
GOOGLE PRIVACY

This document breaks down how to edit your settings in both your Google Account and your Google Photos to suit your comfort level for privacy.

STEP ONE

1. Sign into your Google Account through a browser.
2. Click on the circle icon in the upper right corner.

At this point you can change the circle icon to be more personal. However, this icon is sometimes used by Google to identify you through Gmail and other services. Choose wisely.

3. Click on Google Account.
4. Google Privacy settings:

On the main page you have many options to control your settings.

- A. Sign-in & security
- B. Personal info & privacy
- C. Security Check up
- D. Privacy Check up
- E. Find your phone
- F. My Activity
- G. Account Preferences

STEP TWO

SIGN IN & SECURITY

1. Security Check Up – click to see if there are any issues and to see how many devices are logged into this account
2. Signing in to Google – here you can update your password and set up 2-step verification (highly recommended)
3. Device activity & security events – lets you review any activity on your account and devices
4. Apps with account access – review any other apps you have connected to your Google Account and any Saved passwords. If you connect other apps to Google, Google may store more information about you. Its recommended that you don't save any passwords online.

STEP THREE

PERSONAL INFO & PRIVACY

Privacy Checkup

1. **Personalize your Google experience** – you can choose to turn on or off the following items:
 - a) *Web & App Activity* – turn on if you want Google to assist you in online searching and maps.
 - b) *Location History* – a private map of your activity when you are signed into Google. Google keeps this information but it is not public, only you see it. Google uses this to estimate a GPS location of images if the image in Google photos does not have a GPS associated with it.
 - c) *Device Information* – keeping track of your contacts and calendars, apps and other data. Pause this one and see if it effects your device experience.
 - d) *Voice and Audio Activity* – only keep this on if you use an audio to communicate with google devices.
 - e) *YouTube Search History* – only keep this on if you use YouTube a lot and want assistance in your searches.
 - f) *YouTube Watch History* – same as above
2. **Manage your Google Photos settings**
 - a) *Group Similar Faces* – uses face recognition in Google photos to better sort your images. Good for searching if you have a lot of images.
 - b) *Remove Geo Location in items shared by link* – if you have a GPS location associated with an image but you don't want it to be connected to an image when you share it. Click on Learn More to get more details on this one. It's not an exact science.
3. **Help people connect with you**
 - a) Essentially make the phone number associated with your account available across Google Services. Click this box if you use Skype or Facetime a lot for convenience otherwise leave blank.
 - b) Make the information in your Google Account public. You may choose to turn this off (don't check the box).
4. **Control what others see about you**
 - a) Click on Edit What others see about you to determine what you have made public: your image, your name, shared albums etc.
 - b) Shared Endorsements – click on this to Learn More and decide whether you want your ID associated with products you have endorsed.
5. **Make ads more relevant to you**
 - a) Manage your ad settings – here you can turn ad personalization on or off. This is the crux of where they make their money so they really would like you to keep most of this on. It's up to you if you your personal ID connected to the ad information. Even if turned off, they will track what you look at, that information just won't be connected to your personal ID.

Your personal info

1. **Your personal info** – check that you are comfortable with the information you have provided. Search settings are worth a review.
2. **Contacts** – see what contacts are associated with your activity
3. **Manage your Google activity**
 - a) Activity Controls – covered above in link from Account Dashboard.
 - b) Review Activity – interesting to see what info they collect.
 - c) Timeline in Google Maps – if you have Location Services turned on, this will show your where you and your device have been.
 - d) Google Dashboard – overview of your settings and apps
4. **Ad Settings** – see Privacy Checkup
5. **Control your content** – view all the content Google has collected on you. Download it if you choose.
6. **Assign an account trustee** – a good idea if you would like someone to sign in to your account if anything happens to you.

STEP FOUR

ACCOUNT PREFERENCES

1. **Payments** – set up a payment method if you use Google Play a lot
2. Purchases subscriptions & reservations – for those that use Gmail, Assistant etc to make purchases. Google Services only.
3. **Language and input tools** – set the language Google will display message in. Best if your language preference is not English
4. **Accessibility** – limited screen control options
5. **Your Google Drive storage** – shows you how much storage you have used
 - a) Google Drive is the backbone of your Google Photos and Gmail. These settings determine how many files and photos you can save to the cloud. Click on Learn to manage storage to read more.
 - o For Drive files and Gmail – to save space, delete unnecessary large files or pay for more storage
 - o Google Photos – make sure your uploads are set to High Quality not Original if you want to have unlimited storage. If some files have been uploaded at the Original size, go to Settings in photos.google.com (three lines upper left corner/Settings) and click on Recover storage. Also make sure that your settings in Google Photos is set to High Quality.
6. **Delete your account or services** – self explanatory

STEP FIVE

GOOGLE PHOTOS SETTINGS

1. Go to <https://photos.google.com> or open the Google Photos app on your device
2. Click on the 3 lines in the upper left corner
3. Click on Settings

Upload size

- Choose *High Quality* for free unlimited storage. Know that Google will reduce the size of your jpg images. They claim the image size is still good for printing and now offer printing services.
- Choose *Original* if you have a high-resolution smart phone camera and don't want to lose any data in the upload. This option however will involve a monthly fee once you go over 15GB.

Shared libraries

- If you want to automatically share your photo albums with somebody else. Good for family members.

Assistant cards

- Let the Assistant create groupings of photos and videos for you

Group Similar Faces

- Rather remarkable grouping of like faces for easier search. Our test found it was able to group images of the same person 40 years apart.
- You can change this in your Google Privacy Settings as well.

Sharing

- Sharing suggestion notifications – your choice if you want to turn this on. It might get annoying after a while.
- Remove video from motion photos – this turns off the “live” option of photos taken with an Iphone. Makes viewing easier.
- Remove geo location in items shared by link – you can also change this in Google Privacy settings. When you share an album with friends and family, Google generates an internet link for them to click on. Some believe it is best to turn this element “On” thus removing the geo location.
- Draft reminder emails – for if you started a photo book and haven't finished it
- Google Drive – You can sync your photos in Drive with Google Photos. However, if you delete files in one place, they will be deleted in the other. Click on Learn More to see how it works. I would leave this unchecked and keep photos and documents in separate places. There have also been discussions on the web about the privacy of images on Google Drive if they are linked to shared albums in Google Photos. Err on the side of caution and leave this unchecked if you are worried.
- Browser notifications – up to you. We probably receive enough notifications in the day as it is.
- Activity log – view who has viewed or commented on your shared photos.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT PRIVACY:

- If you sign out of your Google account when you do your online searching, Google still tracks the data but that data is not connected to your personal account information.
- If you choose to search in Incognito Mode (upper left hand, three dots, choose New Incognito Window) your browsing history, cookies and content entered into forms won't be saved but downloads and bookmarks will. Might be better just to clear your browsing history at the end of your internet session. (Same menu, History)
- If you are concerned about having your location tracked even when you are signed out of Google, it is recommended that you go into the Settings of your device and review the Location settings for each app. Some don't have it, some do. By changing the setting to "Only when using the app" you not only prevent tracking but you also save on battery power and possibly data.