

Tips for Recording Better Video and Audio



Video

1. Use the “Rule of Thirds”

To get a better picture, think about dividing your viewfinder’s image into a tic-tac-toe board—three equal parts vertically and horizontally. The most significant part of the picture is where the lines intersect: top left, top right, bottom left, bottom right.

2. Keep It Steady

Keeping your camera as still as possible while you are recording will make your video look far more professional. You can stabilize the camera by either using a tripod or simply placing it on a stable surface.

3. Avoid Background Light

If possible, avoid positioning your subjects in front of windows or where there is any bright background light.

4. Use Zoom Sparingly

Using the zoom feature can help you frame a picture before you begin recording; however, once you hit record, you should try to stay away from the zoom.

5. Mix It Up

Videotape your subjects from several angles and varying distances. And make sure you record more than just the main event: think about the types of additional imagery that will add context and substance to your scenes.

Audio

1. Use a Separate Microphone

The microphones that are built into cameras are never of the same quality as external microphones. With a separate microphone, you will also be able to get the microphone closer to the source of the sound.

2. Avoid Background Noise and Use Headphones

Microphones pick up background noises—such as traffic, air-conditioning, or planes overhead—that your brain filters out. Choose a quiet place to videotape, especially if you’re going to be interviewing people. If you use headphones, you’ll be able to hear any background noise or problems with the microphone.

3. Add Music Afterwards

Don’t have music playing while you film or record. It’ll be a nightmare to edit your video if you do. Add music as a separate track during the editing process.

4. Avoid Copyrighted Music

If you use copyrighted music, you must get permission from the people who wrote and performed it. You can try making your own music for the soundtrack, or you can get music from sources that offer rights to music and other assets at low or no cost to independent filmmakers.

5. Record a Bit of Quiet Atmosphere

Record at least 30 seconds of silence, or “room tone,” at each location so that you have the sound of the background atmosphere without anyone talking over it. This will be very helpful during the editing process.