

A guide to create more engaging selfie-videos

Note: the following guidelines are designed for the inexperienced people who wish to make a selfie-video. Experienced individuals may use different techniques and setups. Using a professional video maker is recommended in order to have a high-quality video. If you are using your smartphone, instead, please follow some useful tips as listed below.

Social media trends seem to be moving away from photo-based posts into video content and for all the good reasons such as straightforwardness, credibility and interactive communication. The task to develop selfie-videos for the world to see and hear can be a little tricky if we don't consider a few fundamental but very simple details. Below we will cover each point at a time, from start to finish, so that your next self-produced video looks and feels great and more importantly enjoyable and easy for you to produce.

Wardrobe and location

Wear whatever you want, considering that you're going out to meet some people, talk with them and have a social gathering. Your advantage here is that you can take all those people anywhere you want and give them the experience that you choose. You can either sit on a chair in your Livingroom or your garden and talk, or you can take them to the park or by the river near your house, or even somewhere calm in the city.

Light!

It is everywhere and in abundance. The natural Light makes everything looks great to our eyes, but the camera has a limited tonal vision, so we must be slightly careful when we point it on ourselves.

Filming outdoors: Avoid direct sunlight unless it is early morning or late afternoon, and the sun is hitting you from a low angle and not from above. While filming, try to turn your position in such a way that the sunlight fills your face and body from a slight angle resulting in less shadows, without disturbing your eyesight directly. **Tip:** Cloudy weather with diffused light is easier and ideal for outdoor filming in anytime of the day, on the other hand, afternoon sunlight can be more interesting if it's filmed well.

Filming indoors: If you want to film indoors, choose a place where the natural light from the window illuminates your face and body. You should be partially facing the window as if you're watching the birds outside, but slightly from an angle, and at a relatively close distance so that the light illuminates you well. Do a 5 second test video, modify any details you need and do another test. When the setup looks good to you then it will look great to everyone else who will watch it.

Ways to hold the phone

Selfie stick: The selfie stick helps you extend the distance between you and the camera for nicer framing and more interesting surroundings around you. **Tip:** don't extend it too far, you will lose audio quality of your voice and you will look distant. **Tip:** You can rest the selfie stick on a wooden fence while holding it to minimize excessive handshake and for a more comfortable grip.

Tripod: If available, a tripod is a great choice. Also make sure to keep it at a relatively close distance to retain the audio quality of your voice. If you are filming with your phone you need to use a (smartphone tripod adapter) to hold it in place on the tripod.

Handheld: Not recommended for videos longer than 10 seconds as it will make you feel tired and will result in shaky videos and low or high angle distortions of the face.

Household items: Those are best if you rarely make videos. Use some books to elevate your phone and put a small weighty item on top to rest your smartphone on. Make some tests and height adjustments for best results (discussed below). To avoid the phone slipping, you can use *synthetic rubber putty* like (Pritt Multi Tack) to fix the phone base on the book under it and fix it flat on another book behind it.

Camera height and distance: For best results and to avoid face distortion, the height of the camera during filming should not be higher than your eyes nor lower than your mouth. Keep it at nose level if you can. The distance from your face to the camera should not be shorter than 50 to 60 centimetres and not farther than 1.5 meters away.

Where to look: To create a stronger connection with the viewers, avoid looking at the screen, instead look at the camera lens. If your camera/smartphone is fixed on a tripod or placed on books or held by a friend, it is advisable that you sit or stand at a slight angle of approximately (40°) from the camera, but with your head turned towards the camera. If you are filming handheld, it is advisable to turn both your head (not your body) and your hand which is holding the camera slightly to the right or to the left of approximately (40°), and film your face from a that angle to avoid the Mug-shot effect where the face and the body are straight in relation to the camera.

In case someone else is filming you, let them use the back camera since it has higher resolution and your video will be a little sharper, but that is not a problem at all, many famous content creators use the front lens of their smartphones, substance is what matters.

Sound/voice: Avoid covering the microphone with your hand while filming handheld or if someone else is filming you. Keep the camera at a distance no greater than 1.5 meters away from you, otherwise you will look distant to the viewers, and your voice will not be well

recorded. If you are shooting outdoors in the garden or elsewhere, avoid noisy places and windy weather because wind and/or noise will create interference over your voice. Let your voice be heard by talking clearly and adequately.

Body language: Relax and feel comfortable while filming. A good tip is to imagine that the camera in front of you is someone that you enjoy talking to like a friend or a family member. This is how professional actors do in front of the camera!

During filming, feel free to change body position slightly if you're sitting or standing and you can use hand gestures the same way as you do while talking with a person in front of you. In this case lift your hands while gesturing and let them be visible in the frame.

You can move slowly while talking, you can even walk in the garden or in a tranquil neighbourhood. In this case make sure that the person who's filming you remains at a close distance not farther than 1.5 meters away from you while walking, and let your voice be clear enough to reach the camera. If a car or motorcycle passes by it means you must repeat the video!

Camera setup and cleaning. Wipe the camera spot with a clean and soft cloth before filming. Greasy spots or fingerprints over the lens will create softness and haze on the image. Avoid super wide-angle or zooming the lens, instead use the standard lens set-up.

Framing: Avoid your head touching the edge of the frame, instead keep a little distance between the top of your head and the edge of the frame. If you're wearing glasses, clean them well and try to find a position that has minimal reflections on your glasses.

Background/foreground: Avoid white backgrounds and white tops/shirts because the camera will be fooled into thinking that it is too bright and will make your video look darker than average. Avoid wearing a black or very dark top as the camera will be fooled into thinking that it is too dark and will make your face look too bright.

Moving: If you decide to be moving/walking while filming, avoid spinning in mid-circles as it will make some viewers feel dizzy. You can move or walk slowly while filming but use the (Image stabilization) option if you have one. It is advisable to let someone else film you in case you decide to walk during your video.

Focus: Make sure your camera is focusing on your face instead of the background.

Resolution: It is advisable to open the settings inside the camera app and choose the resolution of HD, or FHD (Full HD) for video. Lower resolution can make the video look low in quality, and higher resolution can make the file size extremely big and may fill most of your phone's memory and takes a long time to upload on social platforms.

Format: Choose the format of filming depending on the platform you wish to upload your video on. For most platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook the vertical format is ideal.

Testing: When you are all set and before you begin, make a test video and watch it carefully to make sure that the camera is focusing on your face (not the background) and your voice can be clearly heard, and the overall image looks nice. Most importantly enjoy while doing your video because after all it is a social interaction!

