

TIPS FOR SHOOTING VIDEOS

The camera has a high definition setting, however we only recommend using it when the camera can be placed on a steady surface. When panning too quickly with the high definition setting, the image will appear very blurry.

Unless you are recording a meeting or event, please **limit the length of your video** to 1:30 minutes or briefer. That makes for easier downloading and tighter bites.

Avoid unnecessary and fast pan shots. Instead, stay with an image and let the action move through the scene. When panning a scene, **hold the camera steady** and move it very slowly. Keep the camera steady as much as possible and avoid jerky movements. Bracing your elbow with your non-shooting hand, or keeping your “shooting elbow” close to your body, can help steady the camera. You also can use the table-top tripod to keep the camera stationary.

Use the tripod for interviews, if possible. If you are unable to place the camera and tripod on a steady surface, hold it as steady as possible. If you are using the camera microphone, place the camera as close as possible to the subject, otherwise use the lapel microphone for better sound recording.

Adjust for ambient noise. Make sure the sound around you is not distracting. If you cannot get away from intrusive background sound, then make sure to include the source of the noise in the shot behind your interviewee. That way, the image explains where the extra noise is coming from. This makes the distraction more acceptable to the viewer.

Avoid high-contrast scenes as much as possible. Dark shadows will go black in the transfer, and shadows across someone’s face will not transfer well. Try to put your interview subject in even light and avoid backgrounds that are too bright or too dark, since this will increase the image contrast and make the image hard to see. If you are inside a building, try to avoid bright walls behind a dark-skinned person when doing interviews. The contrast could be too extreme.

What to Shoot

Try to **plan your shots and interviews** ahead of time. You can record your interview first and then take what you heard and decide what cutaway shots (b-roll) to get. Always try to cover a scene with a wider cover shot for location identification, and then go in to get close-ups, which give the viewer an intimate feel for the setting and the action. An effective use of the camera is to **record a standup** of someone relating an anecdote or explaining something that is happening in the background.

Before you begin shooting, **coach the person** to think for a moment about what they are going to say – and who the audience is. Tell her or him to stay within a specific time limit -- 1 minute is good. That limit will help them focus their thoughts and keep their comments to the point. Once you turn the camera on, the first thing the person should do in a standup situation is say who they are – “Hi, my name is Jane Doe and I am....”

Direct your camera in such a way that your subject doesn’t fill the frame, and the viewer can get a sense of place from the background.

Also, **overshoot your interview.** Turn the camera on several seconds before your subject starts speaking and don’t stop filming until a few seconds afterwards. This allows for easier and cleaner edits.