

Tips to make your home recording look and sound its best

Have a plan. Think about what you will say before you hit record. Take some notes or create an outline if that will help you stay on track. State the objectives of the video. Try to create videos that have longevity. Brief is best!

Find a good location to record from – Some things to consider

Audio

Think about where you will record and try to make sure it is quiet.

Minimize audio distractions the best you can – fan or AC unit running close by?, neighbor cutting the lawn?, TV or radio on in the background?, loud children playing nearby? barking dogs?

Background

Think about your background if you will be on camera. Make sure your face is well lit and avoid bright windows or lights **behind** you if possible. They will create a bright glare in your shot. If you have no other option, do your best to control the lighting. Pull the curtains or close the blinds.

Try to choose a nice uncluttered corner of your house. Generally, one of the best places in a home to record is the living room. It's usually a big bright room with nice backgrounds and depth that looks great on camera. Ideally have the camera face a wall with a few uncluttered items in the background, plants, books, pieces of art etc.

Lighting

Bright is best. Cameras usually look their clearest and best if the subject is in bright light. Soft natural light is the most flattering and a good location to record from is with light from the window shining on your face. If natural lighting isn't an option, place a light directly behind your camera/computer shining toward your face.

Try to avoid overhead lights directly above you as they tend to create unflattering shadows under your eyes and nose. In addition, lighting from below looks spooky and is unflattering as well. Bad or dark lighting can create a depressing or ominous feeling to your video.

Framing

The most flattering position for a camera is at eye-level, if you have a laptop place it up on a stack of books to achieve the right height. If you have to use a phone, make sure it's positioned securely.

When framing your shot, your head and shoulders should be the only thing in the frame. Avoid having your face in the dead center of your picture, it creates too much space above your head. Instead have your face positioned in the top half of the frame.

Appearance

Consider what you're wearing (at least from the waist up). Think about how you want to be seen on camera. Solid, soft colors, pastels, earth tones and jewel tones look best through the lens of a camera. Avoid detailed patterns, bright white and black if possible.

On camera presence

Look at the camera lens; that will make it seem like you are making eye contact with your audience. If you have any notes or reference materials position them high up on your computer screen near the camera.

Speak clearly. It's also hard to address a camera/computer with the same energy and expression as you would when speaking to a class or to someone in person. However, do your best to imagine your audience watching on the other side of the lens.

Try a test recording before you record all the content

Record a few minutes of your material in the exact place you plan to record. Wear what you plan to wear and use the tone and volume you will use during your recording. Then watch it back. Critique yourself. How does it look? Can I see myself clearly? Am I too rigid and monotone? Should I start with a smile? How is the sound? Can I hear everything clearly? Do I need to speak up or get closer to the microphone? Sometimes it's helpful to have someone else take a look and give some constructive feedback.