



*Centre for Innovation 2021*

# Improve Your Home Recordings



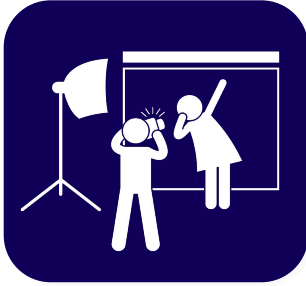
**CENTRE FOR  
INNOVATION**  
Leiden University



**Universiteit  
Leiden**

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*Graphic Design: Bing Tang*

# 6 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RECORDINGS



1. CAMERA SETUP



2. LIGHTING



3. SOUND



4. PRESENTATION



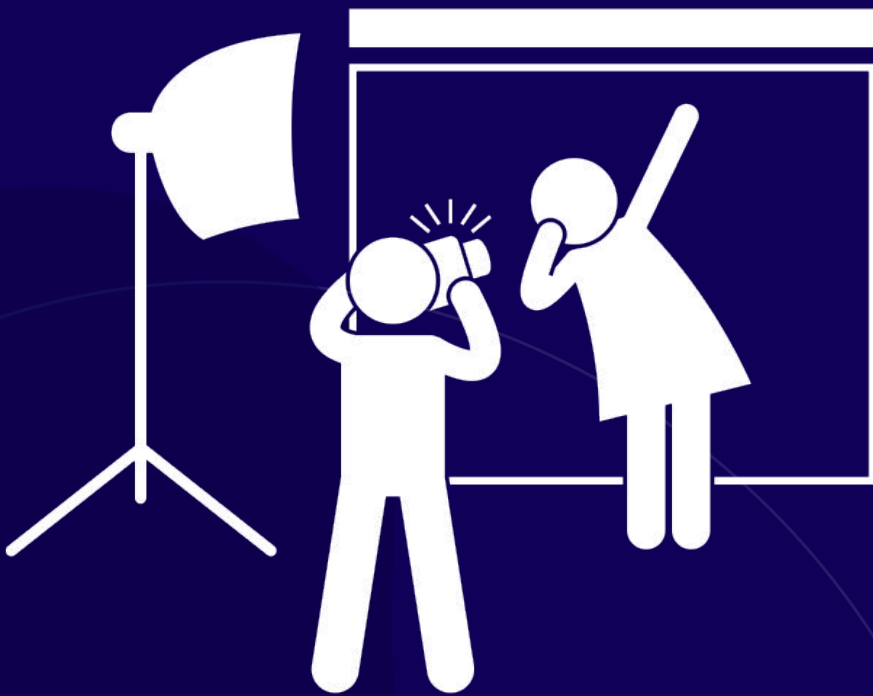
5. ROOM SET-UP



6. REPRESENTATION

REFERENCES

1



# CAMERA SET-UP



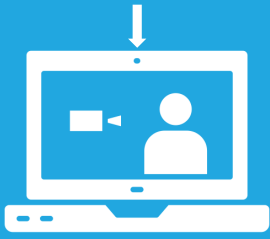
# Rule of thirds

The basic principle behind the rule of thirds is to imagine breaking an image down into thirds (both horizontally and vertically) so that you have 9 parts.

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

The space you gain on the side can then be used to add additional content, such as text or images.





VS



VS



# Choose the right camera for you

1. Built in webcam
2. Good external webcam or
3. A smartphone

*(smartphones have higher video quality)*

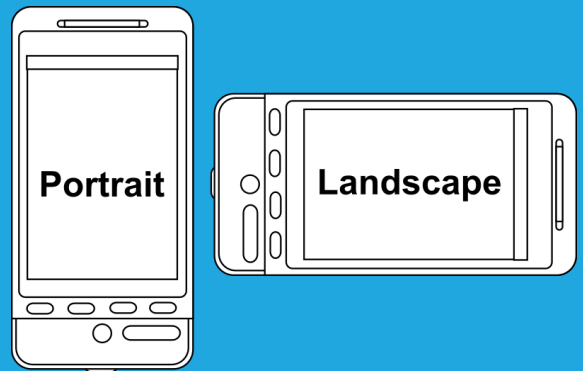
When choosing a smartphone try and use the back of the camera, it's better video quality

*it might take some practice regarding framing and setting up.*

Consider a tripod or come up with a creative way to stabilize your camera.

Remember to make the camera eye level.



