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HOW TO CONVERT VHS TO DVD

By **Brandon Widder** — July 8, 2013

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Memories have a lifespan—err at least when it comes to talking about those captured on the dying medium known as [Video Home System](#), aka VHS. The cassette and tape design was never intended to last a lifetime, only as long as the fragile magnetic tape and outer plastic casing could hold up. However, if your VCR somehow managed to spare your precious [home](#) videos or NFL Superbowl recaps this far, chances are there is still enough time to salvage the audio and video before the inevitable degradation of time takes its irreparable toll. Converting well-worn videos will never be flawless — the slightest hiccup can interrupt the transfer signal — but it can be done on a modest budget with a few basic tools.

Here's our guide on how to convert VHS to DVD using a combo player, an analog-to-digital adapter, two separate boxes or a conversion service so you can save that 20-year-old footage of you faceplanting on your first bicycle. If not for you, do it for posterity's sake.

Related: [How to rip a DVD or Blu-Ray movie](#), [how to convert DVDs to MP4 using Windows or Mac OS X](#).

Disclaimer: It's technically illegal to produce copies of commercial films and copyrighted content, but there are no restrictions on mass producing home videos. Plus, you can usually pick up a used copy of [Top Gun](#), [the Breakfast Club](#) or all eight riveting seasons of [Full House](#) online for next to nothing anyway.

Choose your conversion method:

- Using a VHS-DVD combo player
- [Using an analog-to-digital adapter](#)
- [Using a separate VHS player and DVD recorder](#)
- [Using a VHS-to-DVD conversion service](#)

How to convert VHS to DVD using a VHS-DVD combo recorder

There are plenty of great VHS-DVD combo recorders on the market that allow users to internally dub VHS tapes to DVD and vice versa. They all essentially work in the same, straightforward manner—requiring simple setup and a little bit of patience—but they can be more costly than the other conversion methods on our list given their starting price point. They may be borderline obsolete in today's digital world, lacking the commonplace bundled editing software and high-

definition outputs, but they still remain one of the best go-to options for even the least tech-savvy of people.

Skip ►

Step 1: Purchase a VHS-DVD combo player if you don't own one already.

A nice player will run you between \$100 and \$200, but be weary about picking up a dirt-cheap alternative as you are entrusting your precious memories to a piece of hardware that can ultimately “eat” your tape. We recommend the higher-priced Toshiba VDR620 (\$190) or Magnavox ZV427MG9 (\$240) for solid all-in-one combos, but you can also check out Craigslist, eBay or your local thrift store if you're really looking for something more moderately priced. Just check to ensure it's equipped with the right conversion functionality.

Step 2: Choose a VHS tape.

Obviously you're going to need to select the VHS tape you would like to convert before proceeding. Choose a video and fast forward or rewind to the beginning of the selection you wish to record to DVD. Preferably choose videos that lack noise and severe video degradation whenever possible to ensure the highest quality recordings.

Step 3: Clean the VHS tape and test the VCR.

Although not necessary, it's a good idea to clean your video cassette tape and test your tape deck to ensure it's not going to ruin your VHS. How effective the different cleaning methods are remains a point of contention, but consider opening the cassette encasing and carefully removing any potential dust or dirt using a soft cloth or cotton swab. You might also consider cleaning your VCR's heads either by using a VHS head cleaner or doing it manually.

Step 4: Insert the VHS tape and a blank DVD.

Make sure the blank disc you insert is compatible with your DVD recorder. Some players can only read particular formats, such as DVD+R or DVD+RW, so it's best to check your combo player's specifications before attempting to convert the tape.

Step 5: Convert.

Now it's time to convert your VHS to DVD. The process will vary depending on your machine, so check the included instruction manual or navigate to the manufacturer's website for more information on how to initiate the dubbing process. Typically, there will be a

“record” button of sorts for directly converting the tape onto the blank disc.

Next Page: How to convert VHS to DVD using an analog-to-digital adapter

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Shane Taylor

Not to nitpick, but VHS is actually an acronym for the recording method used on the tape, i.e., Vertical Helical Scan, not Video Home Systems (but nice try). ;-)

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