

CAMERA TECHNIQUES

TOOLS

BETTER VIDEOS



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Camera Techniques

This is where you get to play with your camera. The thing with video is to have a child-like curiosity, to play try new things, to try new angles. There are definite ways to make your videos stand out and I will go through these in more detail from the book.

There are hundreds of different techniques I can talk about however I want to focus on just a few so you can remember what I talk about here. I have used photographs to highlight the examples. I use the exact same principles with video. The trick is to choose one or two styles in a video, not use the whole lot at once. You don't want your video to look like a pizza. (That's the best description I can think of!)



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Video Backgrounds

Video blog backgrounds are very important to the overall effect of your video. You don't want to have a really busy background as people will be more interested in what's going on behind you. Also look at the composition and make sure it helps you to be seen in a way that matches your brand. If you look at your background and don't love it, ask yourself why not? What would make it better? Can you create a little set at home? Look at these for some inspiration.



White is the most common and people can just focus on you.



This is a brick wall with graphics over the top that I designed in photoshop.



This is a night shoot with nice mood lighting and an out of focus background so you don't focus on the background too much.



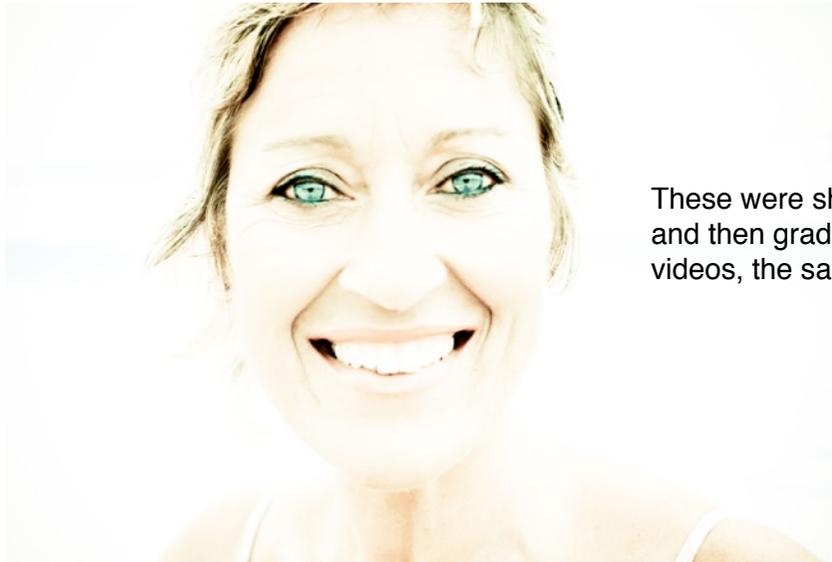
Make up your own little set like we did here with something to let people know what you do.



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Shooting Outdoors

Outdoors is one of my favourite things to do. The most important thing to remember is if you are shooting colour always shoot at the very start of the day or late in the afternoon. This is when the lighting is at it's absolute best. Overcast days are great because the clouds soften the sun and act as one big soft box for you. Also, when you're filming outside on a cloudy day, watch for the lighting changes. This will look weird if your video suddenly gets lighter or darker. Wait until the cloud passes.



These were shot at 5 in the morning and then graded. Whether photos or videos, the same rules apply.



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Mixed Camera Shots

Mix up your camera angles and use the three types below. The WS, MCU and CU. These are the standard shots you want to think about for your videos. I have used a music video I directed as an example.

THE WIDE SHOT (WS)

Wide shots are used to establish the scene like in this shot here we can see they are in a park. It is foggy and the boy friend is running after his girlfriend.

With your video blog try adding a landscape or a sunrise or something to set the mood before you start to talk.



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Mixed Camera Shots

THE MEDIUM CLOSE UP SHOT (MCU)

Medium shots are the most typical shot you will see and this is what you will use for your video blogs. Make sure you can see the eyes clearly so you can connect with the person. (These are a little dark as part of the mood of the music video, but you can see her smile so there is still a connection. The easiest way to remember these shots is think of a Newsreader on TV..



