

HOW TO RECORD QUALITY VIDEO AT HOME WITH YOUR WEBCAM OR PHONE



Figure 1.

Professional video equipment will always be the best option for filming video, but not everyone has access to it. It's still possible to record high quality video without professional video gear.

The image on the left was taken using a phone and a small light as the main light source.

This guide will help you achieve this look!

Don't worry if you're unable to achieve all of these steps, just follow as many as you can!

STEP 1: PICK A LOCATION

If you are using a desktop webcam, you can skip this step since you won't really be able to move it elsewhere.

Ideally, you'll want a lot of space between you and the background. More Space = More Depth = Better Looking

It's also good to limit the amount of outside light in the room. Natural light can be great but in this case, it's better to avoid it or block it out and add your own light. Starting with a mostly dark room seems counter intuitive, but it gives you full control of your lighting situation.

Don't worry if you have limited space or are unable to start in a dark room. Although these tips can make your video better, not implementing them won't ruin your video.

In Figure 1, there is not a lot of space between the subject and the background.



Figure 2.

The top image has almost no space, while the bottom image has a basketball court worth of space. This has a huge impact on how things look.

STEP 2: SET UP YOUR CAMERA

Set up your camera at roughly eye level and sit slightly off to one side, taking up about half of the frame. The area from your chest up should be visible with a little bit of space above your head (see Figure 1). Normally, with a professional interview setup, you would face slightly to the side of the camera (see Figure 2) but since you are doing this alone, it may look more natural to face the camera directly.

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STEP 3: SET UP LIGHTING

Set up a light about 45° to the left or right of the camera. The reason for this is that if you put the light directly in front of you, this is what is called flat lighting. Everything is evenly lit, with very few shadows. This sounds like a good thing, and it can be, but for a more cinematic look, we want those shadows! (See Figure 3.)

If possible, you also want the light to come from above. Most of the light we experience comes from above (think the sun or ceiling lights), so to keep things seeming natural, we want this light to come from above too

Lastly, avoid mixing warm, yellow light with cooler white or blueish light. It will likely make the colors of the skin look strange or bad.

Bonus tip! Add a small light in your background to make things look nicer. In this case, you don't have to worry about what color the light is.

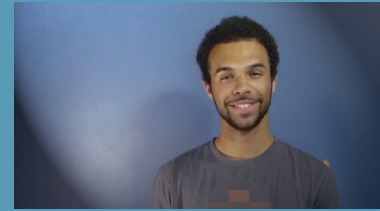


Figure 3. The flat lighting above is okay, but the dynamic lighting below looks more cinematic

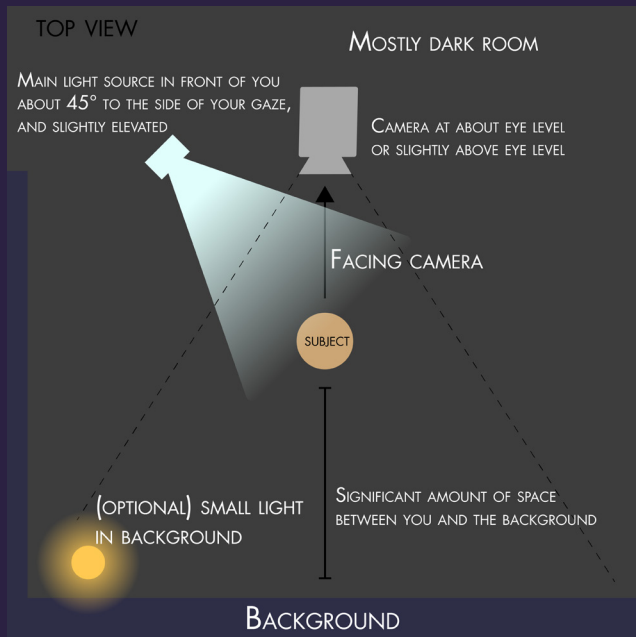


Figure 4. Here's roughly what your setup should look like

STEP 4: AUDIO

Audio quality can make or break a video. It doesn't really matter how good your video looks if the audio sounds like it was recorded with a toaster!

If you have a microphone, great! Set it up as close to you as possible while remaining just out of frame.

If you don't have a microphone, you can use your phone (assuming you aren't also using it as your camera). Just record the video like you normally would and record the audio to your phone, then synchronize the phone audio with the video in the editing program of your choice.

For more information or questions about audio recording, feel free to contact trev@bucketthatstudios.com

STEP 5: RECORD

You did it, you got through all of the technical stuff! Now it's time to record your video! For some, this part will be a breeze. For others, it might take a few tries to get things right. Speak to the camera like you would speak to a person and try not to overthink things. If you use a lot of hand gestures, don't waste energy trying to prevent them. Don't try to be serious if you're saying something light hearted. It isn't necessarily natural to be speaking to only a small metal box, so this part might take some practice. Once you're done recording, you're done!

Now it's time to edit, but that needs a whole different guide...