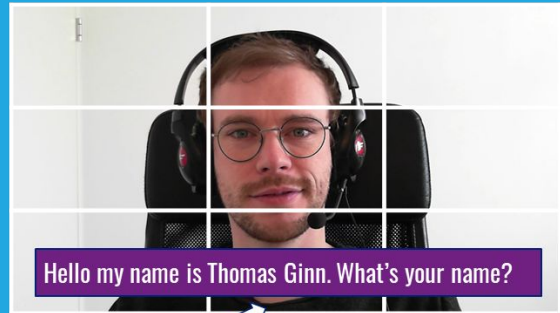


# Portrait or Landscape mode

Choosing landscape or portrait mode, depends on the platform you will share the video on. If it is a vlog and most people will watch it on their smartphones, this can be a good option. But if you are opting for multiple viewing platforms, it is best to film your video in landscape mode.

With landscape mode you can add more content such as adding text or additional images if you like.



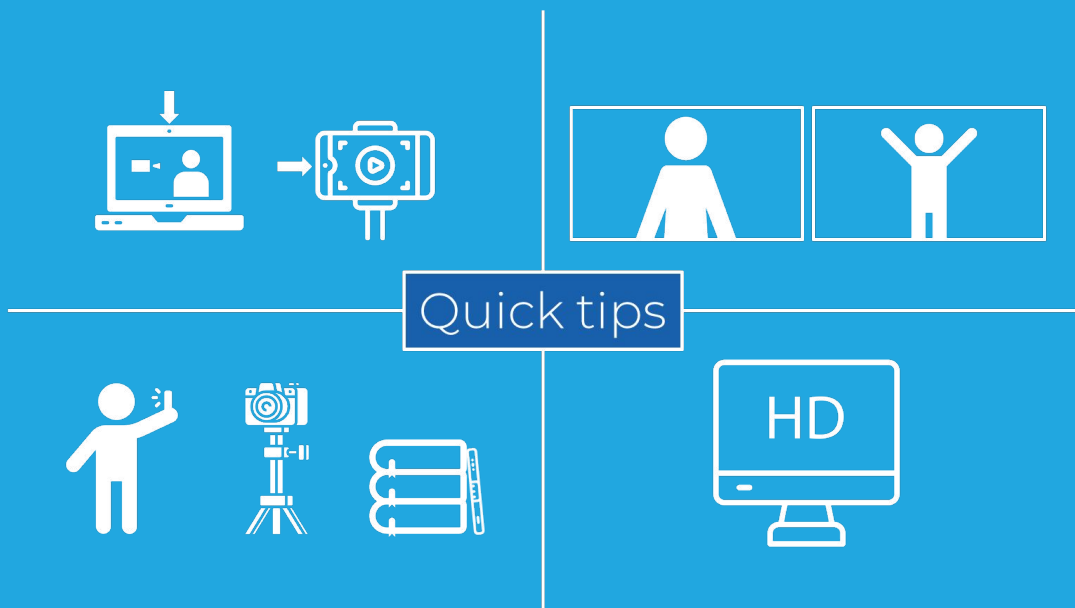


Could use better framing!

## Other framing options

- Position yourself in the middle if you are not going to add extra information or if you don't have a nice background to compliment you.
- If you are going to use subtitles, make sure you give enough space for the text that will appear so that it does not end up appearing over your chin.





## 4 more tips regarding camera set-ups

1. Look into the lens and not at the screen - the same goes for your smartphone.
2. Distance to camera / consider framing (*do you like to use your hands? If yes give yourself more space*)
3. Handheld vs tripod (stability, focus) - *laptop on your lap is not a good idea!*
4. If you are using equipment that has setting options, make sure you are using the correct video settings (*resolution, frame rate etc.*) The platform you will upload the video to has the recommendations somewhere written down.







# Camera upgrades

You might be surprised at what cameras you have lying around, but if the options are that great these are some upgrades to consider.

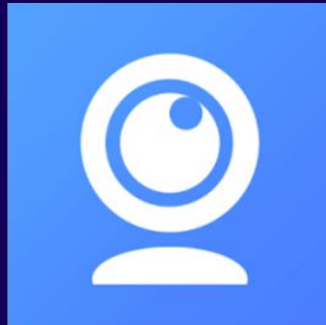
- Better webcams  
(Such as the [Microsoft Lifecam Studio](#) or [Logitech HD Pro Webcam C920](#))
- Compact cameras with video function
- System cameras with video function
- And of course, the GoPro





If you can, try and rent the gear before you go out and buy it. [Gear booker](#) and [Budgetcam](#) are good options.

