

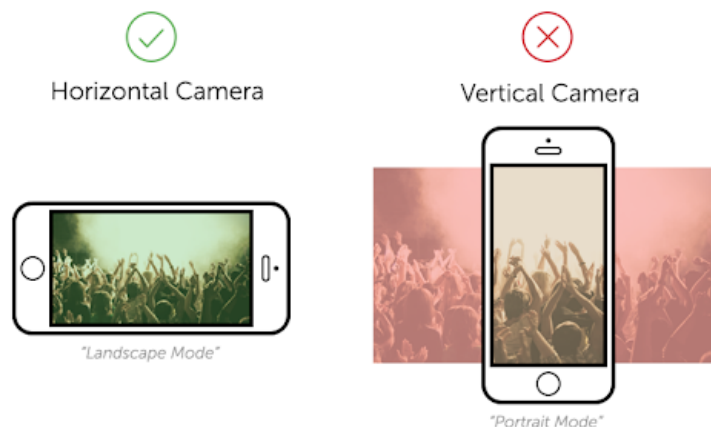
# SMARTPHONE FILMMAKING - Hints & Tips Guide.

## CHOOSING YOUR BACKGROUND

- The choice of your background and the space you film in is a really important consideration. Aside from the matter of lighting and sound (discussed later), your background is going to be a significant element within the frame. As far as possible, aim to film in a space where there is some depth to the room. This works much better than trying to film yourself positioned against a blank wall (Fig 1).
- Avoid cluttered or distracting backgrounds and try to remove objects from the frame that may appear as though they are sticking out from the top of your head.
- Add some personality to the frame - a sofa, a painting, some flowers in a vase or a bookshelf in the background are great ways to dress your 'set'.

## FRAMING AND COMPOSING YOUR SHOT

- When filming, please remember to rotate your phone into the Horizontal / Landscape position as opposed to the Vertical / Portrait position.



- It is really important that you are able to stabilise your phone and keep it as **steady** and as **horizontal** as possible. If necessary, prop your phone up on a stack of books or anything else suitable you may have to hand.
- When setting up your shot, sit centrally within the frame and don't allow too much space between the top of your head and the top of the frame. If your phone is capable of displaying an on-screen grid, you

should position your eyes so that they are level with the top line of the central column of the grid (Fig 2).

- From an eye-line point of view, it looks better if you are looking directly into your camera lens as opposed to looking at yourself on-screen. Maintaining eye contact with the lens really helps to connect and engage with the viewer.
- Position / prop / stand your phone so that the camera lens is at (or just slightly above) your own eye level.
- Ensure that you are definitely in focus. To do this, tap on your smartphone's LCD screen to lock the focus onto your face.
- Make sure that your smartphone lens is clean and free from fingerprints!

## *LIGHTING YOUR SCENE*

- Brightly lit environments are always going to produce the best results. Try to go for as much natural daylight as possible by choosing a filming location with lots of windows and light that falls on your face. Failing that, get creative with any available lights you may have and try to ensure that the frame (and your face) are evenly lit - Aim to avoid harsh shadows wherever possible.
- Lamps and desk lights are a great alternative if the room has minimal natural daylight.
- Avoid backlighting where possible - Bright light sources positioned behind you (such as a window for instance) can cause the camera to expose for the background, leaving you the subject in silhouette. Although some smartphone cameras are good at reducing the effects of backlighting, try to limit this as much as possible.

## *RECORDING YOUR SOUND*

- Whilst the quality of smartphone microphones can vary greatly, it is always important to record your video in a quiet place. Aim to do this indoors where possible, don't sit too far from the phone itself and reduce the background ambient noise as much as you can.
- Try to film your content in a slightly smaller room that has both carpet and lots of soft furnishings (curtains, sofa etc). This often works better than a kitchen for instance where the sound is able to bounce off lots of hard surfaces and thus create an echo.

- Earphones with an integrated microphone or wireless AirPods could be used to record better quality sound.

