

PEEK AT THIS

TOP 10 TIPS FOR FILMING WITH A SMARTPHONE

You no longer need expensive cameras to create good quality video.

PEEKATTHIS.COM

ABOUT ME



Trent Peek

Independent Filmmaker

Trent has spent 10+ years working on an assortment of film and television projects. He writes about his experiences to help (and amuse) others.

If he's not working, he's either traveling, reading or writing about travel/film, or planning travel/film projects.

In this little handbook, you find a checklist of smartphone filmmaking tips to use for filming with a smartphone that will make your video stand out.



INTRODUCTION

10 TIPS FOR SHOOTING VIDEO WITH YOUR PHONE

Nowadays, nearly everyone owns a smartphone—and if you purchased your smartphone within the last few years, it most likely shoots great video.

It could seem obvious, but in order to film high-quality video on your smartphone, you must first learn how to... film. Shooting video with a phone isn't challenging; the methods are nearly identical to those used with other gadgets like camcorders, 8mm cameras, and whatever else you've used over the years.

FIRST POINT



YOU NEED GOOD AUDIO

After watching two or three educational YouTube videos, you'll be able to transform ordinary, boring footage into something entertaining and memorable. Sadly, this isn't the case with audio—if it's of poor quality to begin with, there's no easy way to save it.

Think about using a second device, such as a Zoom H1n or even another smartphone, to record audio while filming a video. The audio will be sharper and clearer, and you won't have to strain to hear what's going on later.

SECOND POINT



YOU MUST HAVE A CLEAN LENS

Don't make this rookie mistake if you want to shoot a video like a pro. If your lens has a smudge, a fingerprint, or water on it, your phone won't be able to capture the action, and you won't be able to edit the video later.

THIRD POINT



YOU NEED STORAGE SPACE FOR THE VIDEO FILES

Video files take up a lot of storage space on your phone. Choose a location to store video to free up space on your phone (like iCloud, Google Drive, or an external hard drive).

Storage is affordable these days, and you don't want to miss out on seizing a moment because you've run out of hard drive space on your smartphone.

FOURTH POINT



YOU SHOULD EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN USING DIGITAL ZOOM

Digital zoom is convenient and straightforward to use, but it has a drawback. When you zoom in, pixels and sharpness are lost.

When you digitally zoom into a scene, you instruct the camera to focus only on a subset of the pixels in your video, just as if you had manually zoomed in on the footage while editing.

FIFTH POINT



YOU WILL REQUIRE STEADY HANDS OR IMAGE STABILIZATION

While a tripod can always be used to stabilize your video, there are tools built into your smartphone that can correct the shaky video.

Apple and Samsung's latest smartphones have optical image stabilization, while Google's Pixel phones have digital image stabilization.

These apps make use of sensors in your phone to compensate for shaky hands, whether you're standing still or moving.

SIXTH POINT



LEARN ABOUT YOUR FRAME RATES

It's worthwhile to put forth the effort to learn about the advanced video settings available on your phone. The most recent iPhones have four video settings that vary in the number of frames per second and the number of pixels captured per frame.

They are as follows:

- 720p at 30 frames per second
- 1080p at 30 frames per second
- 1080p at 60 frames per second
- 4K at 30 frames per second

