

# Tips for Video Capture

Video testimonials are an easy way to have a big impact, and are an engaging way to share your unique message. Below are some easy tips to help you record a great video.

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## Lights

### Light Source

Before filming, make sure you are facing toward the main source of light in the area. Opt for natural light if you can. If the main source of light is behind you, your face and body will be covered by shadows. For example, if you're standing with a bright window at your back, turn around and face toward the window instead.

### Glare

If you're wearing glasses, be sure to check if your light source is reflecting off your lenses. The easiest thing to do is to remove your glasses. Not an option? Raise your light source to reduce or eliminate the glare.

### Ring Lights

If your lights aren't flattering and you have limited window access, a ring light could be a great tool. These lights cast an even light, helping to reduce shadows on the face, giving your skin a smoother look and brightening your eyes. If you're planning on being in front of the camera a good bit, it may be worth the minor investment of \$20 to \$100+.

## Camera

### Grab a Friend

If possible, when using a smartphone have somebody (with a steady hand and from a safe distance) film you. This allows for a more natural camera angle. If filming by yourself, use a small phone tripod, or rig a secure set-up like leaning your phone against a sturdy surface to ensure a smooth video capture.

### Video Orientation

Think about where your video is going to be seen, and pick the frame orientation that works best for your video. In general, horizontal filming is more commonly used and is easier to format into more uses than filming with your phone upright (vertically).

### Video Framing

Be cautious to not cut off your head or sides of your body with the camera frame. If you can't see your whole head in the frame, neither can the camera. Aim to have your head in the top half of the frame, leaving room to add captions if needed. In general, you want to aim to have your camera sitting just above eye-level to capture your best angle.

### Background

It's best to have a tidy background that won't distract from your message. Avoid distracting objects, complex patterns (for example, a houndstooth pattern can be dizzying on camera), and intense lighting (avoiding overexposure and scary shadows).

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## Audio

### Record Indoors

Recording outdoors is risky for audio. Unless you're super confident in your environment and have control over the noise, stick to filming inside if possible to help best control your outcome.

### Checking Sound

When filming indoors, try to make sure no appliances, fans, HVAC units, etc. are running if possible. If they can't be turned off, then close as many doors in between the source of the sound and the room in which you are recording. Background noise can impact your audio, as well as be distracting.

### Using a Microphone

If you want your video to have the best audio possible, you can purchase an inexpensive (around \$15), small microphone that works with your smartphone, laptop and desktop. These can dramatically improve audio quality compared to your phone or computer microphone.

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## Recording

### Set Up Time

Allow yourself ample time to set up and make sure everything is running smoothly. Doing an audio and video test can help ensure that you're taking quality takes each time you press record.

### Eye Contact

When filming from a computer, avoid focusing on yourself in the webcam frame on screen. If eye contact is desired, look directly into the tiny camera source light. If you don't want to provide direct eye-contact, focus slightly to the side of the camera source.

### Practice Makes Perfect

Writing out what you want to say beforehand can help prevent pauses while recording that can make you nervous or stressed. It helps to record multiple takes: practice helps you be more natural and relaxed on camera.

### Be Concise

Keeping your video to 1-2 minutes is harder than you think. Being concise with your words will not only help you keep to an ideal timeframe, but it will help your story be as clear and impactful as possible.