no copy protection. Trying to digitize copy-protected VHS tapes may result in copies that have blurry, dark or scrambled images or they may have no image at all.

Here are several methods of digitizing videotape:

Recording from VCR to digital video camera

Connect the VCR to a digital video camera, play the VHS videotape and record the content with the digital video camera.



Once the video content is on the digital video camera, connect the digital video camera to a computer and transfer the digital video file from the camera to the computer.

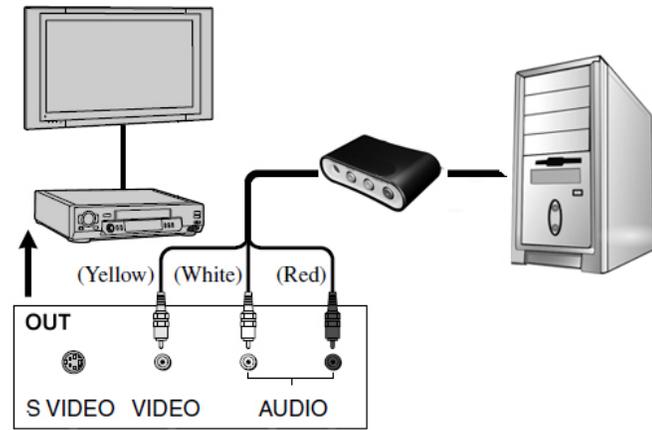
Example 2. Video folder contents from DVD.

NOTE: many digital video cameras can be used as a “pass-through device” by connecting the video camera to the VCR as described above and at the same time connecting the video camera to your computer and capturing the video in real time.

This method is similar to the “VCR to digital converter” scenario described next, but may not yield as high quality of an image as using a standalone digital converter. Please review your camera’s instruction manual for how to do this.

Using a digital converter from a VCR to a computer

Converters interface between the VCR and the computer, digitizing the video to the computer in real time as the video plays (example 4).



Example 4. VCR to PC

VCR/DVD combination unit

A two-slot appliance in which you put a VHS tape in one side, a blank DVD in the other and create a DVD as the movie plays. Later you can transfer the video files off the DVD (see “DVDs” section above).

DVD burner

Special hardware that attaches to VCRs. The VCR plays the videotape and the DVD burner captures the video and digitizes it in real time to a DVD.

NOTE: If you keep videotapes as backup copies, store them away from direct sunlight in a cool (approximately 65 degrees F.), low-humidity room (approximately 45% humidity). It is best to keep the tapes in sleeves or plastic containers for protection.