SEVENTH POINT



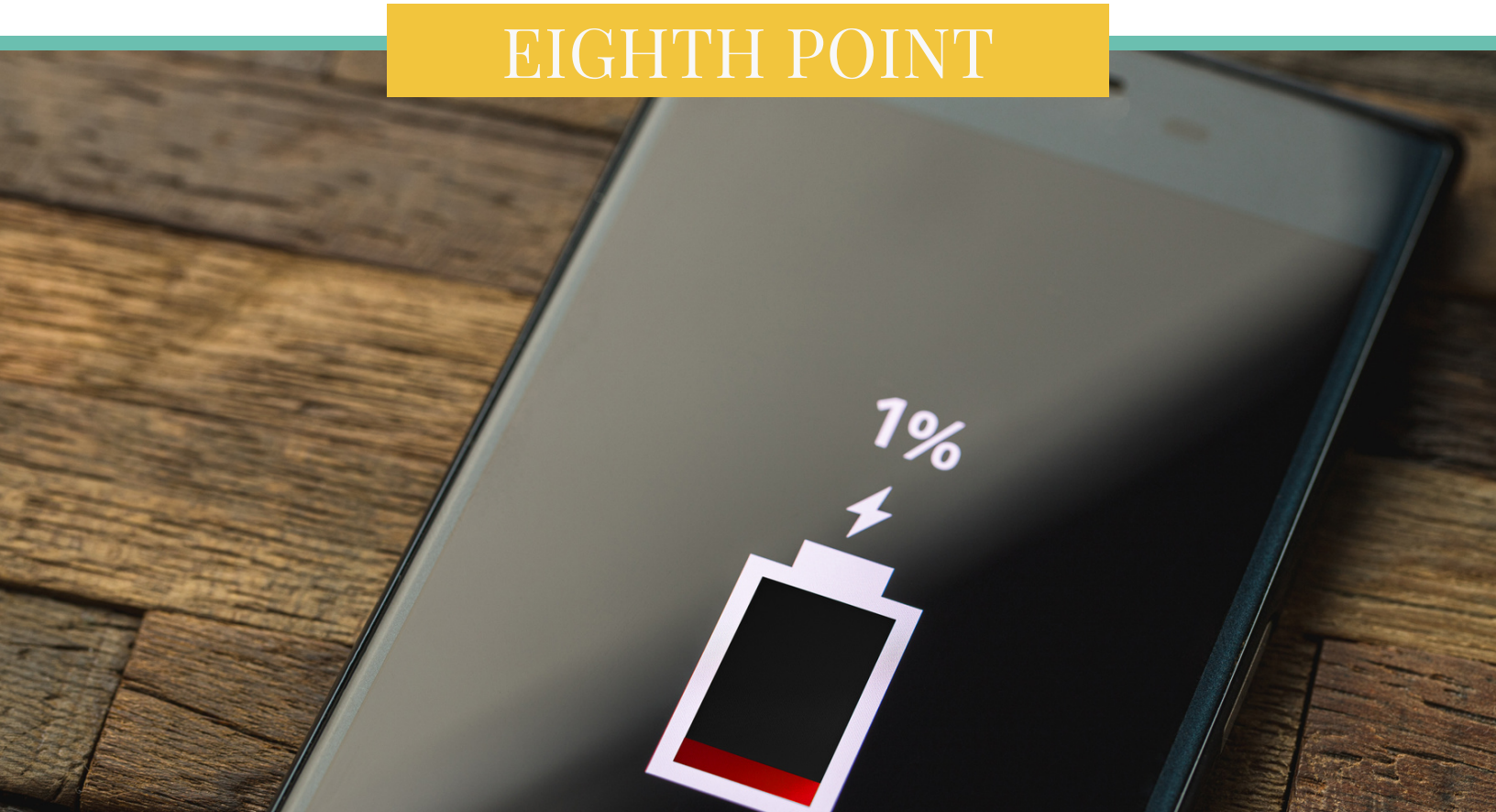
YOU SHOULD SWITCH TO AIRPLANE MODE

Even when you aren't actively using any apps, your phone performs a variety of functions. You don't want to receive a call or notification while using your phone as a video camera.

While shooting video, set your phone to airplane mode to avoid distractions and interruptions.

Turning on airplane mode will also save your battery life, preventing your phone from dying before you finish shooting.

EIGHTH POINT



YOU SHOULD ENSURE THAT YOUR BATTERY IS FULLY CHARGED

Make sure your phone is fully charged before you begin filming.

If you get a low battery warning while shooting, it will be difficult to focus on your work, and you may not be able to finish recording your video.

NINTH POINT



YOU SHOULD CONSIDER LIGHTING

A smartphone's built-in flash can help illuminate a dark scene, but it's better equipped for still pictures than video.

Consider filming during the day or purchasing an external light source for after-dark shooting.

TENTH POINT



VERTICAL VIDEO SHOULD BE SHOT WITH CAUTION

While more and more social media platforms are adopting vertical video for viewing, you might opt for this style of filmmaking, but always think about where you want your film to end up.

Think about the screens on your computer and television. They are oriented horizontally. If you shoot your video vertically, it may appear crooked on other devices.

Before deciding whether to make your video vertical or horizontal, consider how you want it to be viewed.

CONCLUSION



The best camera is the one you have with you. Many high-quality, high-priced cameras can shoot movie-quality videos, but they may not be in your pocket when the perfect moment arrives.

Learn the fundamentals of shooting video on your phone by experimenting in low-stakes situations so you'll be ready when the time comes.

Once you've mastered the fundamentals, you can begin experimenting with advanced options to find the settings, techniques, and storage solutions that are best for you.