
INSTRUCTION MANUAL

Taming the Photo Jungle

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Introduction

Photo Supreme is a Digital Asset Management (DAM) tool designed to streamline the organization of your image files. It automatically categorizes images using embedded metadata, such as technical details and file location. You can further enrich your files by adding tags, descriptions, and custom data. While this may require an initial investment of time, the payoff is clear: you'll be able to quickly locate images using a wide range of search criteria or combinations.

We've all been there: over the years, our digital photo collections have grown into the tens, or even hundreds, of thousands. Scattered across hard drives and cloud accounts, buried in randomly named folders, finding that one special photo can feel like searching for a needle in a haystack. The photo jungle needs taming.

This guide outlines a practical approach to bringing structure and order to that chaos.

To move from chaos to structure, the process is broken down into distinct phases you can follow step by step.

Phase 1: Preparation	<i>Consolidate All Photos in One Place</i>
Phase 2: Sorting	<i>Read metadata and organize files accordingly</i>
Phase 3: Deduplication	<i>Remove duplicate or near-duplicate images.</i>
Phase 4: Maintenance	<i>Automate future imports with rules</i>

Phase 1: Preparation

Backup your existing files

Before you begin, make a complete backup of your existing files. This ensures that if anything goes wrong during the organization process, you'll be able to restore your photos safely from the backup.

Consolidate All Photos in One Place

On a drive with enough free space to hold a full copy of your image collection, create a new top-level folder. This folder will serve as the central location for all your photos. Choose a name that clearly reflects its purpose, something straightforward like “Photos”, “Image Archive”, or another name that makes sense to you.

Start from scratch

Launch Photo Supreme and begin with a new, empty catalog. To create one, click the hamburger menu in the upper-left corner, then navigate to Catalog → Create New Catalog. Once the catalog is created, open it by returning to the hamburger menu and selecting it from the Catalog submenu.

Import the chaos

Now import all your existing photo files into Photo Supreme. If your images are spread across multiple drives or folders, the easiest method is to use your operating system's file manager, Windows Explorer on Windows or Finder on macOS.

Simply navigate to your photo folders and drag and drop them into the Photo Supreme application. You can repeat this process for multiple folders or even individual files. Just drag in everything you want to include in your consolidated photo archive.

When you drag and drop files into **Photo Supreme**, they are imported into the catalog. Allow the import process to fully complete before proceeding.

Phase 2: Sorting

Now that your unorganized photos have been imported into Photo Supreme in their original state, it's time to plan a solid folder structure for your consolidation folder: the new top-level folder we created in Phase 1, which is still empty.

Creating a well-organized folder structure is key to maintaining order and making your photo collection easy to navigate. Start by choosing a logical hierarchy that suits how you think about your photos. Common approaches include organizing by date (year/month), or by location and event.

For example, a date-based system might have folders for each year, with subfolders for months or specific occasions. Alternatively, you might prefer folders named after major life events or trips. Whatever method you choose, keep folder names clear, consistent, and descriptive to simplify future searches and maintenance. Remember, the goal is to create a structure that feels intuitive and scalable as your collection grows.

A date-based folder structure is one of the most reliable and intuitive ways to organize a large photo collection. Having folders for each year (e.g., 2023, 2024), then within each year, subfolders for months. Using a consistent naming format like YYYY or YYYY-MM helps keep everything in chronological order and makes it easier to locate photos later. This method leverages the natural timeline of your memories and scales well as your collection grows over time. Be sure to stick with one clear naming convention throughout to maintain consistency.

Although adding detailed event names to folder titles might seem helpful, when using a powerful cataloging tool like Photo Supreme, you'll primarily rely on metadata, keywords, and tags (such as events) to locate your photos. As a result, folder names don't need to be overly descriptive. Instead, focus on maintaining a simple, logical date-based structure that

supports easy navigation of your file system while leveraging the software's advanced search and organization features.

For the purpose of this manual we'll use a date based folder structure which is like this:

```
Top Level Folder
├── YYYY
│   ├── MM
│       └── YYYY-MM-DD
```

Here's an example:

```
Photos
├── 2024
│   └── 12
│       ├── 2024-12-03
│       ├── 2024-12-05
│       └── 2024-12-27
├── 2025
│   └── 01
│       ├── 2025-01-01
│       ├── 2025-01-18
│       └── 2025-01-19
```

Before creating the folder structure, we need to decide which date to use. Most photos include a recording date embedded within the image file's metadata; this is automatically set by the camera. We'll rely on this date to organize your photos.

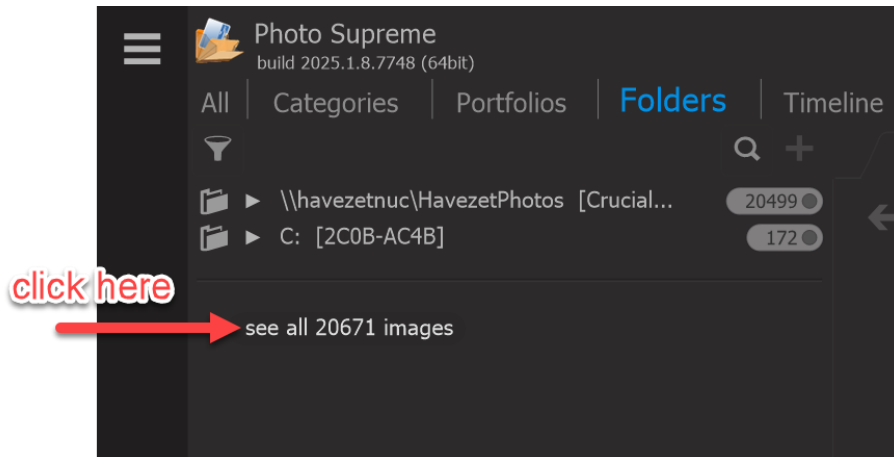
However, your unorganized archive may contain files that lack this metadata or have incorrect dates. We'll address these issues later. For now, photos without a recording date will be sorted using their file system date. Although this isn't always accurate, it serves as a temporary measure until you can correct these files and place them in their proper folders.

