

Tips for Shooting on Your Phone (or Camera)

Elizabeth Shaw | Senior Video Producer
LSU Division of Strategic Communications

1. Turn your phone SIDEWAYS

- Film horizontally and not vertically to achieve the most natural-looking and cinematic footage.
- *Exception – if the platform you are premiering your footage is mainly vertical, shoot **vertically**.

2. Keep it steady

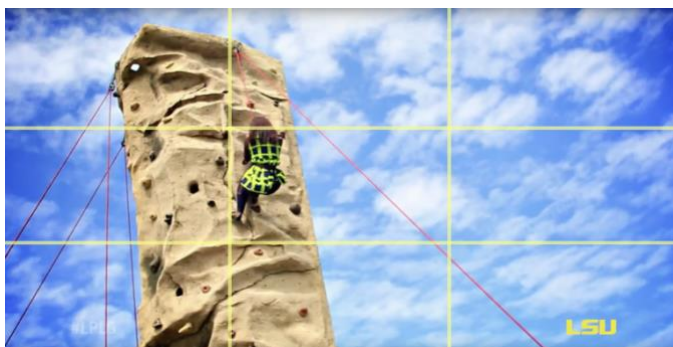
- Use **both hands** to film with your phone.
- **Lock your elbows** into your body – your body will then act as a tripod and you will have much more stabilization in your shot.
- Want **motion**?
 - o With locked elbows, move entire upper body with camera while keeping your feet locked to the ground.

3. The Rule of Thirds

- Divide your image up into **nine** equal parts, like a grid (most phones have a grid feature you can turn on).



- The theory is that if you place points of interest in the intersections or along the lines that your photo becomes more balanced and will enable a viewer of the image to interact with it more naturally, rather than a center-framed shot.



4. Work WITH light, not against it

- When outdoors, try and find a position where the sun is evenly lighting the scene you want to record.



This interview was shot completely with available light only, coming in through windows in front of the interviewees. Windows can act as a natural “soft box” to diffuse some of the harsh sunlight.

- If some parts of the shot are looking too bright or too dark, **change your position or angle** to achieve the shot you want, but now you’re working with the light and not against it.

5. Strive for shot variety

- A video made up of many shorter clips often makes a more interesting watch. You can highlight smaller details, not just the overall scene.



Close-up



Wide-shot

All of these shots were taken within a 3-foot radius of each other.



Medium-shot



Close-up

- Think about what other shots you can get to complement your **master shot**. It can be as simple as shooting your subject both from **close up** and **further away** or getting someone to repeat a performance (like a cartwheel) so you can capture it from a variety of angles.

6. Manually set exposure and focus

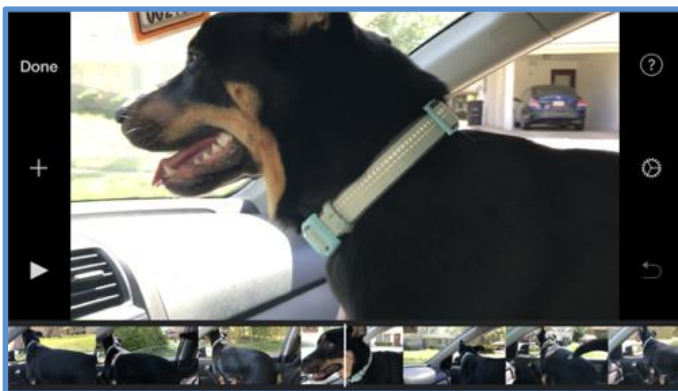
- Press and hold an area of the screen to activate the **AE/AF Lock** function.
- With a smartphone, the most important is the **AE (Auto Exposure) Lock** because you don't want the smartphone to keep changing the exposure while you're filming.

7. Check your mic

- Move close to your subject so as to avoid picking up as much **ambient noise** as possible.
- Make sure your hand placement is not covering your phone's microphone. Hold the phone delicately so as not to cover up any mic spots.
- Turn your phone to **airplane mode** to avoid any notification noises while recording.

8. Editing

- For basic, user-friendly editing apps, try:
 - o iMovie
 - o Premiere Pro



iMovie provides easy-to-use linear and non-linear editing interface with a variety of transitions, text options, and the option to import music for your video. It is available in the App Store for free.

Any additional questions? Feel free to email **Elizabeth Shaw** at **eshaw3@lsu.edu**. Happy filming!