

10 Tips for Looking **HOT** on Video

by Jessica Kizorek

Preparing to be in front of a camera soon?
Follow these ten tips or risk looking like a loser on video.

1. Look Me in the Eye

With the advent of the webcam, people are way more interested in looking at themselves perform in the video preview window than actually making eye contact with the person watching the video. Look into the camera. Straight into the lens. Don't wander with those eyes...you have to be 10 times as engaging through online video to keep people from wandering off your page. Stare them down. Lock them in like a bomber pilot locks in on his target.

2. Be in the Spot Light

If your face is going to be the centerpiece of the video, make sure that it's got the most light on it. People's eyes will wander towards the light, so if there's a bright window with little kids riding tricycles behind you...that's what people will be watching. Viewers are like horses. Put blinders on them and tell their brain what they should focus on. Illuminate the key elements of the frame, whether that's your face, a product or a logo. Place a smaller light to the opposite side (and a little behind) so that you have dimension and pop out from the background.

3. Speak Up

Computer stereos are notoriously insufficient when it comes to pumping up the volume. Most people think that the visual element is the most important when it comes to video, and underestimate the power audio has in communicating the message. Video is 50% visual, and 50% auditory. Use an external microphone whenever possible, or get close to the camera if it's a cheap-o. Speak up, or else people will get frustrated when you make them struggle to hear what's going on. When they can't hear, they say "@*#% lt."

4. Think in Threes

Try and narrow your message down to three key ideas. Three ideas that you'll communicate if you forget everything else. This keeps it simple, and helps you remember what you were saying if you go blank. The more simple your spiel, the more relaxed you'll be. Especially if the video is an interview or back and forth exchange.

5. Get Busy with the Mirror

Once you've got your three points identified, stand in front of the mirror. You can do it naked or with clothes on. Look yourself in the eye and let loose. Practice delivering your talk until you're confident and relaxed. You may know what you're talking about, but you have to convince yourself of that. After a while you'll stop worrying what you look like and what other people will think. The more you

practice in the mirror, the greater chance you have of looking like a natural once the camera's red light comes on. If not, you'll spend your energy second guessing yourself and looking like a stiff.

6. Up Close and Personal

Get closer. Closer. A little closer... Don't be afraid to get close to the camera. Internet video players are pretty small, so don't want to get lost on the wall paper in the background.

7. Befriend the Camera Girl

If you're doing a professional shoot, chances are the camera girl knows more than you do about looking good on video. Ask her advice, and let her set up the scene. Listen to her coaching and suggestions. Ask to see the set through her monitor or LCD screen so you know which parts of you are in the frame. If she asks you to repeat a line or change your shirt, do it. She has your best interests at heart, and wants just as much for you to look good on video.

8. Wear Video Friendly Fashion

Be careful what you wear on camera. Red sometimes bleeds on television. Black and white can create too much contrast and throw off exposure, making your face too dark or too bright if you're using a webcam or camera without manual controls. Avoid stripes, crazy patterns and sparkles, as they can cause noise or pixilation when the video is compressed for the Internet. You may not notice that your shirt is wrinkled or dirty, but the camera will. So make sure your clothes are freshly laundered or else be filled with regret once you see the play back.

9. Don't Sweat it

Nothing will make you more nervous than sweat beads forming on your upper lip. Make sure the room you'll be shooting in is cool so you don't start to worry about whether your armpit sweat will show on camera. Give yourself one less thing to think about. Heat will make you uncomfortable, and the camera lens will catch that.

10. Act Like You Own the Joint

This may be the wrong way to word it, but seriously. You don't want to come across arrogant, but get pumped before you sit down. Stroke your own ego a little. You've got what it takes. 250,000 people may see it on YouTube, but it's only video.

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