## Equip yourself



[HOW TO?](#)

[DroidCam](#)

[iVCam](#)

Third party Apps that turn your phone / tablet into a webcam



2



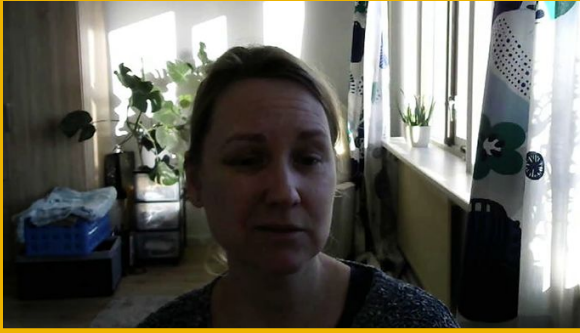
# LIGHTING



# Good day for filming

Filming in front of a window on a **cloudy day** is perfect for a filming day. Here the light is perfectly diffused.





# Exposure

## Left

Here you see that there is too much backlight. This causes the footage to become under-exposed on the face, adds slight grain and shows harsh shadows.

## Right

Here is a correctly exposed set-up with light coming from the front and there are no harsh shadows.





# Ingredients for good lighting

- Make sure you have enough light; more is generally better.
- Try and use diffused light, from a point source (lamp or sun)
- Don't overexpose !
- Don't underexpose !
  - *Overexposed or underexposed footage is impossible to fix afterwards – this could mean a re-shoot.*





# Examples of diffused lighting setups

Diffuse your light if it's harsh, for example by:

- using a semi-transparent curtain,
- a reflector board (bounce board) or
- a large piece of opaque paper.

But keep in mind, lights get hot, so don't burn anything in your DIY setup.





# Buying or renting lights to improve your recording

## ***A few things to consider first***

1. *Make sure you choose the correct bulb, there are different color options you can choose.*
2. *Are you going for natural or artificial lighting?*
3. *Choosing the time when you will be filming determines the additional light(s) you might need.*
4. *Keep in mind that there could be unwanted reflections or shadows that are enhanced when using lighting.*

- The top left light is called a ring light, this is very popular amongst makeup vloggers and youtubers.
- The light in the middle is a led light – this is what reporters and documentary filmmakers like using.
- And the third light is a soft box lighting setup. –professional use.





3



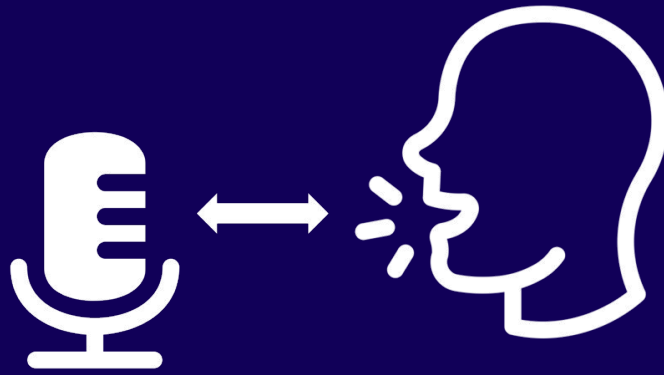
# SOUND



## Different audio options

- Computer audio (*shrill, hollow sound*), this will pick up all the surround sound.
- Headset – popular with youtubers (*much better, closer sound, can be a bit muffled, and will be in camera view*).
- USB mic (much better sound), semi-professional, and way better than computer sound recording.
- XLR mic (professional audio) – expensive
- *Lapel / Lavalier microphone (professional audio) -one that you wear on your clothing - expensive*





## Distance to mic

- Closer is always better
- But too close, will cause clipping or pop sounds.
- Also, the mic might be in your shot, so framing is key if you want to avoid it.
- The farther away, the more the mic needs to pull up the volume. This increases noise and echo.
- The trick here is to find a middle ground. (*do a sound test!*)





# Treating the room

- If you really want a quiet room, you need to treat it.
- Soft, dense surfaces can really help here. Mattress fort!!!
- Only using a blanket can muffle the sound and not sound good at all.
- And again, do a sound test to make sure you are happy with the result.





# Sound surroundings

- Before you start recording, listen carefully to your surroundings.
- Eliminate any noise sources which are under your control.
- Learn to be flexible and plan around noise which isn't under your control. If possible, asking them when they are finished.
- If that's not possible, tell your audience what the noise is and why you can't fix it.
- Or re-schedule if it is possible and record on another day.

