

How to film yourself with a smartphone

Preparation

Create a rough outline of what you plan on recording. It is best if you avoid reading a script, as this tends to take your eyes away from the camera, where you should be looking.

Find a quiet and well-lit location where you can stay for as long as you need to record. Where and when will you do this?

Before you do your first recording, make sure you also take time to test the tech. If you have a tripod and a microphone available to use for your phone, that's even better. There are cheap and easy to use options you can consider ¹.

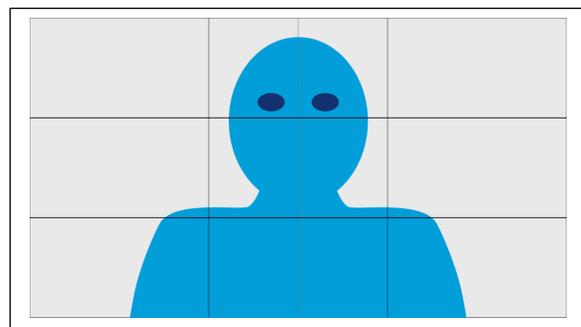
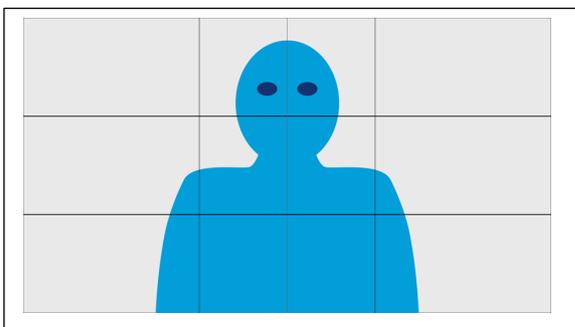
You will want to record test footage, to ensure the sound is working and the framing is correct. Using the guidance below, try and shoot 10-30 seconds of video and check the video and the sound (ideally transferring footage to a computer), to make sure everything is working properly.

Finally, before shooting, make sure you have enough storage: videos can be large, so clear some space beforehand or between recordings, by uploading the files to your computer or to a cloud storage. When filming yourself, use face detection and continuous autofocus if your camera/phone supports them.

Face front – framing

You can either film with your phone's 'selfie' camera i.e. screen turned towards you, or with the camera at the back of your phone towards you – which might give you better quality but could require setting up with the help of another person, or having them – quietly – stay behind camera.

Place your phone sideways, to shoot landscape. The camera should be placed at or around your eye level, and stabilised either on a tripod (ideal) or whatever you can use - I find a pile of books can do the trick nicely - make sure you do not obstruct the microphone, however. You will want to frame your head and half of your torso in shot, keeping your eyes on or above one third of the screen and leaving only a small space above you.



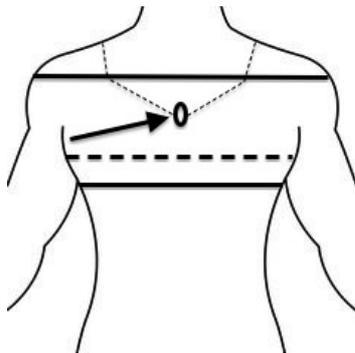
¹ Tripod option: <https://amzn.to/33J322k>

Microphone options for lightning input (e.g. recent iPhones): <https://amzn.to/33IPkwf> ; and for mini jack input: <https://amzn.to/2QWFdin>

When you film yourself you may feel self-conscious or awkward, but do not let that deter you. Also try to look straight into the camera most of the time (direct eye contact) and not the screen, even though it's really tempting. And please, try not to read notes while you are talking to the camera.

Sound and light

Audio is extremely important. The viewer has to be able to hear you! Try to use a quiet location – somewhere without the sound of a TV or radio, other people, etc. Set your phone to silent. Even when there's no apparent background noise, make sure you speak at an audible level. You're probably speaking quieter than you realise out of awkwardness, so just be sure to project your voice. If unsure, listen back to your recording and re-record if necessary (second time's a charm).



If you can, we recommend using a lapel microphone that you can plug into your phone and clip onto your collar or your shirt. You should try and place the mic 6 to 8 inches below your chin. When wearing the lapel mic, keep in mind that friction or bumping against the microphone can ruin audio so make sure your hair, beard, jewellery and clothing are not rubbing onto the microphone!

Shooting 30 seconds or so of test footage can help you make sure that's not the case.

Also keep an eye on your light levels. Natural light from a window is best but regardless of what they are, try and think about the position of light sources in your room. They should illuminate your face, so try and place them in front of you. Avoid shooting with a large light source behind you as your phone will try and make your face very dark to compensate.

Post-production

You will need to sign a consent form (attached to this guidance) otherwise we can't use the footage. If you are filming in locations like your university, hospital, or workplace, you will need permission in order for the footage to be useable. This usually only requires getting in touch with the communications team of the location - and we are happy to help with obtaining permissions should you have any trouble.

All clips in their entirety are to be sent to Multimedia team at BMA to edit. Please send the files to Matt Saywell and Alex Cauvi via WeTransfer – using the following link:

<http://bmacreative.wetransfer.com> .

Let the team know if you have any problems using WeTransfer and we will find an alternative. Please do not edit any footage yourself.

Any questions or issues, please email the multimedia team:

Matthew Saywell, Senior multimedia producer msaywell@bma.org.uk

Alex Cauvi, Multimedia producer acauvi@bma.org.uk