



10 Tips for Capturing Great Video

1. Be prepared

- Go to the filming location the day before to check out the lighting and setting.
- Make a complete shot list.
- Pack DV tapes, extension cords, a tripod, a lens cloth, your camera manual, and an extra set of charged batteries.

2. Get great sound

- Keep your subject close to the camera.
- Eliminate background noise as much as possible.
- Use an external microphone if available.
- Make sure the microphone is out of the camera's view.
- Use headphones to monitor the sound quality.

3. Get the lighting right

- Before shooting, determine where the light is coming from (front, side, or back).
- If backlit, add more light so the front of your subject is lit, or move to another location.
- Use a bounce card to reflect light on your subject instead of shining it directly on them.
- If necessary, set your camera mode to match your shooting conditions.
- Avoid bright sunlight (making sure your shadow isn't in the shot).
- If you're filming inside, turn on all of the lights.

4. Get clear, steady footage

- Use your camera's image stabilization feature, if it has one.
- Use a tripod whenever possible.
- If no tripod is available, hold your bent arm tight against your body or lean against a solid surface to stabilize the shot.
- Use your camera's auto focus mode unless it's having trouble focusing on your subject.
- Hold your camera still and instead have the subject provide motion.

5. Capture the complete story

- Remember to press "Record" several seconds before you cue action to begin.
- Capture an establishing shot at the beginning of each scene.
- Get shots that tell the beginning, middle, and end of your story.
- Change locations and take shots from different angles and perspectives.
- Look for details in the scene that will help tell your story.
- Make sure your footage answers the questions, who, what, when, where, and why.

6. Think about composition

- Make sure all parts of your shot work together — the subject, background, color, and lighting.
- Position your subject off center for a more interesting shot.
- Make sure there is no unnecessary space around the subject.

7. Don't forget the background

- Keep the background simple.
- Include a few props that will make the shot more interesting, but not distract from the subject.
- Make sure there are no distracting objects in the camera's view.
- Check that objects don't look like they're growing out of your subject.

8. Get great shots

- Only use your zoom to quickly switch between close-up and wide shots. You can edit out the abrupt zoom in your final movie.
- Try to get at least two types of camera shots for each scene you film: close-up, medium, or wide.
- Use extra video cameras so you can capture the same shot from different points of view.
- Anticipate the action so you get the shots you need.
- Record a few seconds before and after a scene so it will be easier to edit.

9. Capture candid shots

- Make your subjects feel comfortable and relaxed by talking and interacting with them.
- Try to be discreet.
- Bring along a digital still camera so you can incorporate still photos into your movie.

10. Be Prepared

- When you're finished filming, take the tape out of the camera and put it in "safe" mode.
- Review your footage to ensure you have all the shots you need.
- If you have to reshoot later, do so at the same time of day so the lighting matches your earlier footage.