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Mixed Camera Shots

THE CLOSE UP SHOT (CU)

Close up shot. This is when you zoom in or come in a little closer. It is great to capture the emotion of a person. I like to also use these for my video blogs.

There are other shots to talk about but I don't want to confuse you. These three are the main ones to start with.



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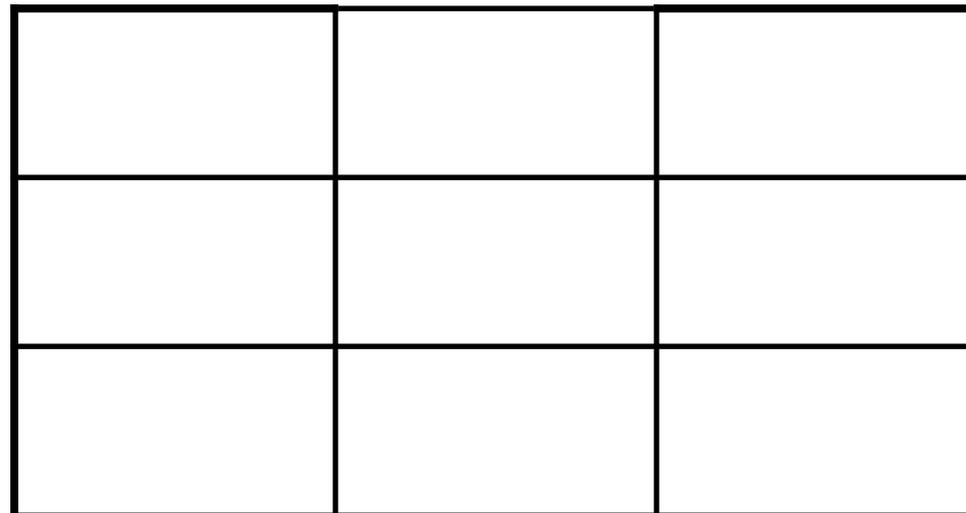
Mixed Camera Shots

FRAMES IN ACTION



Rule of Nine

As I mentioned in the book, this is a very handy tool and once you master it, it will change the way you see shots and your framing. By framing images up on the points of this grid you will find your videos and images will magically look better. With the images you have taken already on your phone, flip through now and see how many of them have one focal point that sit on one of these points.



