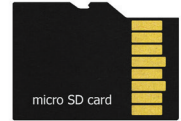


# Getting better video and photos with your smart phone

*Shooting video on your phone is easy: just swipe to video mode and hit record. But shooting **good** video requires a little thought and practice. Here are a few things that you can think about to help you shoot better video (and photos!) on your smartphone.*

1. **Make sure there's plenty of space on your phone.** If your phone gives you a choice to insert a memory card, take extras with you. No matter how much space you have, it won't be as much as you wished you had.



2. If possible, **back up your photos and video files** to make more space and have a safe repository. Back up twice – to your computer and an outboard SD card or hard drive. Check the files to make sure they transferred properly before deleting them from your phone.



3. **Shoot at the highest possible resolution,** in either stills or video. Some cameras offer 4k video. It eats up drive space, but if you can back up the files, shoot 4k. And, the higher the photo resolution, the more options available in postproduction. Always back up or transmit the files without reducing their size or compressing them.



4. **Hold or set up the camera horizontally** when shooting, otherwise it will look like *this* in the finished video. This is critically important for video, but also preferable for stills.



5. **Steady there!** Video is much more watchable when the camera is held steady – a lot of movies use “shaky-cam” techniques, but these are always carefully planned and executed by professionals, and only used where appropriate. Stick to “steady” and your results will be much better.



6. When shooting **panning** shots to reveal a setting, the shot works much better if it’s “justified” – if there’s a reason for the pan. If someone walks across the setting (or you can ask one of your colleagues to do it) you can create the pan by following him or her.



7. Light is important – **use natural light whenever possible**, and avoid using the LED “flash” to light either your photos or videos. Video is always better when there’s enough light. Avoid backlight: don’t put the light source behind the subject, and never put the light source in the shot – unless the light source is the subject of the shot (a sunrise or sunset). Don’t put the subject in the shade and background in sunlight, or vice versa.



8. **Don't use your camera's "zoom" feature** – all it does is reduce resolution. If you want the subject to be bigger in the shot, get closer to the subject.

original  
shot



camera  
moved in



digital zoom



9. **When shooting an interview, don't have the subject look directly at the camera.** Hold the camera to the side and have them look at you. Better yet, have them look at someone else just off camera while you make sure the shot stays steady and properly composed.

10. **Sound can be critical:** If you're shooting someone speaking (an interview, for example), have the subject close to the camera (and therefore the microphone!) and in a relatively quiet place if possible. An interview without clear, audible sound isn't much use.



11. Basic rule of composition – **don't put the subject in the exact center of the screen** – placing it slightly off to one side results in a more pleasing shot. In an interview, have the speaker face toward the wide side of the screen. Otherwise people will wonder what he or she is looking at off to the side.

12. **Don't use filters** to change your photos and videos. Keep them in their original state – if filtration is needed, best it be done later, in postproduction.



13. **Variety is the spice of videos.** If you want to show off the location where you're working, a selection of wide shots, close-ups and shots with foreground and background interest will tell the story better than a single shot.

