



# Top 10 Tips for Better Home Movies

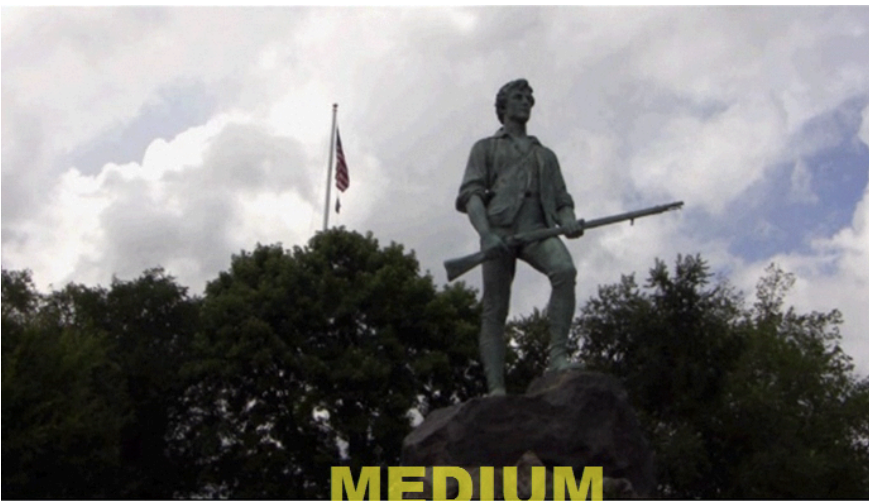
Looking for the cure for boring home movies? You've come to the right place. Following these 10 tips won't turn you into Spielberg but they should at least help keep your audience awake during your next home movie screening.

- 1. Keep it steady.** The number one trick is simply to hold your camera still. Since your head moves with the camera, what looks fine in the viewfinder can look like you shot it during an earthquake on your big-screen TV. Keep things steady by bracing yourself against a wall or tree, or using a tripod or monopod. You can even hold your breath on short takes.



- 2. Minimize zooms.** And keep a light hand on that zoom button. Too much zooming in and out is distracting and looks amateurish. Unless you're shooting the entire school play with one camera, plan to zoom in or out only once per shot..
- 3. Start rolling early.** Want to miss recording your baby's first steps? Then wait till she starts walking before pressing the record button! Always start the camera rolling BEFORE the big event begins. Also keep recording for a few seconds after it ends. It will come in handy for transitions when editing.

- 4. Vary your shot distance.** Filmmakers use three basic types of shots: long, medium and close-up. You'll have a much easier time editing if you get a mix of these shots during your filming. Long shots that establish where the action is taking place are especially useful.



- 5. Shoot B-roll.** Be sure to shoot extra material that you can edit into your main footage later, such as shots identifying the location, audience reactions, or Uncle Harry asleep under the table. This B-roll footage can make one camera look like many.



- 6. Compose using the Rule of Thirds.** No matter what you're shooting, remember the to watch your composition. DON'T put your subject smack in the middle of the picture. Instead, put it off-center using the Rule of Thirds. Google it to learn more..



- 7. Read the manual.** If you haven't read your camera's manual yet, now's the time. Yes, it's thick and yes, it will take a little time, but trust us, you won't figure it out by playing with the buttons 10 minutes before your daughter's birthday party! Practice using controls like exposure and color balance. Locking the exposure can be really useful in changing lighting situations, such as in a moving car. And do color balance your camera if you can. All you need is a sheet of white paper.



- 8. Make light your friend.** Good lighting is also critical to the quality of your video. Too little light, and your footage will be grainy; too much, and it will be washed out. The greatest sin of all is backlighting, which can completely drown out your subject. Move the camera or ask the subject to move..



- 9. Don't forget the audio.** Now that you've mastered the video side of things, it's time to improve your sound. Assuming your camera has a microphone input, add-on mics that you can position closer to the subject will work wonders. Don't worry if some folks have nothing interesting to say, you can replace the duds with a music track during editing. For interviews, invest in a clip-on lavalier mic.



- 10. Edit your footage.** Finally, *do* edit your work. Footage right out of the camera is usually long and boring, if not downright embarrassing with all those floor and ceiling shots. Fortunately, there's a range of applications available, such as Roxio Creator. Your audience will thank you!

- 11. Bonus tip: Don't forget the batteries!** If they aren't charged up, you'll get no video at all. Happy shooting!