

Shooting Video Basics

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You always have your shooting notes with you (hold out your palms in front of you):

Left Hand Fingers

Thumb: **Action**

Index: **Reaction**

Middle: **Wide**

Ring: **Medium**

Pinky: **Tight**

Right Hand Fingers

Pinky: **Eyes**

Ring: **Nose**

Middle: **Sound**

Index: **Lighting**

Thumb: **Background**

If you have a left hand and a right hand, you can ALWAYS shoot good video!

6 Basic Shots

1. Action Wide (or Wide Action)
2. Action Medium (or Medium Action)
3. Action Tight (or Tight Action)
4. Reaction Wide (or Wide Reaction)
5. Reaction Medium (or Medium Reaction)
6. Reaction Tight (or Tight Reaction)

Shot Sequencing during Shooting

Always start with Wide and work your way to Tight. You want to do a Wide, Medium, Tight sequence for every shot you take, pausing your recording in between when you physically move yourself closer to what you are shooting (preferred) or using the camera's zoom to get in closer. Back in the editing room, you'll have lots of choices of shots to choose from.

Shot Sequencing Rules during Editing (only break for a GOOD reason or purpose)

1. Never repeat the same shot (i.e. a Medium Action followed by another Medium Action).
2. Never jump from Wide to Tight.

"Eyes on Third"

Always keep your subject's eyes on the top third line, whether you're 3 feet, 30 feet, or 300 feet away.

"Nose Room"

Always keep more visual space in front of your subject's nose in the direction they are looking. This is also called "Look Room" or "Looking Room". Visualizing Pinocchio is a great way to remember this principle.

"Two Eyes and an Ear"

Always frame an interview subject in 3/4 profile with them looking slightly off camera, preferable at a reporter. You should always position yourself right next to your reporter with the camera on the same eye level as the interview subject. This means for kids, you need to lower the tripod so the camera is shooting at their eye level.

"Cutaways"

Always change position after an interview and shoot footage of the reporter (where they were during the interview) repeating what they were doing during the interview -- listening intently and non-verbally responding to the subject's comments.

Interview Sound

Use a lavalier or shotgun microphone for your interview subject.

Natural "Nat" Sound

Record lots of target and ambient sounds for use during editing.

Monitor Sound

Always use headphones to monitor sound being recorded.

White Balance

Always power-up your camcorder toward a white sheet of paper each time you change lighting conditions.

Bad White Balance Results

Orange tint = Incandescent lighting

Green tint = Florescent lighting

Blue = Sunlight

"God's Shadow Box"

Overcast conditions - the best light to shoot in contains no shadows.

"Light Behind You!"

If there is a direct, bright source of light (like the sun), always put it behind you. Shooting into light rays causes flare spots on the lens.

"No Windows!"

Never shoot an interview subject with a window behind them. A bright background will cause your subject to appear in silhouette.

"No Walls!"

Never shoot an interview subject right up against a wall, including lockers (prison mug). Look for ways to add visual distance between your subject and the background.

Reflections and Distractions

Keep a close eye out for reflections and distractions that can be happening in the background during an interview. If you interview in a barber shop or a mall or anywhere else reflections may occur, make sure you cannot see yourself in the shot. People moving about normally in the background are not distractions.

Keep it Steady

Always use a tripod, brace yourself when shooting, or place your camera on an unmovable surface. The objects in your frame should move, not your camera.

Manual Focus

Always use manual focus before shooting by zooming all the way in, getting your focus set, and then zooming out to your shot before you begin recording.

"Firehosing"

Do not constantly pan back and forth.

"Coiling"

If you do need to do a pan, point your feet in the direction the pan will end and begin the shot with your waist turned.

Zooming

Only use a zoom when you can't interrupt the action to reset your shot selections or when you want to create a single, unique effect.

"Rack Focus"

Use to create a single, unique effect by having a near and far object in the shot and slowly changing focus from one to the other while recording.

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