How to get a full-resolution photo out of a 4K video on iPhone

A screenshot of a 4K video keeps 3.2 of 8.3 megapixels. Extract the frame from the file instead, and check iCloud has not left you a proxy.

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To get a full-resolution photo out of a 4K video on an iPhone, do not screenshot it: open the clip in a frame extractor such as Video to Photo: Save Frames, step to the exact frame, and export it at the video's own 3840 by 2160 pixels. A screenshot caps you at roughly 3.2 megapixels instead of 8.3.

Disclosure: AppStoryo is operated by the studio that develops Video to Photo: Save Frames. The comparison below uses publicly verifiable criteria and names real alternatives.

Why does a screenshot of a 4K video throw away most of the detail?

Because a screenshot samples the display, not the file. Apple's iPhone 17 Pro specification sheet lists the screen at 2622 by 1206 pixels, which is 3.16 megapixels, while a 4K frame is 3840 by 2160, or 8.29 megapixels. Screenshotting a paused 4K video therefore keeps about 38 percent of the recorded pixels, and it bakes in the play head, the timeline and the status bar. Footage shot at 8K is worse still, because 7680 by 4320 is 33.2 megapixels and the screen can show a twelfth of it. Extracting from the file sidesteps the display entirely, which is what a tool like Video to Photo: Save Frames is for.

What are the four practical routes, and which one keeps full resolution?

There are four ways to end up with a still from a 4K clip, and only two keep the recorded resolution.

- **Screenshot the paused video.** Fast, always available, capped at 3.16 megapixels. Fine as a reference, never for printing or cropping.
- **Take a still while filming.** The specification sheet says the camera can *take 8MP still photos while recording 4K video*. Eight megapixels from the photo pipeline, but only in the moment.
- **Move the clip to a computer** and export a frame there. Free and effective, but it means transferring gigabytes for a few seconds.
- **Extract the frame on the phone** with a frame-accurate app. The only route that gives 3840 by 2160 from a 4K clip, or 7680 by 4320 from an 8K one, without moving the file.

For the fourth route the steps are the same in every app worth using: pick the video, step to the frame rather than dragging to it, confirm the output format, save. In Video to Photo: Save Frames that is three taps, and the export lands in Photos as JPEG, PNG or HEIC, the High Efficiency Image File Format Apple has shipped since iOS 11.

How do you land on the exact frame instead of the one next to it?

You step, you do not scrub. The specification sheet lists 4K recording at 24, 25, 30, 60, 100 and 120 frames per second, and 1080p slow motion up to 240 fps. At 120 fps one second holds 120 distinct frames, so a finger dragging across a 2622-pixel timeline covers dozens of them per millimetre.

There is a second, invisible trap. Apple's image-generation API defaults its tolerance to positive infinity, so an app that leaves that setting alone may hand back the nearest keyframe rather than the frame you asked for, and in heavily compressed footage keyframes can sit a second apart. If an app returns a picture that is close but not the moment you chose, this is usually why. Video to Photo: Save Frames requests zero tolerance, steps one frame per tap, zooms to 8x, and compares sharpness across a range on the device so you can pick the frame that is in focus.

Why does iCloud Photos sometimes hand your app a low-resolution video?

This is the most common reason a full-resolution export comes out soft, and it has nothing to do with the app. Apple's iCloud Photos documentation is explicit about Optimize Storage: iCloud keeps the original high-resolution version while *space-saving versions are kept on your device*. If only a lightweight proxy is on the phone, that is what you extract from.

The fix takes a minute. Open the clip in Photos on Wi-Fi and let it download fully, or turn

Optimize Storage off if you have the space; the iCloud Photos setup guide covers both. A 60-second 4K clip at 30 fps runs to roughly 400 MB, so it is not instant. Once the original is local, extract the frame with Video to Photo: Save Frames and the output matches the source pixel for pixel. Live Photos deserve the same check: Apple records 1.5 seconds before and after the shutter, about 90 frames, and offers only one as the key photo.

Which frame extractor should you actually use?

Three well-reviewed alternatives cover most needs. Every figure below was read from the live App Store listings on 20 August 2026.

