
VIDEO TRANSFER FAQs

I am having trouble playing my old video tape of my family. The picture is jumpy. Do you have any special equipment you can use to improve it before transferring to DVD?

Sometimes we can get a good picture from a tape that does not play well on another machine. There are many factors involved, however, so it is impossible to tell ahead of time whether the video can be stabilized. Playback problems can be caused by a poor initial recording, physical tape damage/deterioration/contamination, signal degradation, mechanical issues in the tape mechanism, and other problems.

We generally use a professional playback deck with automatic tracking and Time Base Correction. But sometimes we have to go to manual tracking control or a different playback machine. Time Base Correction will fix some types of instability. Other times it will make it worse. The type of tape and speed of the recording (SP/LP/EP/SLP) also affects what tools we can use.

The best approach is to wind the tapes to the point where you are having the most problem, stop the tape without rewinding it and drop it off (or send it in) for transfer with a note that you had playback problems at that point on the tape. You'll need to leave it with us since we would not likely be able to work on it right away.

If a visual inspection shows no obvious physical problems and the tape plays fine with our regular set-up, then there would be no extra charge. If we need to make setup changes or employ special tools, there may be a \$10 to \$20 setup fee. If the tape mechanism (shell, gears, guides, etc.) is damaged but can be repaired or replaced, we would charge our standard tape repair prices.

It is possible that some or all of the tape will not be able to be transferred – in which case we could refer you to a third-party tape restoration service. In any event, we would call you with our assessment and any additional charges before beginning the transfer.

Can you transfer longer length videos, such as a 6-hr VHS tape to a single DVD?

Yes we can. However, we do not recommend it unless video quality is relatively unimportant. The video “bit rate” has to be reduced for longer videos and the slower the bit rate, the lower the video quality.

We strongly recommend transferring no more than 2.5 hours to a single DVD for important videos. Keeping the length to less than 2 hours is better still and optimal video quality is obtained by transferring no more than one hour.

However, for some situations, such as archival meeting footage, surveillance video (most of which is poor quality to begin with) and similar situations, we can record up to 6 hours of video tape to a single DVD. Call for pricing.

Can you transfer my old commercially-made video tapes, such as my exercise tapes, to DVD if they are not available on DVD or if I cannot find the person or company who made the original tape?

No. It is illegal for us to copy material to which you do not own the copyrights without permission from the copyright owner. The law makes no exceptions for market availability or the difficulty of finding the copyright owner. Our transfer service is intended for family home videos and other materials that you have created yourself.