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Subtle Patterns

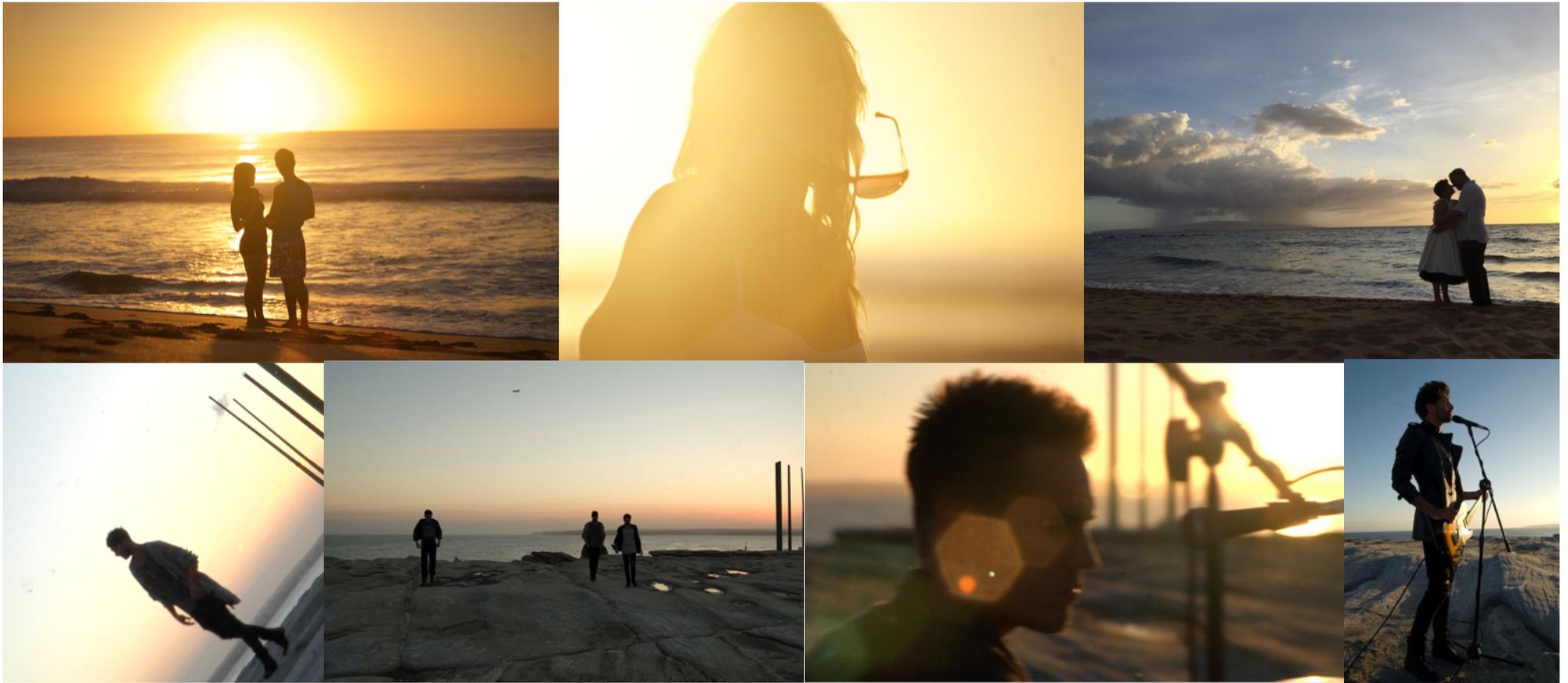
Patterns are everywhere you look and once your new awareness kicks in you will start to notice subtle patterns everywhere. Check out these visual examples below to help explain in more detail.



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Silhouettes

Silhouettes are one of my favourite techniques. They are great because they are very graphic and you don't need to ask permission from anyone to use their image. Silhouettes are timeless. They are great to add to your video collection. Here there is a mixture of sunrise and sunset images.



Get on the Ground

Low angles are another one of my favourites. Just like here where I am filming my cousin amongst the wheat fields in Australia. Lie on the sand at the beach or in your driveway. Don't worry about what anyone else thinks of you. Keep your eyes on the camera and you won't even know anyone is there.



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Black and White

Everyone looks great in black and white.. That is what I think anyway. There is something classic and stylish about B&W photos. The trick with black and white is you want to have high contrast in the shots. This is the time where going out in the middle of the day may work well because of the harsh shadows. The aim is to have dark and light as you can see below.



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Objects

Objects and landscapes are also a great way to tell a story and add extra interest into your videos. Here is a picture of a road filmed low and wide. Landscapes can also convey emotion when you mix sound with them, such as a city scape or water scene.



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Playing with Time

Whether it is super slow motion or time-lapse like the photo below, you can create some amazing looking videos playing with latest time-lapse applications on your phone. These definitely help to make your videos stand out. Time-lapse of lights at night always look classic and creative.



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Your Turn

There's lots to take in when you first start. The best way to get better is to go out and start focusing on taking better photos and then automatically your videos will start to look better too.

1. Look at your shots with the imaginary rule of nine grid on each frame.
2. Choose one or two styles shown here and experiment.
3. Out of 10 photos you may only like one or two. This is normal.
4. Remember to mix up the shots in your videos to make them look better help the edit to run smoothly.



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