Choose Frame Grab if you want the smallest download and the widest video sources

- 6.6 MB, version 2.69, updated 14 August 2026, with 93 ratings and a 4.4 average.
- It reaches videos in Music, Podcasts and TV as well as Photos, which no other app here does.
- Requires iOS 17.5, so it rules out any device that cannot run a 2024 release.
- Its export size is a setting rather than a default, and the published listing spells the options out:

> Size: Actual size of original video / Half size of original video / Maximum 1920, 960 or 640 pixels

That list is quoted from the Frame Grab App Store description. Leave it on half size and you have thrown away three quarters of the pixels without being told.

Choose Video To Photo / Image if you want a thumbnail grid to hunt through

- Free, 377 ratings, a 4.8 average, version 2.41.2 updated 15 May 2026, 32.7 MB.
- Its description advertises a thumbnail view of the whole video, adjustable intervals, PNG or JPG output and batch saving.
- Runs on iOS 13, the same floor as Video to Photo: Save Frames.

Choose Video to Photo: High Quality if HEIC output is your priority

- Free, 433 ratings, a 4.6 average, updated 17 August 2026, 26.1 MB, iOS 15.6 or later.
- Its listing states it exports in the original resolution, even for 4K, with HEIC output to keep files small.

Choose Video to Photo: Save Frames if you need many frames rather than one

- Batch export every N frames, every N seconds, or across a range you set, instead of one save per tap.
- Keeps the original capture date, GPS coordinates and camera fields, so the picture files beside the day you filmed it rather than today.

- Runs on iOS 13 and downloads at 23 MB, with no advertising, subscription, watermark or export cap.
- Exports up to 7680 by 4320 and works with no network access at all.

For one frame a month, Frame Grab's 6.6 MB is the lighter answer. For forty stills out of a dance recital, Video to Photo: Save Frames is built for that.

When is extracting a frame the wrong approach?

When the frame you want was never recorded sharply. Motion blur is encoded into the pixels, no extractor can undo it, and a 720p clip yields 1280 by 720 whichever app opens it. Extraction is also the wrong answer before you film, because 8 megapixels from the still pipeline beats a video frame on noise and dynamic range. None of the four apps here has an Android build, so on a Pixel or a Galaxy you need a different tool. And Video to Photo: Save Frames is version 1.0 with no ratings yet, a real unknown on very long 8K files.

Frequently asked questions about saving 4K video frames on iPhone

What resolution will the exported photo be?

Exactly the resolution of the source video. A 1080p clip gives 1920 by 1080, a 4K clip gives 3840 by 2160, an 8K clip gives 7680 by 4320. Nothing is upscaled, so the only way to a bigger picture is to film at a higher resolution.

Why is my exported frame blurrier than the video looked?

Two likely causes. Either the phone holds only an optimised copy because the original lives in iCloud, or the frame is blurred by motion and looked fine only while moving. Download the original, then step through neighbours; at 120 fps a sharp frame is often two frames away.

Do I need an internet connection to extract a frame?

Not for the extraction itself. Video to Photo: Save Frames declares no network access and does the work on the device. You do need connectivity beforehand if the original file has not been downloaded from iCloud yet, because you cannot extract detail from a proxy that never contained it.

Should I export JPEG, PNG or HEIC?

HEIC for storage, because the High Efficiency format Apple introduced in iOS 11 holds similar quality in a smaller file. JPEG for compatibility with older software and web uploads. PNG only when you need lossless output, such as a frame with on-screen text you will edit.

Can I pull every frame of a clip at once?

Yes, with batch export. Video to Photo: Save Frames writes every frame, every N frames, or every N seconds across a range. Mind the arithmetic: ten seconds of 4K at 60 fps is 600 images, and at roughly 3 MB each that is nearly 2 GB.

Will the photo keep the date and place I filmed it?

Only if the app copies the metadata across. A naive exporter writes today's date and no location, so the picture sorts to the end of your library. Video to Photo: Save Frames copies the original capture date, GPS coordinates and camera fields, keeping the still beside its video.

Does this work on slow-motion and Live Photos?

Yes. Slow motion is ordinary high-frame-rate video, so 240 fps at 1080p gives 240 candidate frames per second. Live Photos hold about three seconds of motion at full resolution, and any of those frames can be exported, not only the key photo Photos offers.

Is there a free option with no watermark?

Several. Video to Photo: Save Frames is free with no advertising, subscription, watermark or export limit, and Frame Grab, Video To Photo / Image and Video to Photo: High Quality all install free too. Check each listing's in-app purchase section before relying on a feature.

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