

# How to Make a Video: Part 2

## (1) Equipment

### Step 2: Filming your video (*production*)

#### 2.1 Equipment

##### 2.1.1. Cameras



There are a number of different types of video cameras you can use for filmmaking. All the major brands like Sony, JVC, Panasonic, etc. offer various models: from cheap and easy to handle cameras to advanced cameras for professional productions. Basically, the higher the budget, the better product you will have.

##### Camcorders (entry level)

*Advantages:*

- Small and easy to handle
- Not expensive
- All-in-one, compact package



*Disadvantages:*

- Image and sound quality won't be as good as with prosumer or professional cameras
- Usually not good image in low light conditions
- Image stabilization challenges.

##### Prosumer-camcorders

(between **professional** and **consumer** level)

*Advantages:*

- Good image and sound quality
- Even documentaries or TV news can be made with cameras like that



*Disadvantages:*

- Fairly expensive
- It won't fit professional needs

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### Professional Broadcast cameras

#### *Advantages:*

- Great image, lots of control and options
- Even popular TV shows, live sport events are made with cameras like that

#### *Disadvantages:*

- Expensive
- Because of its size, hard to carry, pack, transport
- Demands serious cameraperson skills



### Pro DSLR cameras

#### *Advantages:*

- Excellent image quality
- Lots of creative control
- Good in low light

#### *Disadvantages:*

- Stabilization problem when used with no tripod
- Take time to learn
- Requests various expensive accessories



### Smartphones



#### *Advantages:*

- Easy to use
- Small and portable

#### *Disadvantages:*

- Sound and image quality won't be as good as a video camera, particularly under demanding or in no-studio conditions



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### 2.1.2. How to use your camera (ten top tips!)

Most of today's consumer camcorders have common settings, controls and functions. Here are some useful guidelines for proper use of your camera.

1. After you power on your camera, first check your recording space in your media. FYI most cameras use external media for recording like SD cards (type of SD cards: nano SD, micro SD, SD).
2. Also ensure your camera battery is full. It is a good idea to have more than one battery!
3. The automatic picture settings on your camcorder will take care of most shooting conditions, for example brightness, contrast, light etc. If you want to go for a specific effect, you can try different picture profiles by adjusting the settings manually.
4. It is very important to have your object in sharp focus, not blurry, especially when filming interviews with people. As a beginner, you may want to use the auto focus mode on the camera.
5. Zooming in/out is one of the most used functions on the camera. It is great if your camera has/uses optical zoom. However, the digital zoom will decrease the quality of your video. Overuse of digital zoom could result in a poor quality video.
6. Most camcorders have built in microphones and places to plug in external microphones. Recording audio with an external microphone will improve the sound quality, but in good conditions a built-in microphone will also do the job.
7. Practice makes perfect - the more you film the better. Learn to use your camera in different conditions, indoors and outdoors, feel free to change spots if the picture quality is not right. Try, experiment, repeat.
8. Many beginners like to use the built-in special effects in the camera. Although these effects can be fun, use them sparingly - or even better, not at all. These effects are rarely seen as professional or modern while it could permanently

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change the original recording with no option to undo them. It is advisable to add any effects during editing.

9. You will learn how to make a better looking video and make the most of your camcorder if you watch your recorded samples, by transferring them to your PC/laptop or TV to check what you have filmed.
10. Always backup your video files — either to additional discs or to an external hard drive. Don't duplicate your files on the same PC.

### 2.1.3 Tripods



For many tripods may seem awkward so people often try to avoid using them. But if you are looking for better quality, steady, un-shaky shots you will definitely need a tripod.

#### What kind of tripod do I need?

This will mostly depend on how much your camera weights, how fast and precise movements should be, and on other important parameters like:

- The desired height of the tripod for filming
- Collapsed size
- Tripod material (heavy tripod equals precise moves)
- Tripod head type (ball head, pan/tilt head, fluid head...)

For beginners making videos with camcorders or smartphones, inexpensive tripods are available. Starter tripods are lightweight, plastic and quick to set up, which is a big advantage. These are only suitable for small, lightweight cameras. Other disadvantages are:

- They are not as stable as more professional tripods
- The camera movement, speed and precision are limited
- They usually do not so offer a higher position

As usual, also with tripods you'll get more if you are willing to spend more!



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### 2.1.4 Microphones



Badly recorded audio can ruin even the best video. Using quality audio recording devices can improve the audio in your videos and make it look

like a professional video.

#### Handheld microphone

Handheld microphones are popular with journalists and presenters, but you will normally need more than one person for filming. If held right, not too close or too far away from the person speaking, the sound quality will be good. However, they can make to look your video like a news report.



Handheld microphones can also be plugged into smartphones.



#### Lavalier microphone

A lavalier is a small microphone that can be hooked onto your speaker's shirt or lapel. These microphones, especially the wireless type, are a good option if your speaker is going to be moving around.

- Be careful to set it in the right position
- Ensure the batteries are full all the time
- Be careful it is not touched with anything during filming, for example by the hands, hair or clothing of interviewee



#### Shotgun microphone

Shotgun camcorder microphones can be mounted on your camcorder, so the microphone will pick up all the sound coming from the general direction in which it is pointed. Shotgun camcorder microphones work well when you want to record ambient sound. Or if you only have a single microphone and unexpectedly you find you have more than one speaker appearing in front of your camera. The disadvantage of using this type of microphone is that audio recorded this way will require a lot more work in postproduction.



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### 2.1.5 Lighting



People often underestimate the capabilities and effect of lighting in video production. The same subject or location can look much better if natural lighting rules are respected, or if some appropriate additional light sources are added.

When natural light is available, try to find places to film where the lighting is even, rather than those with high contrast. Natural light can help you when you don't have additional light sources, or where there is not enough light in a room. As natural light is hard to control, always be aware of random shadows – these are a big NO in filming!

When there is insufficient, patchy or too bright natural light you can consider using artificial lighting. Led light systems can do a really good job without having to spend a fortune. For the most common led light setup in video production you will need led light panels to provide backlight, a key light and a fill light.



A **Key Light** is the main light for filming your subject in the video.

A **Fill Light** provides support for the key lights and helps to 'fill' (neutralise) shadows created by the key light, or by other factors.

The **Backlight** separates your subject from the background.

### Reflectors

You can use reflectors to enhance natural light outside or indoor lighting. Reflectors bounce the light off the subject and can be used as key light or fill light.

Reflectors can be flexible or rigid. The flexible variety is light and easy to store, but is unstable in a breeze making the light waver on screen.