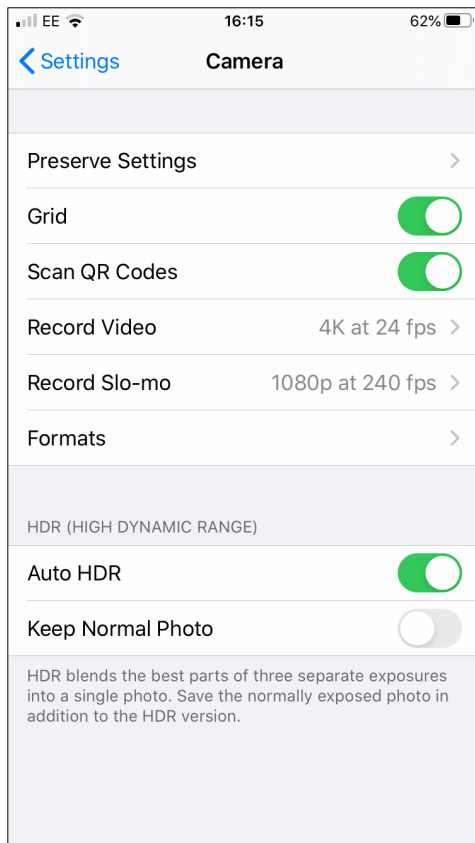
## *CAMERA SETTINGS AND FILMING*

- The rear camera on a smartphone is better quality and has a higher resolution than the front-facing 'selfie' camera. If you are able to film without needing to see yourself on-screen (or can film with the help of someone else or a mirror), then using the rear camera will almost always give better results.
- Don't use the digital zoom on your phone as the quality of the recorded footage will be reduced.
- Spontaneity comes across really well on camera but when a person can be seen to be reading from a script, they naturally break eye contact with the lens and the delivery feels less authentic and engaging. If possible, try to learn your content without the need for a script or a prompt. If you are reading from longer passages of text where it is not possible to memorise, make it obvious that you are reading by having your book / notes visible on-screen at least once.
- If you are less confident about talking in front of the camera, nothing beats a few rehearsals!
- Where possible, after you have pressed the record button and are looking into the camera lens, you should film for at least 3 seconds before you start talking and 3 seconds after you have finished talking (whilst still looking into the lens). This is to help with the editing of your footage. And please remember to SMILE...it really does make a big difference to the way in which the audience engages with your content.

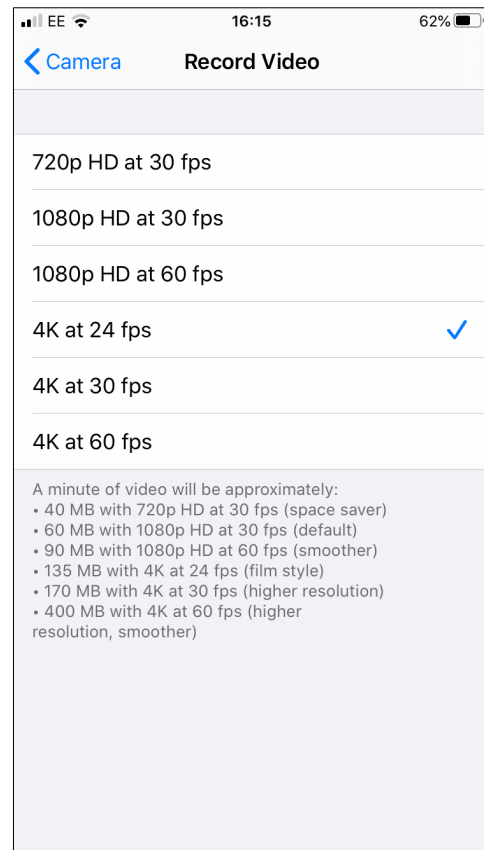
*The following section is the technical bit and relates only to more recent iPhones. If you have an android phone or an older iPhone with different settings, then don't worry. Simply leave your phone to do it's own thing...9 times out of 10 it will do a great job!*

Please make sure that your smartphone camera is set to record at a resolution of at least 1080p HD and if possible 4K would be preferable. To set this on an iPhone, go to SETTINGS and then scroll down to CAMERA. Then within RECORD VIDEO, select the '4K at 24 fps' option if you have it. If not, then select '1080p HD at 30 fps'. If neither of these settings are present within your version of iOS, then please select an option closest to these settings (Fig A and B).