Tame the jungle

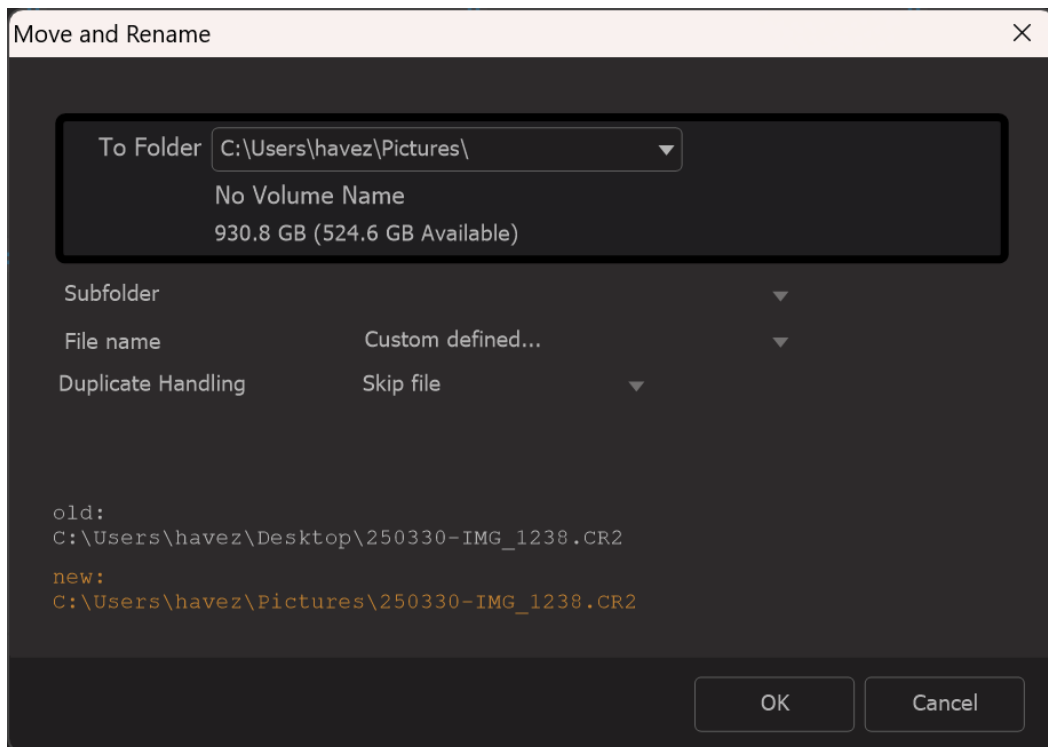
We're now ready to tame the photo jungle by moving the files from their original locations into the new consolidated folder, organized according to the date-based structure.

All your unorganized photos are already imported into Photo Supreme.

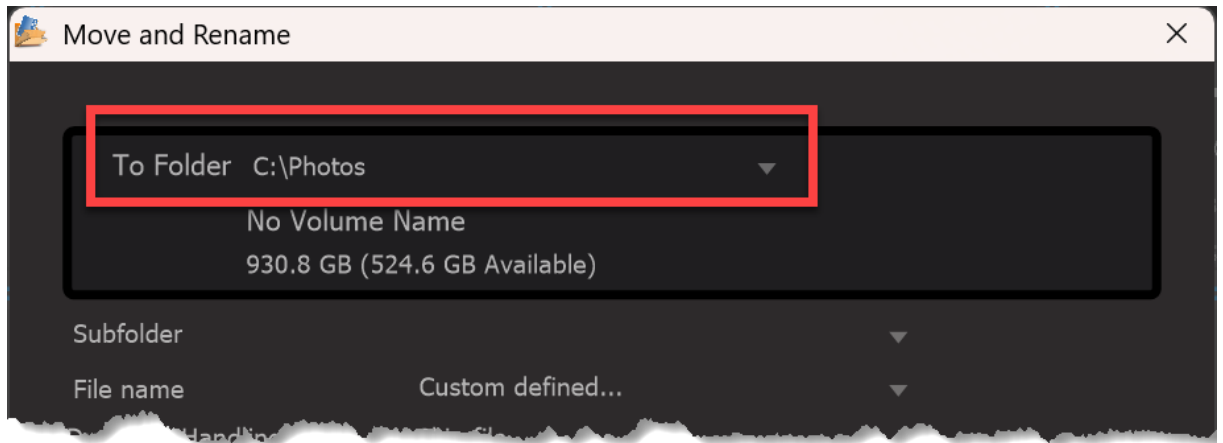
1. Select all files in the catalog.
 - a. Click the "**See all xxx images**" button located at the bottom of the Catalog Structure panel on the left. This will display thumbnails of all the imported images.
 - b. Click on the first thumbnail to select it.
 - c. Press Ctrl+A (on Windows) or Cmd+A (on macOS) to select all thumbnails.



