

## Pictures Degrading

We have a lot of pictures saved on our computer. My wife says that many of the older ones seem to be degrading. They are all saved in .jpg format.

Do they just degrade? Maybe with repeated opening? Or might it be some other issue, with the computer?

Thanks.

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While video on magnetic tape and images on film and photo paper will definitely degrade over time, digital images and video cannot do so. If the digital media on which the files are stored is corrupted, the files will simply be inaccessible.

Andrew C. McDannold, Florida

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Your older pictures are likely of lower quality because either what you used to scan them was a much lower DPI than is standard today or the digital camera you took them with was a much lower megapixel.

The average camera phone today is running about 10-15 mega pixel if not higher. That is what most middle DSLR cameras were running in the 2000-2010 range (my higher end beginning DSLR was 8 mega pixels)

This will make your older pictures look less clear when compared to newer ones taken on a camera with higher mega pixel.

Kind like if you are used to watching TV in high Definition and go back and watch an original of older films/tv shows, they look grainy and slightly out of focus. They haven't degraded, you are just used to a much better quality that didn't exist back then.

Erin M. Schmidt, Ohio

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These seem to be degrading, or corrupting over time, perhaps each time we view them.

Some are fully accessible. Others we've lost part of the picture. Others just appear less sharp.

Michael D. Caccavo, Vermont

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Yes. Pictures in jpeg format do degrade each time they're opened. Only RAW format saves every pixel.

Peter T. Clark, Massachusetts

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1. Back up what you currently have.
2. Hopefully you have prior backups.
3. When ready to proceed, take a duplicate copy and try it using different programs and computers. Make sure you run malware searches and update the computer you are going to use before attempting. Run a malware search on the duplicate copy as well prior to use. See what works and what does not.

JPG does not deteriorate, but may be corrupted. Corruption source is typically one of three things, malware, program or hardware. Experimenting with the above approach will narrow cause.

Darrell G. Stewart, Texas

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<https://www.lifewire.com/jpeg-myths-and-facts-1701548>

Above link would be contrary to PTC position. It goes through explanations on the varied approaches.

Darrell G. Stewart

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Also, beware of the software you are using. The default settings of old versions of Google Picasa as well as cloud storage software may compress image files on the computer to save space (while hopefully storing originals somewhere in the cloud). That compression would cause a quality degradation. If you still have the originals stored somewhere, you're OK but you can't uncompress quality back into the images.

Jarrett Silver

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Jpegs are compressed.

Every compression throws away some data. So every time you \*re-save\* a jpg (for example if you edit the file) it will re-compress it. Eventually the picture will look worse.

It should not happen when you merely open a file to view it, but (no offense) it's always possible that you're doing something without noticing it.

The solution is to use something like Lightroom, which is a non-destructive photo editor. Lightroom will never actually touch your root files no matter what you do; it merely stores a set of instructions ("rotate, lighten 10 steps, add some red") and applies those instructions when you export. It's designed to avoid the problem you describe.

Erik Hammarlund, Massachusetts