

Making a video – hints and tips

It's easy to pull out a camera or smartphone, make a video and upload it, but here are a few tips for filming that will save you time and improve your videos. We recommend you read all the tips before you start filming.

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Format

Shoot in landscape, not portrait (that's the 'long way' not the 'tall way'). If you shoot your video in portrait mode you'll see thick black bars on either side of video. There's a reason why films are shot in landscape as human eyes are designed to see the world in widescreen.

For clarity and quality we recommend that you create your video in 720p (HD Ready) or 1080p (Full HD) resolution.

Recording techniques

Try to find a way to capture sound separately if you're using a phone or a tablet. We recommend that you:

- Use an external microphone if you have one
- Avoid background noise
- Avoid wind noise if outdoors
- Avoid buzz from electrical equipment if indoors
- Do a test recording and listen back

For an overview of sound issues and how to avoid them see:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation/contribute/tips/sound/mics_and_headphones/index.shtml

See also: <http://www.imore.com/how-get-good-audio-while-shooting-video-your-iphone>

This short video gives you hints on how to improve your sound without buying additional equipment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tFcUghQ3TI>

Free music

If you're using music you will need to find music that is copyright free and royalty free so we don't have any issues about showing your video online. There are lots of sites that are 'royalty free' but this doesn't mean the music is free, it just means you don't have to pay per play. Find out more about the distinction here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFj4cFAOtg8>

Please **don't use any sites that require you to submit credit card details**. Good free music sites to try are:

YouTube Audio Library: <https://www.youtube.com/audiolibrary/music>

Nocopyrightsounds <http://ow.ly/O33s6>

www.purple-planet.com

Please follow the site's rules on crediting the owner of the music in your video.

Storyboarding and planning

Keep your video simple and use a storyboard. This will help to make your filming less stressful and help you use your time more efficiently.

When you're planning your video start with your end requirement:

- Who is going to watch the video you are about to make?
- Is the video stand-alone or will text accompany it to explain its meaning and content?
- How long should the video be?
- Will people need to speak or be interviewed for your video?
- Do you need to show places, objects or other things in the video?
- What locations will you use for filming?

Jot down a storyboard for your video:

- The quality of the sketches isn't important; stickmen will do, as long as the shots and direction are clearly set out.
- A storyboard will help you keep your filming short and make sure you capture everything you want.
- Note down the messages you want to get across –bullet pointscript.
- Write a list of the shots you need and locations.

Time management

- Don't shoot too much (remember you have to edit this) and show, don't just tell.
- Keep shots short and uncomplicated.
- Remember to record some 'cutaways':
 - These can give a better sense of what happens in the ACF – showing where you train, what the detachment looks like, where you live, etc.
 - Cutaways will also help when you're editing to cover up cuts.
 - For ideas see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8pqMVXbEf0>

Planning a shoot

Because your video is likely to be viewed at a small scale **try not to include tiny details that are going to be difficult to see**. The best videos are those that are simple, straightforward and get their message across without faddy gimmicks. If you need to write or draw, do it on a large white board rather than a small piece of paper, so that it can be easily seen even when viewed on a phone screen.

Ever watched a video and seen it pixellate? The more complex your video, the more bandwidth the viewer's device needs to have available to stream it properly. So if you wear your MTP and stand in front of a stripy background there's a lot of detail to be transmitted, even before you start talking.

Keep backgrounds simple and uncluttered – stand in front of a white background if at all possible, and – if you're not wearing your ACF uniform – wear plain, preferably dark colours.

For the same reason, **keep movement to a minimum** in your video. Movement creates more engagement, but be careful how much you put into the video. Movement requires extra bandwidth and if you're pacing around, viewers with slower internet connections are likely to experience issues with bandwidth and pixellation. Keep the camera as still as you can and if you need to move around then make your movements fluid and smooth.

If you're planning to mount your camera on a tripod and film yourself, **try and find someone to help you**. Many hours have been lost because someone moved outside the frame, or had the top of their head cut off, or the lighting was wrong, and they didn't notice till after they'd completed the filming! Having someone else there to monitor the screen and give you feedback can be a great time saver.

Give some thought to the lighting in the area where you're filming. Spotlights can cause issues as the camera will struggle to set the contrast properly, and you'll end up with very bright areas, very dark areas and streaks of light. Film your video outdoors or in a well-lit room – natural light is best – but if you do need artificial light, try to evenly light a large area.

Interviews

If you're interviewing ask someone else to film so you can focus on the questions and answers. It's also useful to have a second opinion.

Things to think about when interviewing:

- Is the interview just one question with one long answer?
- If you have a series of questions and answers, do you want to hear your questions being asked or will they be cut out so it sounds like the interviewee is just talking freely about the topic.
- Would you consider re-asking your questions on camera and editing them in after?
- Can you record the interview in a quiet location?
- What's in the background?
- Do you want your 'star' looking at the camera?

When planning an interview:

- Make sure your star has consent to be filmed (from their parent/guardian).
- Brief your stars on questions – but don't let them write out full answers as it should sound natural.
- Check what people are wearing? Are they properly turned out if they're wearing uniform?
- Remove clothing or backgrounds that might date-stamp your footage, for example, a poppy.
- Health and safety – e.g. if you are filming by a climbing tower your interviewee should be wearing the proper protective headgear.

Camerawork

- Practice before you head out on your shoot.
- Try and keep the camera steady.
- Hold the device in such a way as to create a human tripod using both arms to hold the camera steady.
- Don't use the electronic zoom but rather move forward to make the person or equipment fit your viewfinder frame.
- Stay close to people you are filming – just capture head and shoulders to ensure you capture sound (see our tips on improving sound quality above).

Editing

Lighting, location and storyboard will all be important in the edit -if you plan these in advance, your edit will be so much easier.

If you are editing footage yourself, keep it simple and short. If you try to be too complicated you may get fed up and not finish the project.

- Editing can be time consuming so don't take that task on unless you know you can complete it.
- Use common editing software, such as; **iMovie** - available as standard software on Macs for free; **Movie Maker** - available as standard software on PCs with Windows for free
- Watch and name your video clips
- Plan how you will edit your story
- Do a compilation of the basic shots and sound
- Then add your extra visuals
- Add other sound, commentary, titles and music

Further resources

Need more hints and tips? Have a look at some of the great tips on these web pages:

http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/technique/expert_advice/21-tips-for-shooting-better-video-59032

Handy 'cheat sheet' for preparing a shot list: <http://www.mulinblog.com/mobile-video-shooting-tips-a-sample-iphone-video-with-shot-by-shot-instructions/>

Great advice for iphone and ipad users:

<http://www.expertreviews.co.uk/tablets/8055/how-to-shoot-better-video-on-your-ipad-and-iphone>

<http://proeditors.com/2016/03/iphone-video-recording-tips/>

<http://myboringchannel.com/how-to-make-great-iphone-videos-ten-tips/>