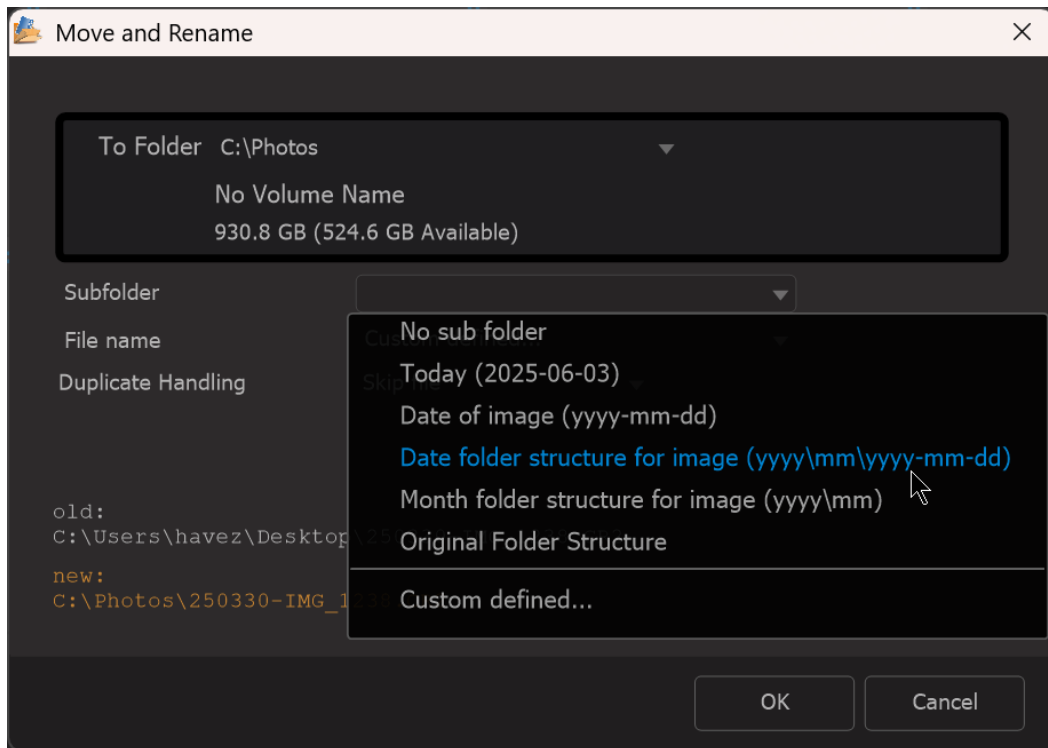
2. Right-click on any selected thumbnail, then choose Operations → Move and Rename Files. This will open a dialog where you can specify the destination folder, define the folder structure, and set the file naming convention you want to use.



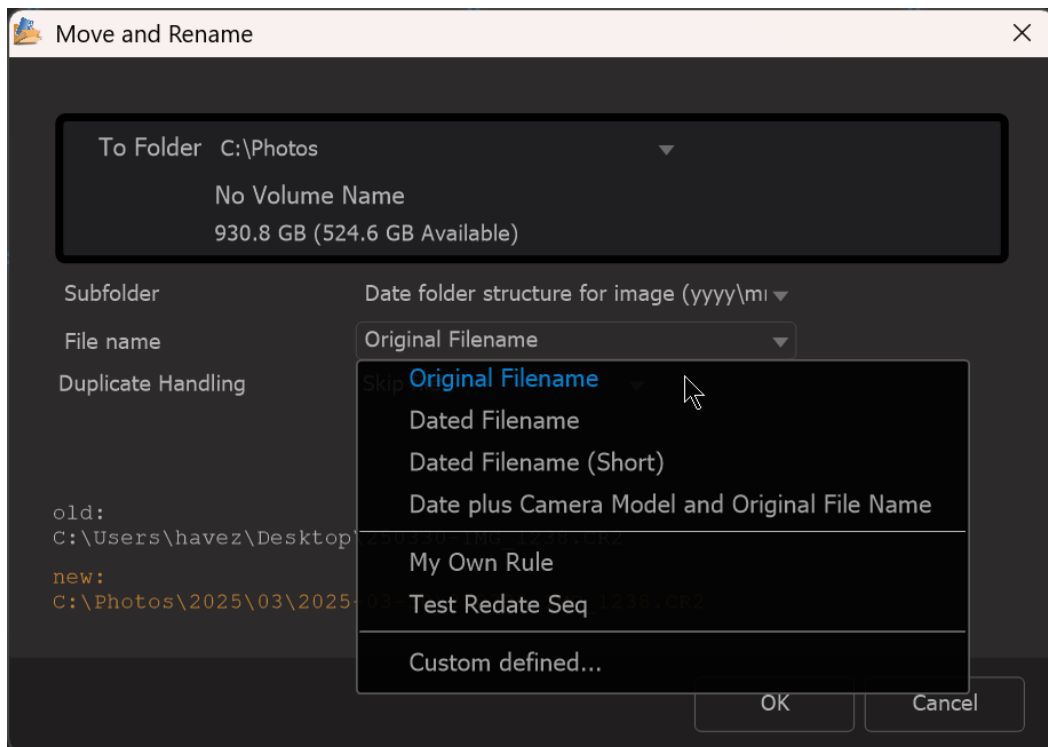
3. Click the dropdown icon next to "To Folder" and select "Choose Folder." Then navigate to and select the consolidation folder you created in Phase 1, for example, C:\Photos.



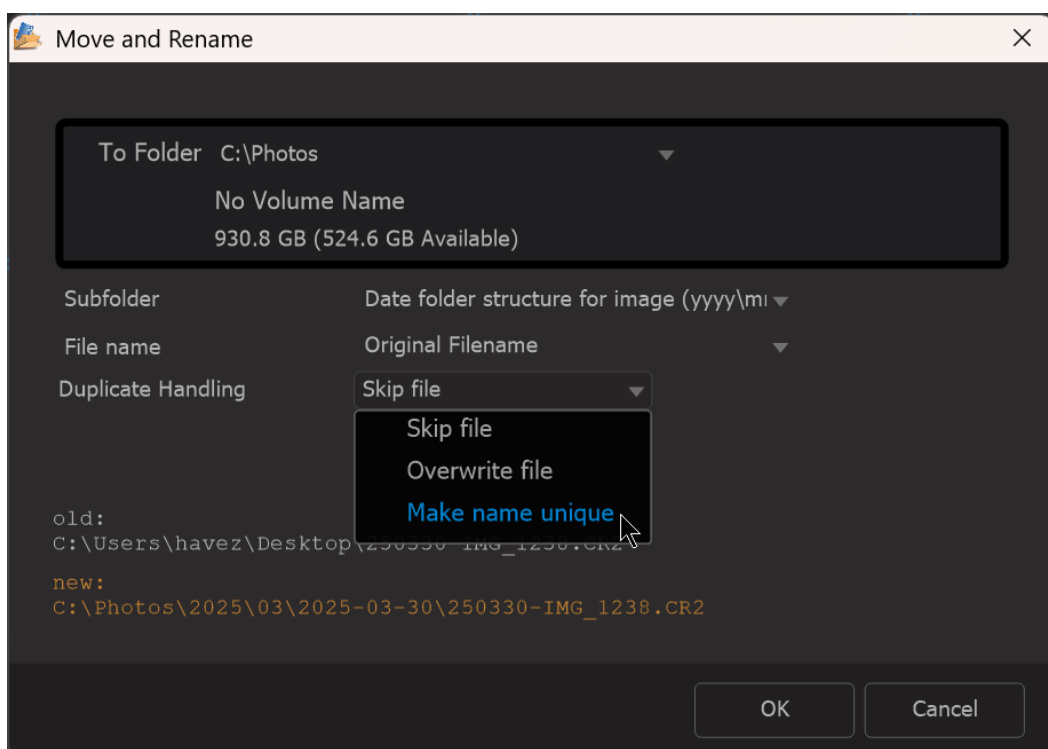
4. For the "Sub Folder" option, open the dropdown menu and select "Date folder structure for image."



