SOFTWARE & TECH

How To Move Apps To Sd

Published: November 20, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Introduction: Why Free Up Internal Storage by Moving Apps to SD?

Smartphone storage fills up faster than ever with high resolution photos, downloaded videos, and a growing collection of apps. When your device starts warning you that internal storage is almost full, one of the most effective solutions is to move apps to an SD card. This simple action can free up significant space, improve system performance, and extend the life of your device—especially on budget or older phones with limited built in memory. In this guide, you'll learn everything about **how to move apps to SD**, from built in Android features to third party tools, along with important tips to avoid common pitfalls.

Understanding the Basics: Can You Really Move Apps to SD?

Not every app can be moved to an SD card. Developers decide whether their app supports this function. Generally, apps that include widgets, live wallpapers, or critical system services cannot be moved because they rely on internal storage to run properly. Also, moving apps to an SD card may result in slightly slower load times, depending on the speed of your card (look for A1 or A2 rated cards for best results).

Android itself has evolved its support for external storage over the years. Early versions (2.2–4.4) offered a simple "Move to SD" option. Android 6.0 introduced **Adoptable Storage**, which lets you format the SD card as internal memory, effectively merging the two. However, many manufacturers disable this feature or limit it. Let's explore each method step by step.

Method 1: Using Android's Built in 'Move to SD' Feature (Android 2.2 – 4.4)

If your phone runs an older version of Android (2.2 Froyo to 4.4 KitKat), you can use the native "Move to SD" option. Here's how:

1. Open Settings on your Android device.
2. Tap Apps or Application Manager (the exact label varies by brand).
3. Select the app you want to move (for example, a game or a downloaded utility).
4. Look for a button that says Move to SD Card. If it's grayed out, the app does not support relocation.
5. Tap the button and wait for the transfer to complete. You'll see the app's storage location change from "Internal" to "SD Card."

Note: On these older versions, apps that are moved to the SD card may become unavailable when you unmount the card or connect your phone to a computer via USB. Also, moving system apps or pre installed bloatware is usually blocked.

Method 2: Using Adoptable Storage (Android 6.0 and Higher)

Starting with Android 6.0 Marshmallow, Google introduced **Adoptable Storage**. This feature allows you to format your SD card as part of the internal storage. Once formatted this way, the system treats the SD card as an extension of internal memory, and you can install apps directly to it without manual moving.

Steps to Set Up Adoptable Storage

1. Insert a high speed SD card (Class 10 or UHS-I/UHS-II) into your device.
2. Open Settings and go to Storage.
3. Tap on your SD card name, then choose Format as internal or Format as portable. Select Format as internal.
4. Read the warning: formatting will erase all data on the card, and once set as internal, the card is encrypted and tied to your device.
5. Tap Erase & Format.
6. After formatting, you'll have the option to Move now (transfer existing apps, photos, and data to the new storage) or Move later.
7. If you choose to move later, any new apps you install will automatically be placed on the adopted storage (depending on app settings).

Important considerations: Adoptable storage is not available on all devices. Many manufacturers (Samsung, LG, Huawei) disable or hide this feature because they prefer you buy phones with more internal storage. In such cases, you may need a third party app (see Method 3). Also, if the SD card fails or is removed, your apps will become inaccessible, and you risk data loss. Always back up important data.

Method 3: Using Third Party Apps (With or Without Root)

If the built in options are insufficient because your manufacturer blocked the feature or you need more control, third party apps can help. Here are the most popular ones:

App 1: AppMgr III (App 2 SD)

This app (formerly known as App 2 SD) works on both rooted and non rooted devices. It scans your installed apps and shows which ones are movable. Simply select apps and tap "Move to SD." It also offers a "Move to Phone" option if you want to revert. **Note:**On non rooted phones, AppMgr III relies on the same built in Android mechanism, so it won't work for apps that the system says can't be moved.

App 2: Link2SD

Link2SD is a powerful tool that requires root access. It can link an app's files (APK, OBB, data) to the SD card, effectively moving the entire app even if the system says it's not movable. It supports different partition types (FAT32, ext2, ext3, ext4). The process is more technical but gives you full control.

1. Install Link2SD from the Google Play Store.
2. Partition your SD card using a partition tool on your PC (e.g., MiniTool Partition Wizard). Create two partitions: one FAT32 for normal files and one ext2/ext4 for app linking.
3. Insert the partitioned SD card into your phone and open Link2SD.
4. Grant root permissions when prompted.
5. Select the second partition's file system (e.g., ext4) and tap "Mount."
6. Now you can choose any app and tap "Create Link" to move its files to the SD card.

Warning: Rooting your device voids the warranty and can expose your phone to security risks if not done carefully. Only proceed if you are comfortable with advanced modifications.

Method 4: Moving Apps to SD on Specific Brands (Samsung, Xiaomi, Huawei, Motorola)

Manufacturers often modify Android's storage settings. Here's a quick guide for popular brands:

Samsung (One UI)

- Go to Settings > Battery and Device Care > Storage.
- Tap your SD card name, then tap the three dot menu and choose Storage settings.
- You may find an option called Move apps to SD card. Tap it and select apps to transfer.
- Alternatively, you can move individual apps via Settings > Apps > choose app > Storage > Change > select SD card.

Xiaomi (MIUI)

- Open Settings and search for “Move apps to SD.”
- In older MIUI versions, go to Settings > Installed apps > tap an app > Move to SD.
- MIUI 12 and later have largely removed this option. You may need to use Adoptable Storage via a hidden menu: dial *#*#6484#*#* to enter hardware test mode, then navigate to storage settings—but this is risky. Safer to use third party apps.

Huawei (EMUI)

- Huawei devices often label the option as Move to SD card in app info pages. Go to Settings > Apps > tap an app > Storage > tap Change > select SD card.
- Note: Huawei restricts adoption on many models, but you can still move many user apps individually.

Motorola (My UX / near stock Android)

- Motorola devices running Android 6.0+ support Adoptable Storage if you insert the SD card and format it as internal. Steps: Settings > Storage > tap SD card > > Menu > Storage Settings > Format as internal.

Important Considerations and Limitations

Before you start moving apps, keep these points in mind to avoid frustration:

- SD card speed matters: For moving apps (especially games or heavy utilities), use a card with a speed class of at least UHS 1 or A1/A2. Cheap, slow cards can cause apps to lag or crash.
- Not all apps are movable: System apps, launchers, widgets, and apps that require background services are usually blocked. You’ll see a grayed out button.
- Performance impact: Moving apps to an SD card can result in longer launch times, particularly on devices with eMMC internal storage that is already faster than many SD cards.
- Removing the SD card: If you unmount or remove the card while apps are stored on it, those apps will disappear from the app drawer and may become corrupted. Always unmount properly via Settings > Storage > Unmount SD card before removal.
- Adoptable storage can be reversed: If you later decide you don’t want the card as internal storage, you can reformat it as portable, but that will erase all app data stored on it (your apps will revert to phone storage if possible, but lose saved data).
- Encryption and data security: Adoptable storage encrypts the card so it cannot be read on another device. If your phone breaks, you may not be able to recover the data.
- Install location settings: Some phones (especially with Android 5.0+) let you set a default install location. Go to Settings > Developer options > Force allow apps on external (if available) to attempt to force all apps onto the SD card—but this can cause instability.

Conclusion

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