

How To Record Better Video

Whether you are shooting a video of your kids, family vacation, or a birthday party, here are a few basic tips that can help you to improve the quality of your video.

Indoor Lighting: Most consumer camcorders compensate for low light situations by decreasing shutter speed (which causes more blurring in the image) and/or by increasing the chip sensitivity to very high levels (which causes visual noise in the image). Avoid these problems by opening blinds and turning on lamps and lights to give the room a better ambience.

Outdoor Lighting: Avoid shooting in direct sunlight, which causes harsh shadows and desaturates colors. Try to shoot in a shady spot, which will give you much nicer results.

Panoramic Shots: If you are recording a scene where you are panning and/or zooming across a distance, always do it slower than what you think is instinctively right, because when viewing it afterwards, it appears much faster than what you think.

Telephoto Shots: When taking telephoto shots (zoomed in), always mount the camera on a tripod or other sturdy base. Even if the camera has image stabilization, the slightest bump, jerk, or bounce will look awful on screen.

Digital Zoom: Turn off digital zoom, it looks bad! Many camcorders flaunt the fact that they have 2,000x digital zoom or some other ridiculous number like that. What you want to look for is “optical zoom”. With optical zoom, the lenses inside the camera physically move, changing the focal distance between them, thus changing the focal length (zoom level) without losing visual quality. With digital zoom, the lenses don’t move, the image is simply magnified by an image processor in the camera using a process known as interpolation. (Interpolation is the scaling up of the pixel size, in order to give the appearance of being closer. This makes the video look pixelated, noisy, and grainy.) If your optical zoom can’t get close enough to the subject, move the camera closer, but don’t use digital zoom.

Handheld Shooting: If at all possible, mount the camera on a tripod to avoid camera shake. If you choose to hold the camera in your hand, don’t hold the camera up out in front of you (unless the shot requires it). Instead, rest your elbow on your chest. This helps to steady the load-carrying arm and reduce camera shake. You can also rest your arm on a railing, bent knee, table, etc.

Lens Cleanliness: It’s a good idea to have on-hand some lens cleaning wipes (the kind for cleaning eyeglasses) in your camera bag. Fingerprints, water spots, smudges, and dust can ruin a nice shot, and if you are not prepared, it can be really disappointing. They are cheap, and can be picked up for a few dollars at your local drugstore. Get in the habit of cleaning the lens as soon as you pull out the camera to begin shooting.

A professional shoot by Market Vision Media is always the best choice for projects where a polished, professional video is needed, but for personal and family recording, these quick tips can help you improve dramatically the quality of your own video. Good luck with your shooting!

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