4



# PRESENTATION



Choose the right time of the day, when you have maximum energy, concentration and confidence when you decide to record your video.



Take your time. Break your script into smaller sections. Take a rest in between. Drink plenty of water.





Have a concrete outline for your video, instead of improvising. It's best to have talking points, instead of a full text. - It's difficult to remember.

If you MUST use a script and a teleprompter app.

[www.easyprompter.com](http://www.easyprompter.com)



You'll get better with practice. Ask students, friends, colleagues for feedback. It can feel a bit intimidating, but you will learn a lot from it!





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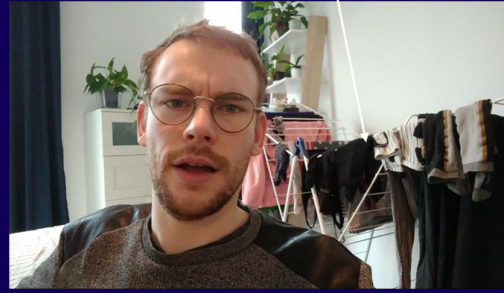


# ROOM SET-UP

Random crap



Clean undies



Cute but  
distracting

## Examples of bad backgrounds

- Keep it neat and protect your privacy!!!
- You don't need to film in front of a white wall, just make sure wherever you are that it is tidy.
- And if you want to take it to the next level, make sure what you show in the background compliments you and the topic you are talking about.
- Animals are awesome 😊 BUT they are distracting to you and the viewer. (*kids – that is an entire discussion on its own*)





## Examples of good backgrounds

- In the first image you see a calmer, neater background. (*notice the nice fruit basket 😊*)
- In the second image it is not as calm, but it is relevant to the context discussed in this video. (*notice how this was filmed on a cloudy day? – even light distribution*)





# Using props

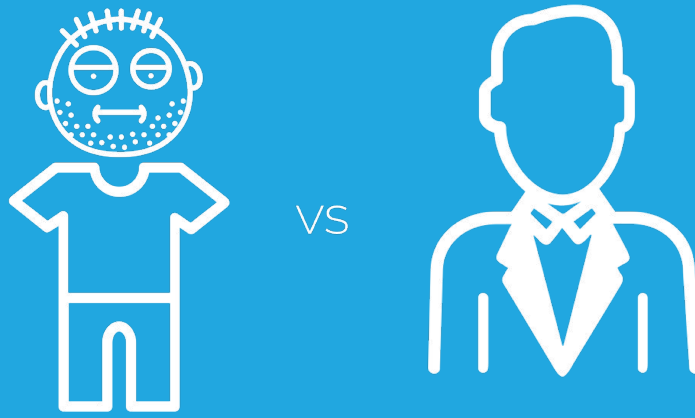
- We encourage you to use props in your video.
- They make your video come alive and offer possibility for storytelling.
- Props serve as a visual aid and help the student remember content better. Looking at something in a 3-dimensional perspective is sometimes more beneficial than a standard 2-dimensional image.
- Props also help keep you focused on what is important instead of being distracted by the fact that you are on camera.
- Show don't tell.



6



# REPRESENTATION



## Dress code & hygiene

For goodness's sake brush your hair!  
Put on some ironed clothes.  
Get yourself looking neat. If you show your audience you don't care, why would they?

Dress for success. Remember *your video will be online forever!*

How will you represent yourself?

Oh, and have you washed your face or brushed your teeth? We can tell.







You're welcome 😊





# Posture

Don't slouch, project energy. If you radiate energy, your audience will pick up on it and stay captivated.

You can also opt for sitting on a nice couch, in front of your desk or even better stand when you record. Choose the most comfortable position for you.





# RESOURCES & REFERENCES

## Inspirational videos and other resources

Michael Wesch

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChaQjN6tViOSPvY9LLaq\\_Mg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChaQjN6tViOSPvY9LLaq_Mg)

Gia Goodrich

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YO6utfQm7Bq>

Leiden Video Toolkit

<https://www.staff.universiteitleiden.nl/vr/video-toolkit?cf=service-units&cd=administration-and-central-services>

5 Reasons to Start Using Vertical Video on Social Media

<https://www.wyzowl.com/vertical-video/>

### Taking sound to the next level

Izabelle (*targeted at singers but a lot of relevant context*)

<https://blog.landr.com/recording-vocals-mistakes/>

### Third party Apps to record with:

DroidCam turns your phone/tablet into a webcam for your PC.

