NZCGS Guide to Filming at Home

We invite you to create a short video to accompany your blog piece. It’s easy enough to do this at home, but you might find the following tips helpful if you’ve never filmed yourself before.

**1. Location: BRIGHT & QUIET**

Find somewhere bright and quiet to film. Bright light improves picture quality and a quiet location ensures minimal sound interference. A position indoors, next to a large, closed window is ideal. Make sure the daylight is in front of you, shining on your face. You want to avoid having the light behind you, as this will make the image too dark. If you have a floor or table lamp, you can also use that to improve the lighting: place it in front of you and adjust it to head level so that it lights up your face (don’t shine it from above, below or behind you).

**2. Background: CLEAN & INTERESTING**

The background will be a strong feature in your video, so you want to design it carefully so that it looks professional. You can film anywhere as long as you limit what can be seen. Aim to film yourself sitting at a table or desk in front of a simple but interesting backdrop: a bookcase, a map, a plant, or some pictures. Avoid cluttering the space and if in doubt, remember less is more.

**3. Camera: YOUR SMART PHONE**

The more recent smart phones have excellent inbuilt cameras, and many professional film makers now use these extensively in their work. You need to use the rear camera (not the selfie cam!) to ensure the best picture quality. The first step is to clean the rear lens and place your camera in landscape mode (i.e. horizontal rather than vertical). Ensure the microphone is on and unimpeded, and switch off any fans, noisy air conditioners, any other distracting background noise in the room.

**4. Tripod: ESSENTIAL & EASY TO MAKE**

Whether you’re filming yourself alone or have someone assisting, you’ll need a tripod to keep the camera completely still and in the right position during filming. (If you don’t have a tripod, you can make one in two minutes using a paper cup. [Here’s how](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vj5vUz1FFho)). Secure your phone horizontally in the tripod and position it so that it shoots from just above you. You might need to place it on a piece of furniture, and you might need to stack some books or boxes on top of the furniture to make sure the phone is at the right height. If you’re alone, it can help to place a mirror behind the phone so that you can see what’s being filmed.

**5. Positioning: THE RULE OF THIRDS**

You’ll need to be in the correct position throughout your video, so take time to ensure your set up is right. You can use your phone camera’s inbuilt features to help. When you switch the camera into film mode, it might automatically show a grid, allowing you to follow the rule of thirds. Position yourself sitting up straight (filming from the waist up) with your head in the top third of the grid, either over to the left or right (where the horizontal and vertical gridlines intersect) and your torso in the bottom two thirds of the grid. Avoid positioning yourself right in the middle of the frame. If you’re on your own, you can use a prop - like a pillow – to represent yourself so that you can check the grid position before filming. (If the grid isn’t showing on your phone, go into camera settings and switch it on. You’ll find it under ‘Composition’.)



**6. Content: BE ENGAGING**

Now you’re ready to make your five-minute video. Plan ahead so that you know exactly what you’re going to say, and have some reference notes on your lap. Don’t read from a script, as that’s boring for your audience. Instead, look directly into the camera lens and speak slowly, clearly and conversationally, picking up on the points from your blog that you think are most interesting and important. You can have as many attempts as you like to get it right. Keep playing each new video clip back so that you know what’s working and what isn’t. Use the opportunity to check the sound and picture quality, and, if necessary, adjust your background or setup.

**7. Editing: i-MOVIE SOFTWARE**

You might decide your five-minute video clip is perfect as it is, or you might decide it could do with some editing. If you transfer your video onto your computer, you can download and use the [free i-MOVIE software](https://www.videowinsoft.com/imovie-movie-maker-mac.html?gclid=EAIaIQobChMImoiun8SG7gIVjq-WCh1oQQp9EAAYASAAEgIhUfD_BwE) to edit it (note there are different versions for Macs and PCs). You might want to remove certain sentences from your video, shorten it overall, or show a series of clips from it that you consider to be the highlights. Note, though, that you can’t use i-Movie to fix problems with your initial setup (such as camera-shake, poor lighting, or poor positioning) without reducing the overall video quality. Focus on getting your initial set up right and avoid over-editing.

**8. Finally: SEND US YOUR VIDEO!**

Once you’re happy with your video, please send it to us. The video will be too big to send as an email attachment, so please use the free ‘[We Transfer](https://wetransfer.com/)’ service. It’s very simple and quick to use, as you’ll see from [this short guide](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SgN1cfXLwE).

***-Please note NZCGS only publishes videos that have good sound and picture quality***

***and suitable, relevant content-***