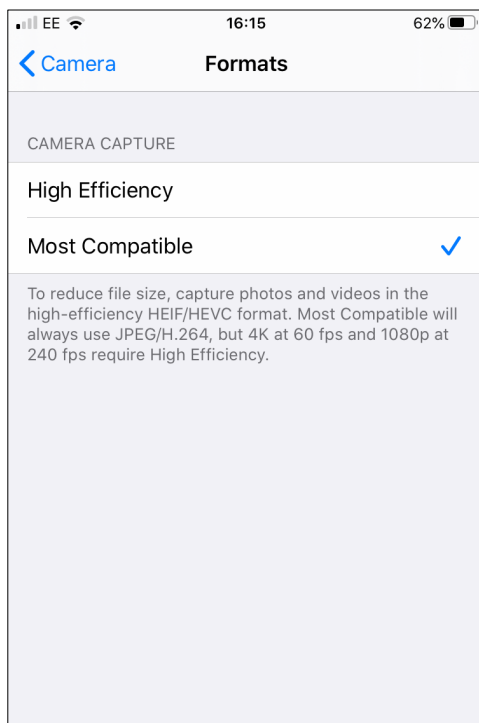
Please also ensure that your capture settings are set to 'Most Compatible'. In order to do this, go to SETTINGS and then scroll down to CAMERA. Then within FORMATS, select 'Most Compatible' from the 2 different options (Fig C).



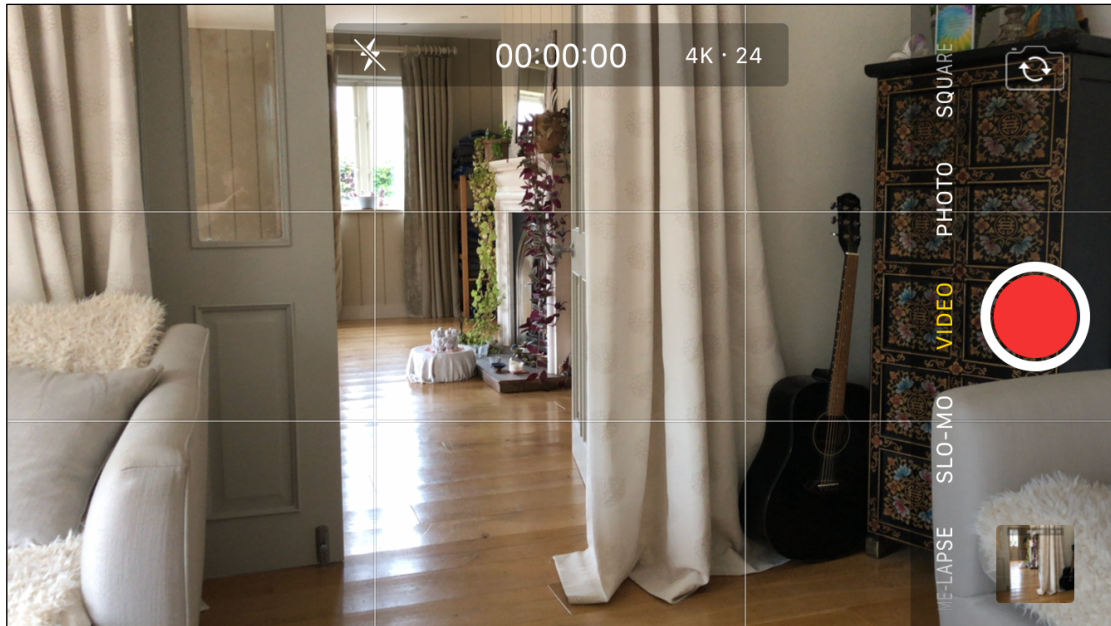
**Fig A.** When in Camera Settings on an iPhone, you can turn on the **Grid** settings, change the **Record Video** mode and change the record **Formats**.



**Fig B.** If possible, select '4K at 24 fps' from the **Record Video** menu. If this is not possible, then select '1080p HD at 30 fps'.



**Fig C.** If possible, select 'Most Compatible' from the **Formats** menu.



**Fig 1.** This is an example of a framing setup that has a lot of depth to the scene. There is also a lot of natural daylight entering the frame and as you can see displayed, the iPhone's **Grid** lines have been turned on and the **Record Video** mode is set to '4K at 24 fps'.



**Fig 2.** This is an example of a framing setup that also has a lot of depth to the scene. In this example, you can see that the interviewee has been positioned in the frame, such that their eyes are level with the top line of the central column of the grid. The camera lens has been positioned at eye level to the interviewee and there is just enough 'head room' between the top of the interviewee's head and the top edge of the frame. The interviewee is also well lit from natural daylight coming from the left hand side of the frame.