<https://www.dev47apps.com/>

iVCam same as the DroidCam

<https://www.e2esoft.com/ivcam/>

<https://www.wired.com/story/use-your-phone-as-webcam/>

# Inspirational videos and other resources

## Taking video to the next level

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[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChaQjN6tViOSPvY9LLaq\\_Mg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChaQjN6tViOSPvY9LLaq_Mg)

Gia Goodrich

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YO6utfQm7Bq>

Leiden Video Toolkit

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<https://www.wired.com/story/use-your-phone-as-webcam/>

# Equipment to get you started

## Cameras

Webcams (*Microsoft / Logitech*)

<https://www.microsoft.com/accessories/en-in/webcams>

<https://www.logitech.com/nl-nl/webcams>

Video / compact cameras

<https://www.techradar.com/news/best-vlogging-camera>

## Smartphones

iPhones are rated one of the best cameras for video recording, but every day there are new phones coming out with excellent video quality capabilities. Use what you have. Guaranteed they can give you HD quality results.

(1920x1080 (1080p) or even 1280x720 (720p) )

## Microphones

Blue Yeti

<https://www.bluemic.com/nl-nl/>

Devine USB Microphone

<https://www.bax-shop.nl/microfoons/devine>

## Lights

Ring lamp (*used for vlogging*)

<https://ringlampkopen.nl/>

<https://filtergrade.com/top-5-lighting-setups-for-vloggers/>

# Equipment to get you started

## Equipment you can rent

### Cameras / Microphones / Lights

If you don't want to invest in gear, RENT.  
Also, if you want to try before you buy this is a good way to go about it.

<https://budgetcam.nl/>  
<https://www.gearbooker.com/nl>

### Teleprompter / Autocue

<https://www.easyprompter.com/>  
<https://promptsmart.com/>

# Image Sources

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Page	Image
3	studio photography by Gan Khoon Lay from the Noun Project
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5	Finger Frame by Gilad Sotil from the Noun Project
8	Vlogging by tezar tantular from the Noun Project person by Tara from the Noun Project person by asianson.design from the Noun Project Selfie by Adrien Coquet from the Noun Project Tripod by Amethyst Studio from the Noun Project Stack of Books by Adib Muhammad from the Noun Project phone side by Berkah Icon from the Noun Project HD by Vectorstall from the Noun Project
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13	Light by Numero Uno from the Noun Project cloudy by Kieu Thi Kim Cuong from the Noun Project
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16	Ringlamp, courtesy of coolblue.nl Led lamp, courtesy of cameranu.nl Lichtset, courtesy of kamera-express.nl

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22	Speaker by Adrien Coquet from the Noun Project
23	Happy Alarm Clock by Akshar Pathak from the Noun Project Happy by Adrien Coquet from the Noun Project Presenter by Oksana Latysheva from the Noun Project the rest by Виталий Плут from the Noun Project water glass by Nook Fulloption from the Noun Project
24	bullet list by Rflor from the Noun Project <a href="#">Teleprompter. Västnytt.jpg</a> , Wikimedia Commons practice by ProSymbols from the Noun Project feedback by Nhor from the Noun Project
25	studio by Giuditta Valentina Gentile from the Noun Project
27	Evolution Today MOOC, Leiden University
28	Evolution Today MOOC, Leiden University The Truth in our Bones MOOC, Leiden University
29	female user by Andy Ivandikov from the Noun Project biker by Olyn LeRoy from the Noun Project

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30	Clothes by Vectors Market from the Noun Project Grubby by Ben Davis from the Noun Project formal user by Navaneethakrishnan R from the Noun Project
31	Still from <i>Cast Away</i> , 20th Century Fox & DreamWorks Pictures, <i>fair use</i> Still from <i>Twin Peaks</i> , Lynch/Frost Productions et. al., <i>fair use</i> Spinach in teeth, courtesy of Denver Energy Donald Trumps hair waving in the breeze, courtesy of
32	WORKING LAPTOP by IconTrack from the Noun Project conquer the mountain by Gan Khoon Lay from the Noun Project



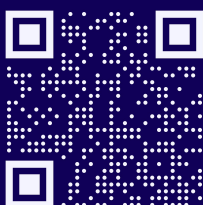
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