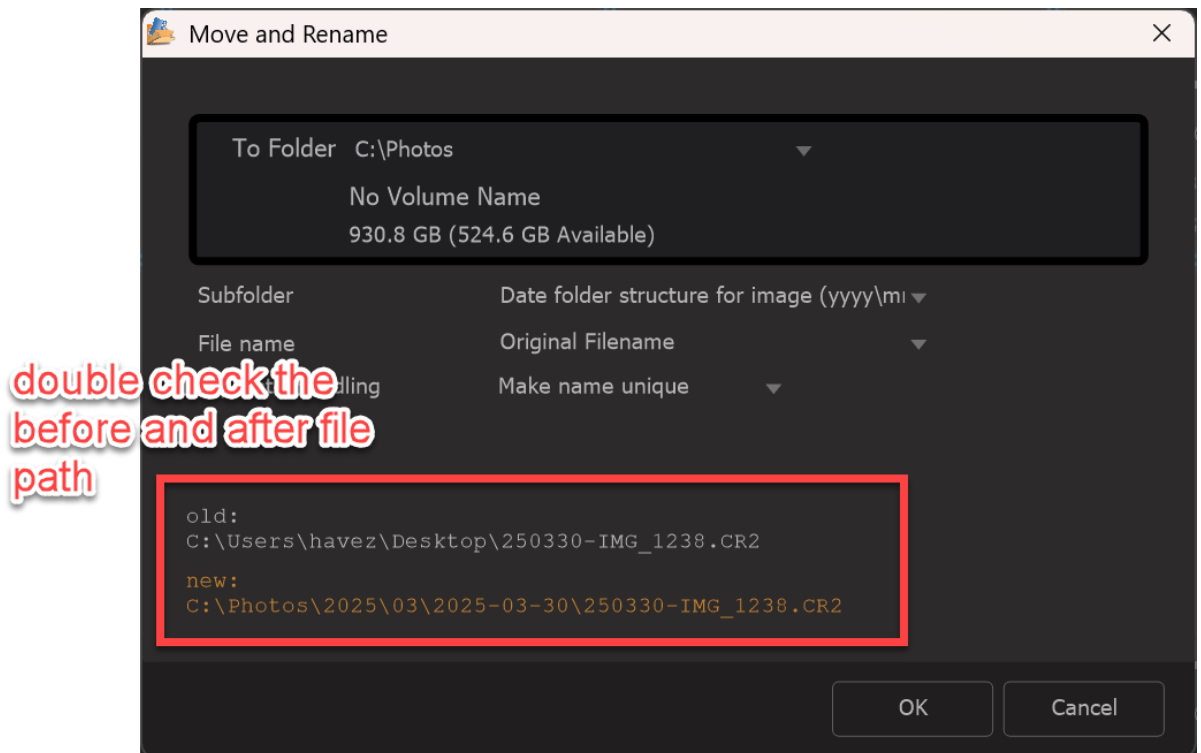
5. For the "File Name" option, choose to retain the original file name.



6. For "Duplicate Handling," select the option to make file names unique. This ensures that all files are successfully moved, even if some have duplicate names.



7. At the bottom of the dialog, you'll see a preview of the "before" and "after" file paths. Review this carefully to ensure the new file path reflects exactly how you want your files to be organized.



8. If everything looks correct in the file path preview, you're ready to proceed. Click OK to begin the move and rename process. This will:
 - a. Move each file from its original location to the new consolidation folder
 - b. Create a date-based folder structure using the metadata from each file
 - c. Optionally rename files based on your selected naming convention
9. Once the process is complete, open your consolidation folder using your operating system's file manager (Windows Explorer or macOS Finder) to verify that everything has been organized as expected.

Phase 3: Deduplication

Now that all files have been moved into a single consolidated folder, organized with a properly structured date-based hierarchy, we're ready to begin identifying and cleaning up any duplicate files.

There are several different approaches to handling duplicate files.

- a. Identical Files: Exact copies of the same file.
- b. Visually Identical Files: Different files that look the same, such as an original image and a downsized version, or multiple edited copies of the same photo.
- c. Identical File Names: Files that share the same name but may or may not be duplicates of the same image.

