

Filming Top Tips



A few tricks of the trade, guaranteed to make your videos look so much better

Norman Ivison

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Top tips

These are not hard and fast rules designed to cramp your style, but ideas which will help you produce videos which have impact. They are simply tips based on the experience of people who have tried different ways of making videos down the years. And they are tips which will help you avoid those distracting mistakes which often stop your audience concentrating on what you want them to concentrate on!

If you decide to ignore them, make sure there is a good, creative reason why – not simply because you forgot! Remember, most of us are not trying to turn ourselves into professional broadcasters, but we are trying to avoid doing anything that might distract from the content or the message.

Filming

- The ‘framing’ of your shot is important. Always look straight at the camera if you are speaking directly to us. Remember to film landscape rather than portrait format.
- Remember to have your camera or mobile set to record in widescreen (16x9) not 4x3, otherwise you will look very overweight on most devices!
- The ‘size’ of the shot is also important. You shouldn’t be too small in the frame. If you are you will look a bit lost and people who rely on lip reading may struggle. This is a good sized landscape format shot, although there is not a lot of headroom if the subject starts getting animated or excited
- But this is OK too, especially if you are demonstrating something which this presenter was. It’s also OK, for example, if you are pointing to a painting, or describing a feature in your backyard. And of course, you will need to be smaller in the frame if there’s more than one of you. But note the warning about sound below.



This is not so good....

...for more reasons than one!



- If the person editing your video wants to add captions, for example your name, remember to leave enough room at the bottom of the shot so the caption doesn't go across your chin.
- Good lighting is really important.

- Always try to use natural, daylight if you possibly can. A dark room doesn't look great on a sunny Sunday morning.

- Sit near a window if you can, sideways on. It's good if the lighting on your face is not completely 'flat'. This shot illustrates this simple kind of natural lighting well...



- Avoid sitting directly in front of a window. You will get distracting reflections and who knows what might happen behind you!
- Always do a test shot first and then see if you can improve on the lighting at all by moving yourself or your camera/mobile. It's well worth the three minutes this will take.

- Smile when appropriate. You'll be amazed how much warmer the sound of your voice will be if you do!
- If you can, use a tripod and make sure your camera/mobile is looking straight at you and not moving at all. If you haven't got a tripod, rest your mobile/camera on a pile of books but then don't touch it. The less it moves the better, although this rule can be broken on rare occasions if you are out and about and want to create a 'on the hoof' feel. Selfie sticks can be really useful for that kind of out and about shot.
- If you want to show everyone your double chin, put the camera/mobile low and point it up at you. If you want everyone to see your bald patch, put it above you pointing down. If you would much prefer people to see you as the lovely person you are, put the camera/mobile about 5cms higher than the height of your eyes.
- Think about the background, for three reasons....
 - It says something about you. A shelf of books might say 'reads a lot, so probably not often in the real world'... A blank wall can say 'I was in a hurry so quickly recorded this in the dining room'.... Try and find something that's neither bland on the one hand nor distracting on the other. You have lost me if I am trying to see which Agatha Christies you have read, rather than listening to what you are saying. Outside is good if there are not too many distracting noises.

- Most cameras/mobiles on their auto settings find a straight line and focus on that or focus on what is in the middle of the screen. Do a test and check that you are in focus rather than the picture on the wall behind you.
- Don't back yourself right up against a wall. It will make you look like a photo the police have taken! Instead, if you have got room, try to be at least a metre away from the background. Your camera will then try and put you in focus and the background slightly out of focus which will look much better.
- The chances are that your rear lens (on a mobile) will be better quality than your front, selfie lens. So use the rear lens if you can. But now you can't see what you look like. Do a test take to check you have a well framed shot, or place a mirror behind the camera so you can check you are well framed throughout.
- Good sound is also important. The further away you are from the camera/mobile the less distinct the sound will be. However you can plug in a clip/tie mic, if you've got one, and that should improve things a lot. Try and hide the cable under your shirt/blouse/string vest if you can. Again, do a dummy run and check it. Try not to record in a very echo-y room, especially if you are filming from more than a few feet away.
- However, perhaps most important – be yourself. It's not easy to talk to camera, and keep going.

