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Home Style- Spring/Summer Issue 2007::

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A NEW FRAME OF MIND

By **Sally Farhat Kassab**
CTW Features

If you have drawers overflowing with pictures or if your computer has thousands of digital photos sitting on its hard drive, you're not alone. In fact, you're in the majority, according to an online survey by Tabblo.com, a new photo-sharing site that lets you make online collages.

"It's gotten out of hand," says Jeff Davidson, author of "Breathing Space: Living and Working at a Comfortable Pace in a Sped-Up Society" (BookSurge, 2007). "People are taking too many photos to begin with, and not deleting enough of the ones they take."

He suggests paring them down to the top few. Once you've done that, consider these are some easy ways to display them to make your home, and your pictures, look good.

The Frame Game

The single-photo frames you've been using for years are still in vogue, especially silver-, gold- and black-edged ones. If you're having trouble at the store finding the perfect frame for the perfect spot for your perfect photo, upload your digital files to photo sites like Shutterfly.com, where you can fit your photo to the right frame. The best part: The framed photo comes delivered to your mailbox ready for the wall.

If you have photos ready to frame, multi-photo frames look great in the living room. They especially are good if you're trying to display a photo story or want to put a larger focus on smaller photos. Not sure how many to put up? As with most design, there's no set rule. Just don't make it too busy - if it looks too cluttered to the eye, it probably is.

"Ask yourself, at what point am I reaching absurdity? If you have three nice family pictures on the wall, is 30 going to be better?" Davidson says. "Pick the ones that are most representative or help remember the time."

Blowing Up

An easy way to display something without it being "too much" is to make a poster. It's easier than ever to blow up your photos these days, so go for it. Antonio Rodriguez, founder and CEO of Tabblo.com, says most of his users put them in their kids' bedrooms or the kitchen - anything

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except the dining room or living room. "You're not seeing a Victorian dining room with a 4-foot poster," he says. Take some old black-and-white photos to a photo lab or scan them and upload them to a photo-sharing site, and arrange them in a big frame alongside new ones. The benefit being that you don't have to worry about damaging the old photos cut them to size and you can use photo-editing software to erase any imperfections.

Some people make murals by saving a photo on a photo site four times, cropping each quadrant, making each a canvas and putting them together to make a large mural-type photo, says Bridgette Thomas, a Shutterfly spokeswoman. This works best with natural images, such as flowers or landscape shots.

Off the Wall

Put a photo book on those bookshelves and coffee tables. Forget the old albums where you have to slide photos in holes. Now, if you want to show off your candid wedding shots, baseball game or family reunion; \$10 can make a purse-sized linen book at Boston-based Tabblo.com, or make one in honor of your favorite "hero" at Sarasota, Fla.-based CelebrateAHero.com for \$25.

"It's easy to display too many images around your house," says Amanda Sudimack, owner of Chicago's Artisan Events Boutique, which sells frames and other photo items. "That's why books are so popular. You can have 20 photo books on your coffee table and not be obnoxious."

You Want to Put a Picture Where?



Image courtesy of Pandigital

When you get out of the living/family room, what can you do? Want to plaster photos on the fridge? Go ahead. But try an organizer like the Fridge Frame (\$7 to \$20), from Plymouth, Mich.-based Fridge Frame, so it doesn't get too cluttered. Or just turn those digital images directly into magnets.

Thomas says a popular item is recipe books. "People are making a book, for example, with photos of 'cooking with grandma in the kitchen,' or 'making her first turkey dinner,'" Thomas says. "They put the photos alongside the recipes, and make tons of copies so everyone in the family can enjoy them." Display the book prominently on the kitchen counter to show off photos somewhere other than the fridge.

In the bathroom, don't display people pictures. That single-framed shot of your dog, sitting over the toilet, is fabulous. Even a multi-frame with pictures of your trip to Paris (displayed on the wall above the toilet) works well.

Digital Décor

Digital photo frames are small screens dressed up as traditional photo frames, often with a nice wooden finish. The best spot for these is the office. Just grab pictures from a computer, or directly from a memory card, and copy them into the frame, which displays them as stills or slide shows. Some we like include San Jose-based Siren's FotoFrames (\$129 to \$199 each) and Lafayette, Calif.'s Pandigital's 6.0 Digital Photo Frame (\$115). Make sure you get a frame with "onboard memory," meaning you don't have to leave the memory card in the frame all the time.

Who Woulda Thought?

Make something no one has seen before. Think beyond a mouse pad or mug ... like a lamp from Lamps Plus (\$100 to \$130). Giclée Art Shades - on the market for just a few months - allow you to e-mail in your photo and see it printed on the canvas lamp shade. Mark Sincevich, executive director of the Digital Photography Institute in Bethesda, Md., suggests photo quilts. "Take an off-white quilt and add black-and-white photos to it for a meaningful, classy look." Quilt sites include puttingyouinstitches.com or photothrows.com. If you're looking for a new place to share your photos online, Smugmug and Zazzle are two new photo-sharing sites with unique features.

If you or someone in your family loves playing with gadgets, there are some new ones that will really knock their socks off. Try Sony's VRD-MC3 (\$250), which converts digital photos to DVDs without a computer. Like a screen saver on the computer, the TV becomes a backdrop for photos. And there really can't be a better spot to sit back and enjoy your photos than on the couch in front of the TV.

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