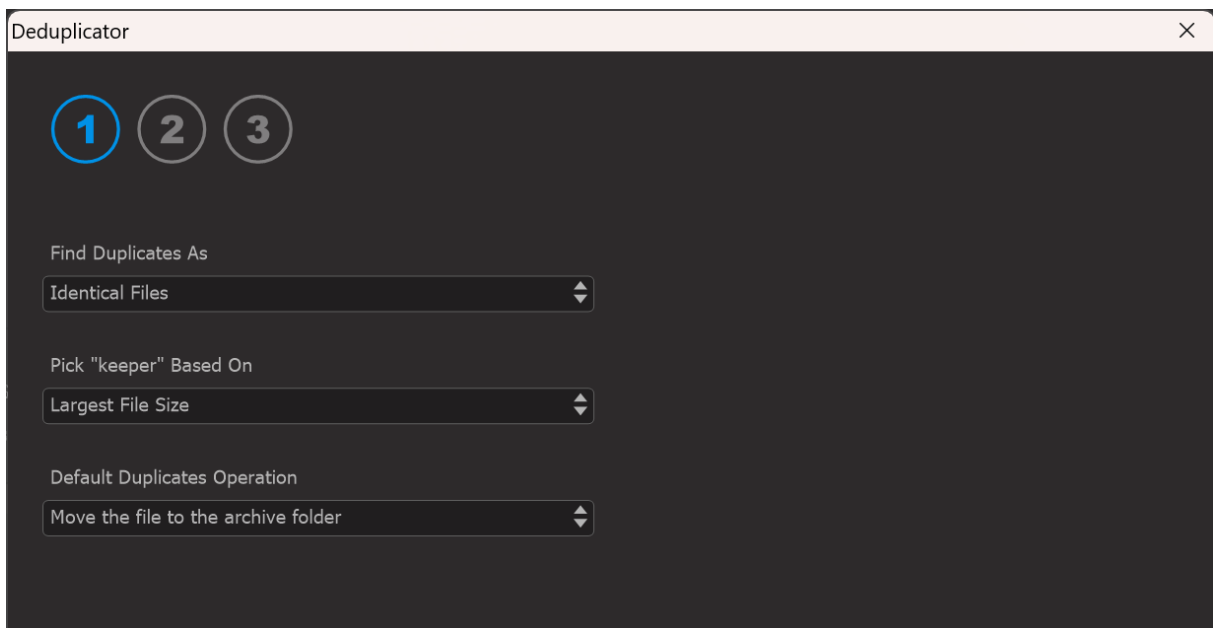
To declutter the consolidated folder, we'll begin by identifying exact duplicate files.

Identical Files

A file is considered identical when its content is an exact duplicate of another file. In other words, the files have the same data inside, even if their file names are different.

Photo Supreme includes a Deduplicator Tool that we'll use to identify duplicates. To open it, click the Tools button on the left sidebar, then select Deduplicator from the menu.

The Deduplicator has a 3-step interface: 1. Configure your settings, 2. Find duplicates and choose the desired action, 3. Review and confirm your selections.



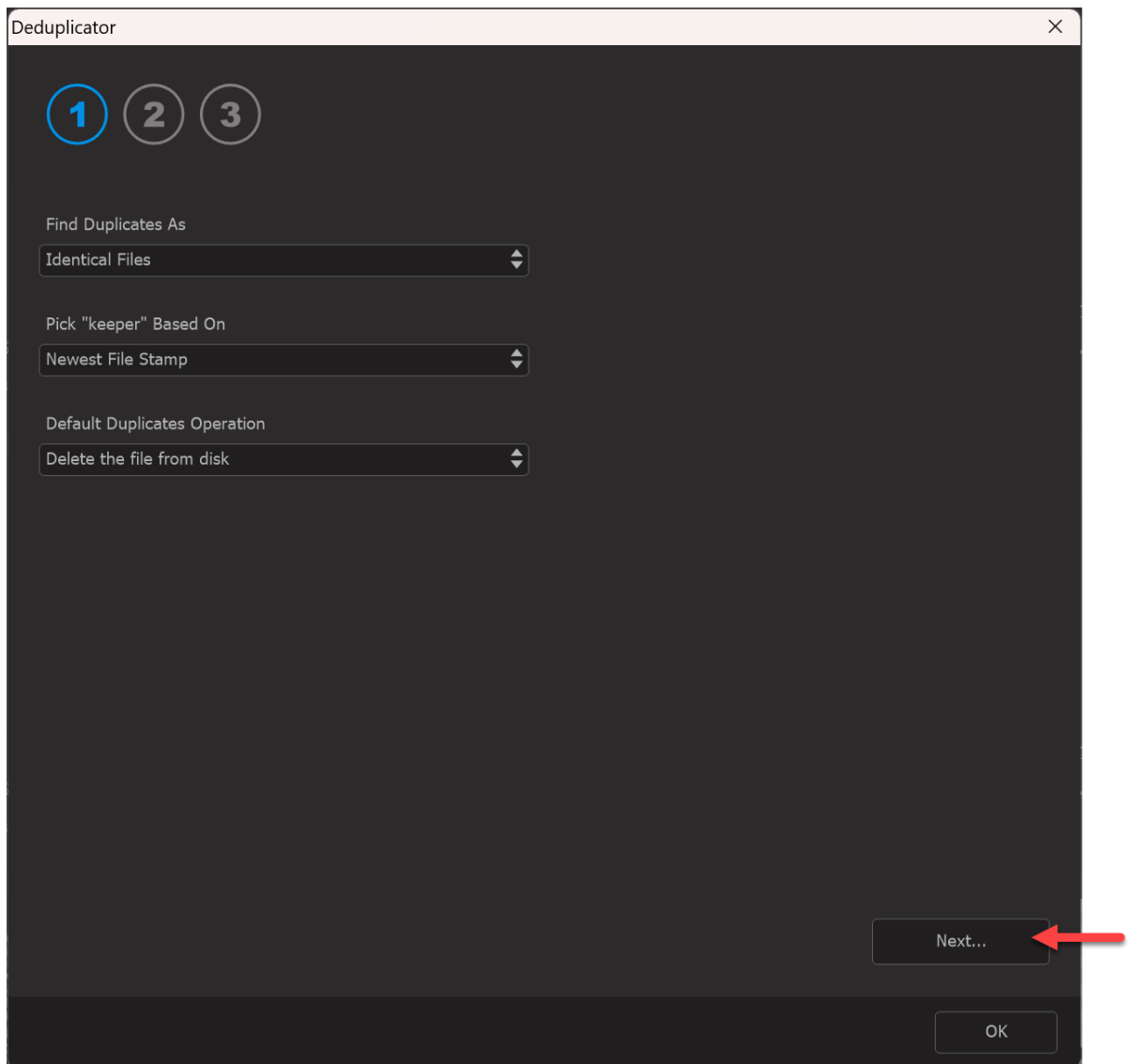
1. Configuration.

