



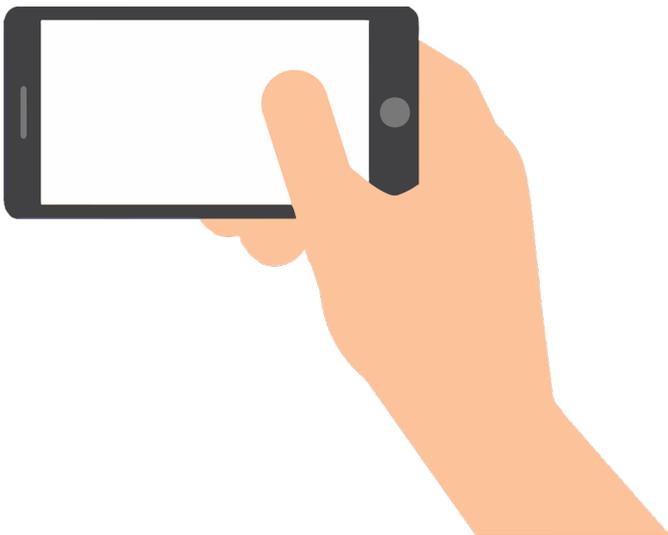
Tips for Shooting Videos at Home

Video has always been a powerful form of communication, but it has never been as important as it is today as 96% of Americans are being ordered to stay home. The pandemic has changed the way we do business, entertain ourselves and our children, and communicate with larger target audiences.

For county leaders, it means we have to find creative, engaging, and meaningful ways to reach our constituents.

It is important to get video right. People have short attention spans and lots of options, so they won't stick around long if they find your video unappealing. That doesn't mean you need to have a full production team, you can produce – and even edit – videos right on your phone.

The following are a few tips to help make your next video a success.



1. Don't Look Down

We've all seen it: a video or a web chat where someone is looking down at their laptop with the camera aimed up toward their nose. It's not a flattering look for anybody, so make sure your webcam or smartphone camera is eye-level, so you are looking directly into it.

Also make sure you are looking at the camera and not the screen. It's also very important that the camera isn't shaking or moving around too much. Things like selfie sticks and Pop Sockets are great, but you can also carefully place your phone on a bookshelf or table to get a great, stable shot.

2. Frame the Shot

Think about how you want this to look on the audience's screen. If you are recording on a phone, position your camera horizontally! Use the zoom feature on your phone or computer's camera if a shot is too wide. For close-ups, we tend to focus, naturally, on the face.

You don't want to be so close to the camera that your face is the only thing in the frame. Sit or stand far enough back that your shoulders appear in the frame and your chin (not your forehead) is in the center. A wider shot may be better if you are doing any demonstrations or movement.

3. Consider Your Clothing

It's important to dress the part. A serious delivery/message requires business attire. If it's a lighthearted fitness tips, casual logo attire (polo or T-shirt) is better. Branding remains key!

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4. Think About the Background

What is behind you matters and can convey a message, intentional or otherwise, about your brand. Right now, most content is being produced from home, and you have several options to ensure a thoughtful background. You could even consider putting your logo on a TV behind you, as long as the monitor is not creating a glare.

Also, for lighthearted videos, it's ok to have pets and kids run in and out the shot...it makes it more relatable for the viewers since we are all in this together.

5. Avoid Distractions

Programs on your computer or smartphone, especially the microphone, can pick up a lot of extraneous noise that can be very distracting. If moving too much or too fast, it may also pick up on heavier breathing patterns. Just be mindful and don't get distracted.

6. Think About the Hardware

Many of us today have the wireless earbuds which are ideal. But a tip for those that may rely on earbuds with cords: Instead of wearing your earbuds the way you would if you were on a phone call or listening to music, place ear bud with the microphone attached to it, in the opposite ear and loop the cord behind your ear (see image at right). This will create a more professional appearance than a cord hanging in front of your clothes.



7. Lighting

The best lighting is natural light. For indoor shots, indirect incandescent lights are best but other kinds of light can be fine. Avoid a spotlight on or above your face (or doing outdoor shots between 11 and 1), because direct overhead lighting can create some unattractive shadows.

Since most video is being conducted in the home, whenever possible, face a window, desk lamp, or other light source to ensure your face is well illuminated and clearly visible.

8. Be Yourself

People aren't expecting perfection, they are expecting a human. Don't be overly scripted or stiff. Talk to the camera as though you are talking to a person, try to picture their face, and be yourself.

If you're doing this live and make a mistake, correct it and laugh it off. If you're recording your video, you can always go back for another take.