- - If it helps put up a few bullet points as close to the lens as you can. And look at those occasionally. Don't put them too far to one side or below the camera - you will glance off and look shifty. Get them as close to the lens as you can. If your eyesight is good, stick a post-it note on your phone with the main points on it.
 - Remind yourself you are not addressing hundreds of people, but chatting to individuals and household groups watching you in their living rooms. No need to shout or take forever to say that one, simple thing you want to say.
 - Don't panic and stop at the first fluff, keep going like it's a normal conversation. Only redo it if you feel you really need to. It's your friends watching, not the Oscars Committee.



The best way to pass on your material

These ideas will really help you and the person who might be editing your video for you.

- Always allow a good 10" pause at the beginning and end of your video. If you clip it too tight, your editor can't mix in our out of it, or fade the sound up or down. Start with a nice

expression on your face (if you can!) and try to end with a smile and hold it for longer than feels natural.

- Please don't put captions, or other graphics, on your video if someone else is editing for you. They will already have a style or particular font they want to use. Get their advice and let them have captions on a separate document with clear instructions about where and when you want them to appear. Use the timecode on the video you have recorded to explain this. Eg. 'The story continues...' appears at 0'30" and 'That's all for now!' at 1'15"
- If you want a music backing, send that as a separate MP3 file. That means that if your speech needs a little editing the editor can do that and then will mix the music in once the speech track is just right. Again say when the music is intended to stop and start using the timecode on your video if possible. If your music is already added, it does make editing very difficult.
- Upload your video to a shared drive or use www.WeTransfer.com to send your video to your editor. Remember to also send a note about any music that needs mixing in or captions which need adding.



And finally a note about copyright...

This is something of a minefield but some things are clear:

- You can't simply use a track of music or video or image in a video or any other kind of broadcast without permission. Some copyright free material is available online if you look carefully. But if it doesn't say 'copyright free' or 'no licence required' assume you can't use it without permission.
- You can't simply sing a song, unless you have personally written it, in a live or recorded video (for example a worship service) without permission or a relevant licence.
- But there is good news of you use YouTube or Facebook Live as far as local sung worship is concerned. This from the Church of England website¹:

Those wishing to live-stream via platforms such as Facebook and YouTube should be covered by the existing licensing agreements in place with those platforms. Please ensure you follow the terms of use and copyright requirements of each respective platform.

But note: If a church wishes to host a live-stream on their own website, rather than simply embedding a link from YouTube, then they can apply for a limited online music licence (LOML).

Read more from PRS here about LOMLs (see footnote)².

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/digital-labs/labs-learning-blog/beginners-guide-going-live-your-service-or>

- If you use a YouTube video in a video which is then streamed via YouTube, you should be covered by YouTube's own licence. This does not cover videos you might download free or at cost from elsewhere. Check copyright with your supplier before you use. If you do upload copyright music (the biggest risk area) to YouTube, which is not covered by the generic YouTube licence, then YouTube will warn you and, in some instances, stop you uploading. You don't want to find this out 10 minutes before your premiere is about to start!
- Images are normally copyright unless it specifically says otherwise on the site you get them from. If you use Google Images, click on TOOLS>USAGE RIGHTS. *Labelled for non-commercial reuse with modification* is probably your safest option and will give you the widest range of images and allow you to alter them in some way.
- BUT.... This is a difficult area to navigate so please always check before you use. And sorry, but we can't be held responsible if any of this advice turns out to be misleading or inaccurate.

Useful sites with contact details if you are still unsure:

Performing Rights Society: <https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/using-music-online>

Christian Copyright Licensing International (for churches, church services online etc):
<https://uk.ccli.com/copyright-licences/>

Church of England Digital Labs: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/digital-labs/labs-learning-blog/your-most-frequently-asked-questions-and>

Finally have fun!

Go for it! You will quickly learn the 'language' of video making and your videos will start to have real impact. Then you can start bending the rules!

² https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/using-music-online/limited-online-music-licence?utm_source=Social&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=prsformusic