In this step, you choose the type of duplicate detection to perform:

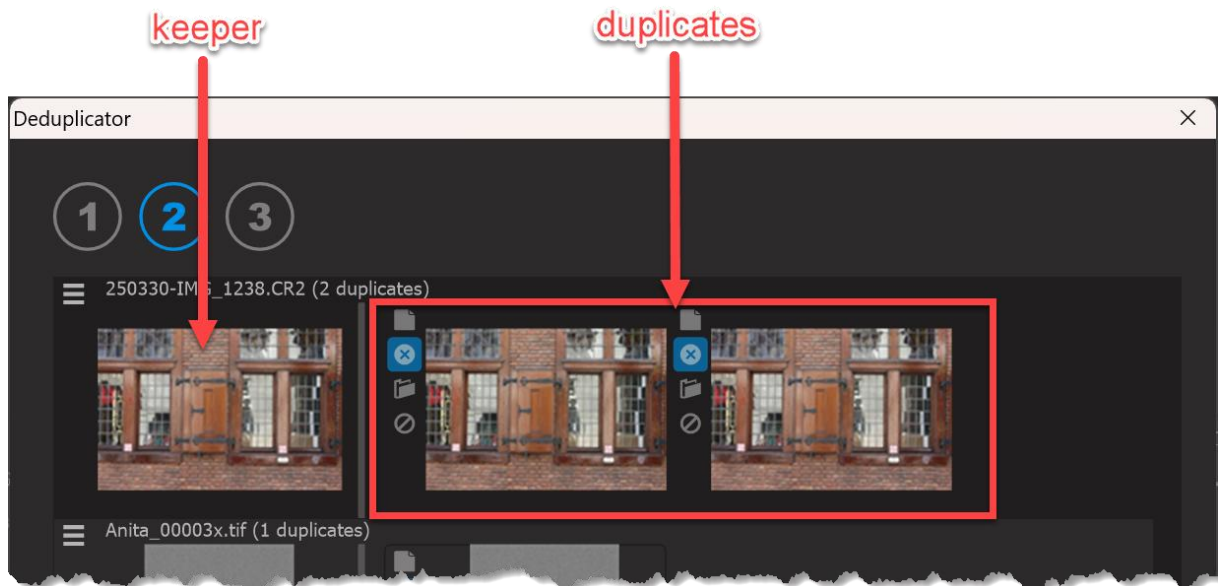
- a. For "Find Duplicates As," select "Identical Files".
- b. The "Pick 'keeper' Based On" setting is less relevant here since all files are identical. However, you can set it to "Newest File Stamp" to keep the most recently created file.
- c. For "Default Duplicates Operation", choose whether to move duplicates to an archive folder (which you can review and delete later) or delete them from disk. Since we're dealing with identical files, selecting delete from disk is appropriate.

In summary, this configuration will find files with identical content, keep the newest version, and delete all other duplicates from your disk.

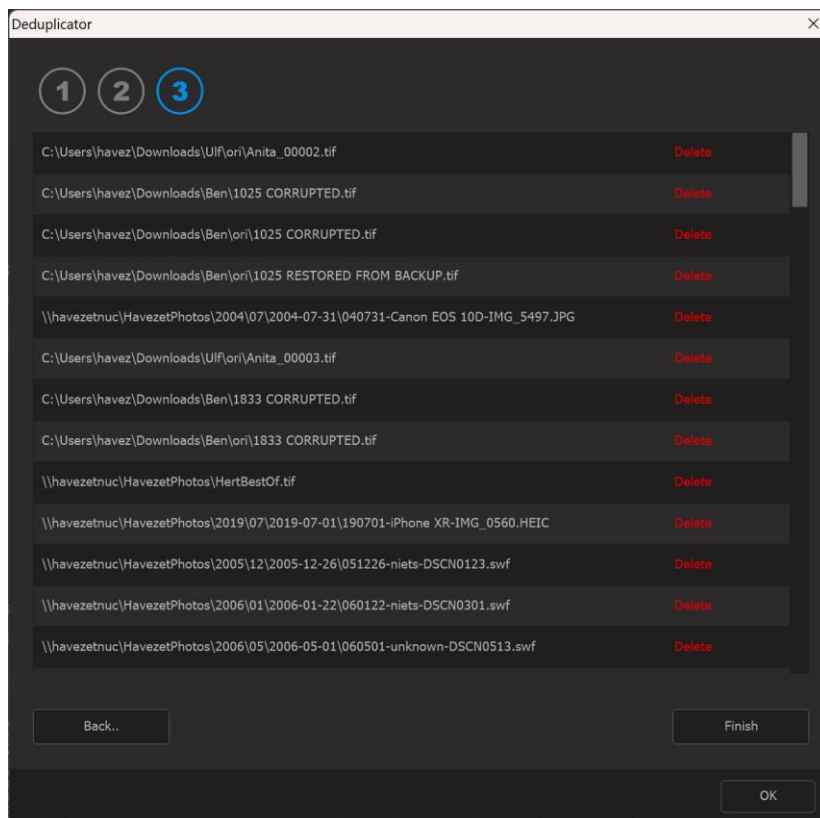
Click Next to begin the duplicate detection process.



2. When identical files are found, a list of detected duplicates will be displayed. In each group, the “keeper” appears first, followed by the duplicate files to its right.



3. Review the detected duplicates and the proposed actions. If you're satisfied with the results, click Next to proceed to the confirmation step.
4. In the final confirmation step, review the listed duplicates and their planned handling. When ready, click Finish to execute the process. At this point, the duplicates will be handled according to your settings: in this case, they will be deleted from both the disk and the catalog.

