

Top tips for filming yourself on a mobile phone

QUIETROOM

thinking / writing / training

The more of these tips you follow, the better your video will be.

1. Plan it like you would anything else

Jot down the headings of what you want to say. Like any communication, think about who your audience is, what they will be interested in, and what your main point is. Don't write a script, just bullets.

2. Practise what you're going to say

However silly it feels, practise out loud, ideally to someone else – either face to face or on a video call (call us if you need someone friendly!). Practise talking to the camera on your phone. Look directly into the lens. Talk to it like you're talking to a friend who is sitting right there: say 'I' and 'you' and speak at a medium volume. Have your list of bullet points to one side and use it as a prompt to move from one subject to the next, if you need it.

3. Split your filming into sections

If your video is more than a couple of minutes, split it up into sections and film each one separately. It's a lot easier to think about and record one section at a time. In the edit, the cut between sections can be smoothed over by adding a simple transition, like a fade to white.

4. Choose a quiet room with no echo

You need a really quiet room with no background noise, buzzing or anything else. Ideally choose a good size room with furniture and carpet in it, as the sound will be less echoey.

5. Use a mic if you can

If you can get one, use a lapel mic that plugs straight into your phone. The sound will be better. If you can't, it's even more important to choose a room that has no echo.

6. Face a window

Natural light is by far the best. Anything else will probably look a strange colour on film. Ideally face a window fairly straight on or slightly at an angle – depending on what's in your background. Don't be in direct sunlight.

7. Find a neutral background

Choose a fairly neutral background – a plain wall is OK, or maybe a wall with a picture on, or wallpaper, or an angle that includes a door or some furniture in the background. Nothing too busy or ostentatious.

8. Wear appropriate clothes

Choose muted or pastel colours and, probably, go for smart casual. Don't wear the same colour as the wall behind you. Avoid stripes or bold patterns as these can be distracting. You don't want people to remember your clothes.

9. Set up your shot

- You can be sitting down or standing, whatever you prefer.
- The phone should be about the same height as your nose.
- The phone should be 1 to 1.5 metres away from you. Don't use the zoom.
- If you don't have a tripod, prop the phone up on a shelf or pile of books on a table.
- Use your phone's main camera, not the selfie one.
- If possible, put a mirror behind the phone so you can see if you are in shot. Otherwise take some test shots to check your position.
- The shot should usually be landscape, but think about what will suit your channel's format. Include your whole head down to about your waist.

10. Check phone is silent and clean

Switch to airplane mode, and gently wipe the lens.

11. It's OK to do it again

Do as many 'takes' of each section as you need until you're happy with what you have said. It's OK to stop and start again without going all the way back to the beginning – just go to the start of the section.