



TRADE SECRETS

Shoot great video

If you want to shoot great video, look no further. We've compiled these tips from CNN video producers and editors that will help you do everything from frame your shot to use available lighting to your advantage.

Make sure to have plenty of material to work with

When taking video, the general rule is the more material, the better. You need to make sure to have lots of B-roll, or alternate material, in order to add dimension and secondary footage to a story. B-roll helps with cutaways and gives a much more fluid look to a package.

Use the rule of thirds

The rule of thirds, or "golden cut," is a compositional rule to help frame your shots in a more natural and engaging method. Since your TV monitor is a rectangle, you should visually divide it into horizontal thirds, and line subjects up a little bit off center. If your subject is directly in the middle of a shot, it will be wooden and stiff. But if you use the rule of thirds, you anticipate your subject's movement and allow for some background information to be in the frame.

Use a tripod

Many tripods are available at retail stores for \$15 to \$50, and they can be a worthwhile investment. They'll make your shots steady and sure.

Hold your shot

If you hold your shot for at least seven seconds, even if it won't need to be that long, you ensure that you get plenty of usable material.

Always think about the lighting

Have well-lit surroundings, and always use daylight whenever possible. Avoid fluorescent lighting if you can. And don't be afraid to move the shot – if you're in a poorly lit situation, ask your subject to move outdoors or to a better-lit area.

Even though it's video, don't forget the sound!

If you don't have sound with your video, your viewers are missing a huge part of the story. The more natural, or background, sound you can tape, the better. Try pointing your camera at the ground for a few minutes to absorb some natural sound at the event you're covering, whether it's a concert or a protest. You can use that as a bed for background sound later on when you're editing.

Avoid pans, zooms and dissolves

You may feel like getting crazy with some of your shots, but every video expert we talked to said video clips are simply better when they use static shots. If you must use a pan, it should be tight and quick. An overuse of dissolves tells viewers that there just wasn't enough material to make the story work. Static shots make a video look cleaner and more professional.

Bring an extra battery

Don't get caught with a dead camera in the middle of a great story. Other things to keep in your bag: extra tapes, a notebook and pen, and something to eat (just in case).



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