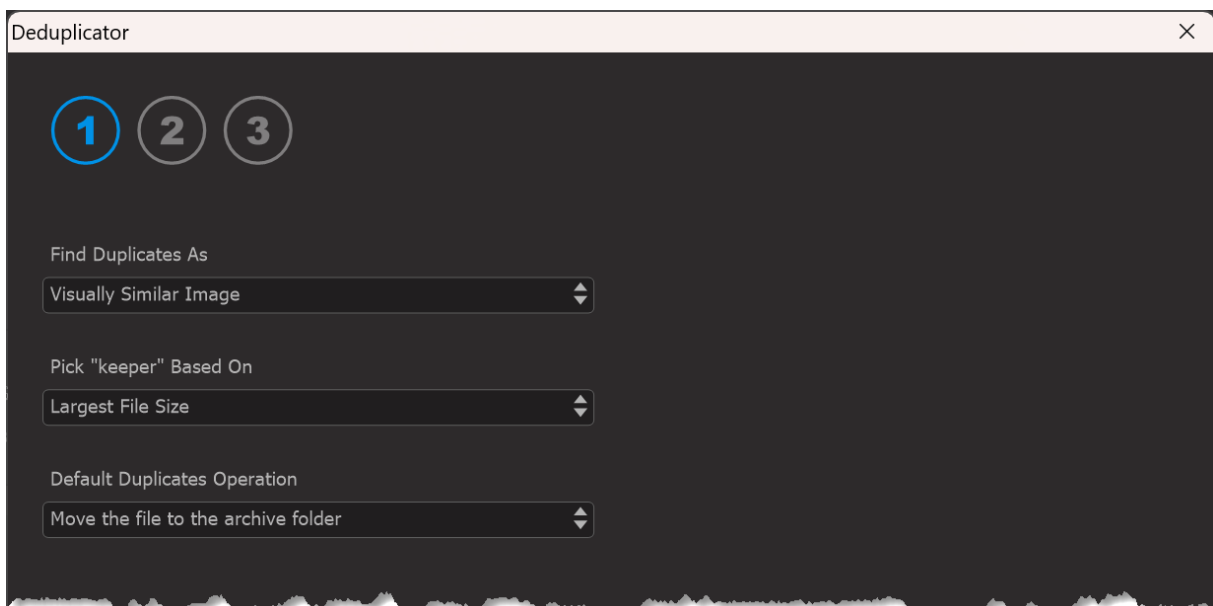


Visually Identical Files

A file is considered a “visually identical file” when its image appearance matches that of another file. This includes downsized versions of an original or multiple edited copies of the same photo.

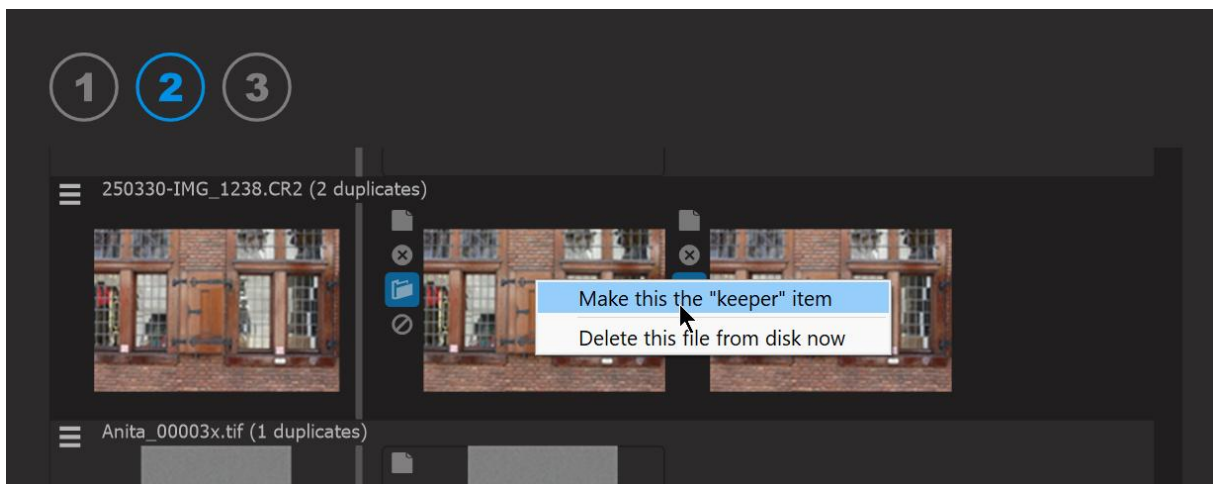
The process for deduplicating visually identical files is similar to that for identical files. However, during the Configuration step, it’s recommended to set duplicates to be moved to an archive folder rather than deleted outright. When reviewing results, carefully inspect each set of duplicates to avoid unintentionally handling files that shouldn’t be moved.

A good setup is to select the largest file as the “keeper” and choose “Move file to archive folder” as the default duplicates operation.

