



## Shooting Your Own Video and Photography: A Step-by-Step Guide

Only have access to your phone or laptop? No problem. There are easy steps you can take to improve the quality of your photos and video recording.

### Capturing Photos on Your Phone:

You don't need a professional camera to take professional quality photos. Your smartphone can serve as a great resource for capturing any activity at home or on the go. We're here to help guide you on finding the best lighting, using the self-timer, and submitting your images to the BU photo team.

- **Find a partner.** If you have a family member or friend at home with you, have them take the photos. This will help achieve the best resolution photo. (Have kids at home? Now's their opportunity to be a photojournalist for a bit!) If you are alone, you can flip the camera, lean it on something, and set the self-timer.
- **Embrace your natural setting.** Ask your photographer to include any items you're using in the moment (laptop, whiteboard, etc.) No need to move things around to create a set, as we want to be able to see what you're working with and the space you're working in.
- **Don't strike a pose.** There is no need to pose for the camera. Just do the work you're doing and have your photographer, or self-timer, capture it while you work.
- **Pay attention to light.** If the photo subject is backlit by a huge window or light source, close your curtains or shut off the offending light and turn on a different one to avoid the photo subject being dark. Additionally, do not shoot using a camera filter and do not use autocorrect later.
- **Submission guidelines.** For all *BU Today* photo submissions, please copy [Cydney Scott](#). Send the photos in the largest file size and highest resolution when possible. Please include a brief description of what's happening in the photo, who appears in the photograph from left to right along with their BU affiliation (work title, graduation year, school, etc.), and the name of the photographer.

### Tips for Shooting Video:

It is possible to capture great video footage no matter what device you are using if you follow these simple guidelines. Most of these guidelines apply specifically to filming yourself talking to



the camera, but we've also included additional tips that will be helpful if you are asked to shoot footage of someone else.

- **Orientation is key.** If you are doing a video recording, no matter what you're shooting, please use **landscape orientation**, NOT portrait. If you're using a phone, make sure to turn it sideways, so that your video is horizontally oriented, not vertical.
- **Pay attention to light.** Find a location where there is plenty of light and make sure you are directly facing the source of the light. One trick to help you "find your light" is to hold your hand out in front of your face and spin 360 degrees, and then stop when your hand has the best light on it. That light is now coming from behind you, so make sure to turn around before you start filming.
- **Pay attention to sound.** If you have the option to choose between different locations, we strongly recommend choosing the location with the least amount of background noise. This can be particularly important if you're shooting yourself in a lab with lots of equipment running.
- **Pick a good angle.** Don't put your camera too low or too high. Your camera should be roughly level with your eyeline when you are looking straight ahead. This might mean you need to prop the camera up on books, a box, or a table to get a better angle.
- **Don't move around too much.** Place your camera on a stationary surface. If you need to hold your camera, make sure to hold it steady and at a consistent angle.
- **Speak naturally.** Try not to read directly from any prepared talking points. Written language can sound stilted when read aloud, and this can be distracting to the viewer.
- **Utilize other technology.** If you must prepare a statement in advance to read for the camera, try composing that statement using a dictation or voice-to-text app on your phone. Compose the statement off the cuff, then revise it only lightly. This will result in more natural-sounding language.
- **Shoot from different angles.** If you are filming a person engaged in an activity, make sure we can see the entirety of the person, but also get close! Shoot their hands by themselves. Shoot their face, even if it's not part of the process. Shoot the activity from behind the person. Get creative!
- **Shoot more than you think you need.** If you're filming a process that happens repeatedly, film it several times—not just once!



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- **Submission guidelines.** Sending your work to *BU Today*? Please email [Alan Wong](#) and [Devin Hahn](#). The video team is happy to provide guidance on file formatting and destinations to upload your video, such as a Google Drive, Dropbox, or an external server. For additional questions, please reach out to [pr@bu.edu](mailto:pr@bu.edu).