

A Fresh Approach

10 top tips for taking great videos on your mobile or digital camera

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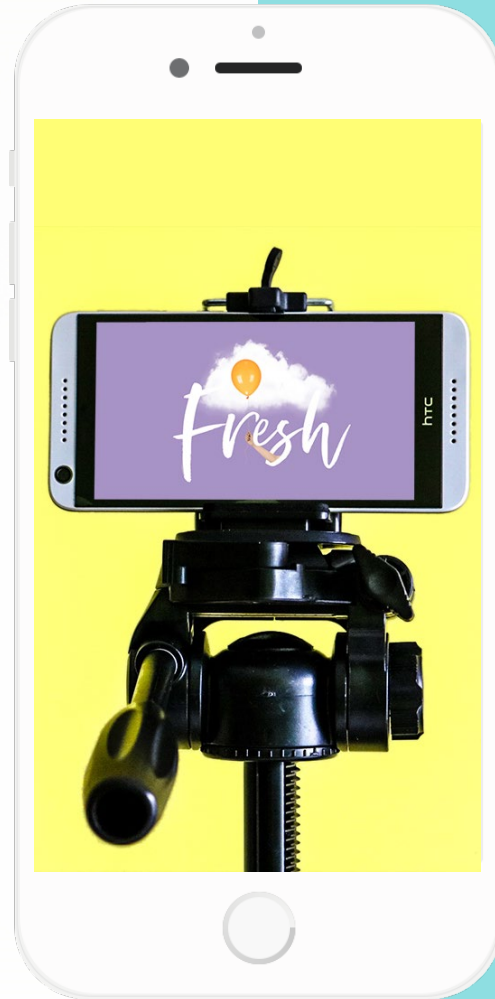
Video content is great – it attracts lots of online views, gets the message across quickly, and is easy and cheap to do yourself. However, a badly filmed or inaudible video is a waste of time – no one will watch it. The following pages have 10 top tips to help you create top-notch videos with a smartphone or digital camera.



01

Check it's OK

Before you interview anyone on video, get permission to film them. That means telling the interviewee how the footage will be used, and where it will be published.



02

Use a tripod

For professional-looking videos, it's best to use a tripod for stability. Most digital cameras work with basic tripods, and there are adapters available for phones.

We recommend using one that includes sound and lighting, like this:

Amazon US:

<https://amzn.to/38CauRg>

Amazon UK:

<https://amzn.to/32BMqtE>

03 Lighting

Natural lighting works well in most videos. Make sure your subject is facing **towards** a window for good lighting, and never put a window behind them or you'll be left with a silhouette.



04 Get your audio right

Place the microphone (or phone) as close to your subject as possible – about 15-20cm from their mouth (or check out our recommended tripod on the previous page).

Have your subject speak for two or three seconds at their natural volume as a test to make sure you've got it right.



Good sound rules to remember are:

- Avoid areas with too much background noise. If you can hear people in the background, try to include them in the shot, but make sure the main subject is the loudest voice by far.
- Turn off ambient noise like air conditioners and avoid shooting where you can hear loud music, traffic, or the ocean.

05

Plan your framing

The safest frame plan is a head and shoulders shot. Measure 5cm below the subject's collar to just above their head. Check that their head doesn't touch the top edge of the frame. Make sure your subject is talking directly to camera.

Never shoot vertical video

Computer monitors, televisions, and websites have landscape-oriented displays. Make sure you turn your phone on its side to record horizontal footage.

If the interview includes webcam or laptop camera footage, make sure your subject pays attention to how they are framed. If you're not using a tripod, raise the laptop on a stack of books to get the angle right.





06 Exposure and focus

Don't use digital zoom: While it's tempting to use the zoom feature to get a closer shot of your subject, it doesn't give good footage. Instead, put the phone or camera closer to your subject.

Smartphones and digital cameras automatically detect and adjust exposure and focus. While it's great for quick shots, if you're recording, you'll want more control.

Lock your manual controls down (so they don't adjust and leave your footage over-exposed and out of focus) by tapping on your subject in your smartphone's default camera app.

For interviews, focus on the face and adjust while filming.

07

Prepare and practise

- Have a script. This will help you cover everything in the right amount of detail and keep to the agreed time (as a general rule, the perfect time for videos is 90 seconds – anything over that, you risk people switching off. So, at the very least, cover your most important content in the first 90 seconds).
- Don't read from the script – you need to make eye contact with the camera, and you can't do that if you are reading from a script. Reading also makes the delivery more monotonous, less spontaneous. Instead, create cue cards you can glance at.



- Film a couple of dummy runs so you can feel confident in your delivery, and also check for any problems with sound and lighting.



08

Getting a great interview

If you are interviewing a colleague:

- Leave a couple of seconds of silence between questions. This will make it much easier to cut sections or rearrange the sequence when you want to edit later.
- Don't speak over each other. Wait for the subject to finish their response before moving on to the next question.
- If your subject makes a mistake, keep the recording going, have them take a breath, and go back to the beginning of the response they were busy with.



- If something is unclear, wait for them to finish that sentence, then ask them to repeat it.
- Encourage your subject to begin each response by rephrasing the question in the first person. This will provide context for each response, e.g. "What is the biggest challenge your team has overcome?" "The biggest challenge my team has overcome is..."



09

Check your footage



- When you are finished with your interview, but before you say goodbye, do a quick check of the footage you recorded. Has it got audio? Can you hear the subject clearly? Did the tripod slip and ruin the framing halfway through recording? It is much easier to ask the subject to record a second take with you at this stage than to set up a whole new interview!



10

Edit for success

Some basic editing will make your video more engaging. For example, you can:

- Add some opening and closing titles.
- Use frames to divide the content, introduce new topics or speakers, and create summaries.
- Add music. If you don't want it to distract from the audio, just use it for opening and closing sequences.
- We know that people often watch videos with the sound off, so subtitles that repeat key statements are a useful way of making sure that the message isn't missed.

Need more help?

You can always ask Fresh to edit your footage and add titles, animations, and music – we're here to help you create great communications!

Email getfresh@nowthatsfresh.com

