

Skip's Method for Steady Hand-held Camerawork!

(excerpt)

Know your camera and all relevant (and irrelevant) features: Read the manual.

Testing

Always test camcorder first and last in a shooting day.
Put the system away, clean and ready to record.

Stabile Position: it's physical

Default position is alert even when resting, but relaxed, non-aggressive, not tense (relaxed, loose & flexible), not unsupported

Exercise: stand comfortable, knees bent; elbows supported by your body; breathe gently

Exercise: imagine you are a stiff metal tripod; relaxed but sturdy, balanced, stabile.

Stabilizing w/ objects: table, signpost, etc.

Exercise: practice, review tape very carefully

In general, keep the camera straight. Angled look can be used for effect.

Exercise: practice keeping camera straight, angled without looking thru viewfinder.

Your body is more flexible than a tripod.

Exercise: camera reaching, stretching, twisting bending

- **Exercise:** hatha yoga camera: recording on one leg, toes

Sharpest focus, zoom in on the subject and focus carefully, then zoom out.

Exercise: practice zooming in, focusing, snapping out

Frames and angles – hi, low, eye level, c.u., mid, LS, VLS

Exercise: practice, test, review very carefully

Wide angle, telephoto, zooming (when to zoom), when in doubt, zoom out. Wide angle is easier to be framed, steady, focused.

Exercise: practice snapping out without looking

Exercise: practice pulling focus

Standing by: always ready to turn on

Exercise: practice recording without looking; review very carefully

Exercise: practice setting up to record without looking

Camera Body Language – It's physical and mental.

Casual vigilance: a camera is not a gun; totally focused but acting fuzzy and disinterested

Exercise: reconsidering the camera - as book, baby, still camera; hand as eye, ear

Camera Movement:

Your body's the best dolly.

- **Exercise:** pan/tilt exercise: follow the bouncing ball exercise (wide & telephoto)

Moving camera/smooth camerawork; when in doubt, zoom out.

Exercise: floating camera

Exercise: steady camera – follow the leader video walk

Action motivates camera movement.

Exercise: use subjects' movements to motivate pans, zooms, tilts, walks, etc.

When it's better to walk in than zoom in and vice versa doesn't mean zooming out.

Make sure you don't accidentally hit record button, especially when walking (unless you want to watch shots of your shoes).