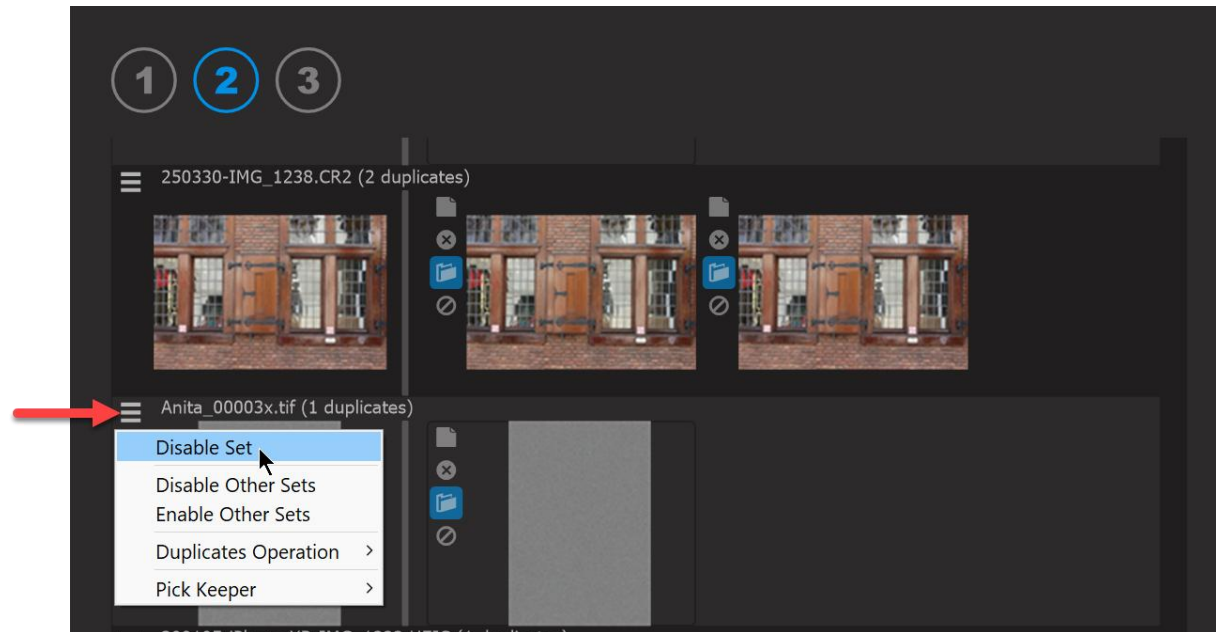


Click Next to proceed to the second step.

Here, thoroughly review each detected duplicate set. If the selected “keeper” isn’t correct, right-click the appropriate file and select “Make this the Keeper item” to change it.



If you find a set of duplicates that should not be processed, disable that set using the mini-hamburger menu located next to it.

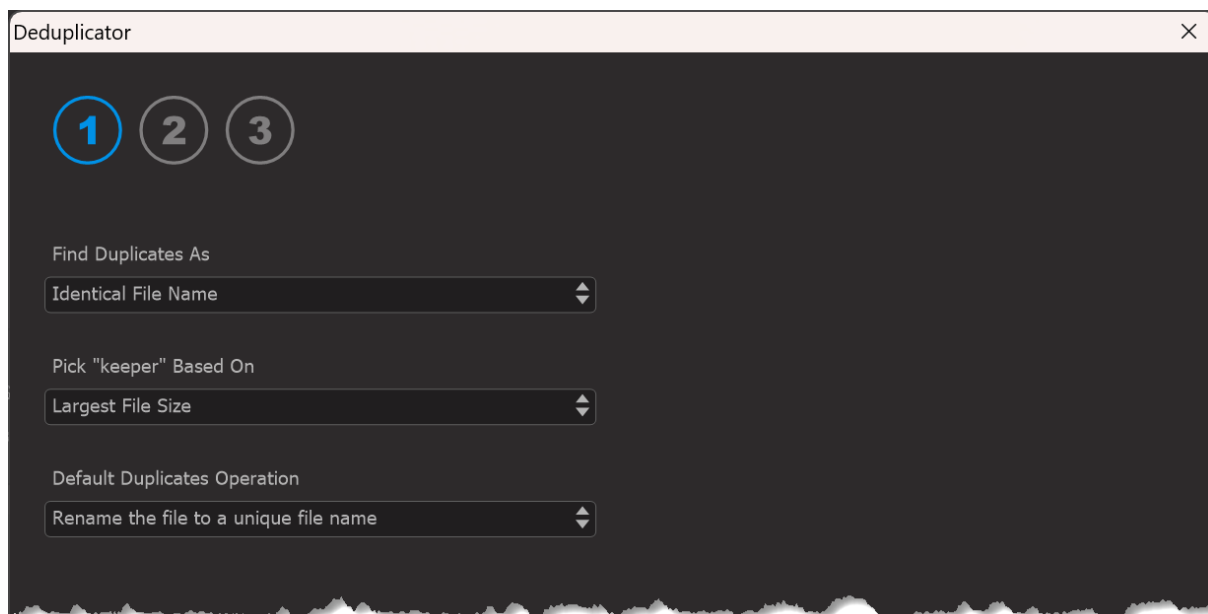


After reviewing, click Next again to reach the final confirmation step, where you can specify the archive folder if necessary.

Identical File Names

Sometimes, multiple files share the same name. These might be copies of the same file, but it's also possible that your file naming convention results in different files having identical names.

The process for handling duplicates with identical file names is similar to that for identical files. However, during the Configuration step, it's important to select "Rename the file to a unique file name" as the default duplicates operation.



Then click **Next** to proceed to the review step, and click **Next** again to move to the final confirmation stage. Review the results carefully, and when ready, click **Finish** to rename the duplicate files.

Phase 4: Maintenance

With a well-organized folder structure in place and duplicates properly managed, you've successfully tamed the photo jungle. Your files are now neatly stored, easily accessible through Photo Supreme, and free of unintended duplicates: unless purposely kept.

As mentioned earlier, some files in your archive may have incorrect or missing metadata dates. These files often end up in the wrong folders. To find and fix them, follow these steps:

- **Identify files with missing or incorrect dates:**
Use Photo Supreme's search features to locate files without date metadata or files that were scanned (which often lack proper dates). You can also browse through your folders manually to spot files placed in the wrong date-based folders.
- **Update file dates:**
Once you find files with incorrect or missing dates, use the Redate Files feature:
Right-click → Operations → Redate Files
This lets you assign the correct date to each file.
- **Move files to the correct folders:**
After updating the dates, use the Move and Rename Files function again to relocate the files into the proper date-based folder structure.

By regularly checking for and correcting these files, you'll maintain a well-organized archive that stays easy to navigate.

Moving forward

Now that your files are well-organized on disk, it's crucial to maintain this structure by ensuring that any new imports are placed into their correct folders. To do this, set up an **Import Profile** configured to copy files into the same date-based folder structure while applying your preferred naming convention. This ensures that all newly added files are consistently and correctly organized.

For more information on creating and customizing an Import Profile, please refer to the Cataloging manual.