

The Seven Deadly Camera Sins:

Wow, do I see a lot of poorly shot video around here. Heck, I've even shot some of it. So in the interest of improved videography, here's a list of some no-no's I've noticed, and what can be done about it.

#1: Firehosing, meaning you turn the camera on and aim it vaguely until you find something interesting.
Solution: Compose and frame your shot before you hit record. It makes your editing much, much easier.

#2: Snapshooting, recording shots or scenes that are too short, which hoses you in the editing process.
Solution: Let your shots last 7-10 seconds, giving you some tape leader and editing flexibility.

#3: Handholding, shooting everything with the camera on your shoulder.
Solution: Use a tripod; make your subject the focus of your video, not the bouncy camera.

#4: Motorzooming, the need to zoom constantly in or out while taping.
Solution: Very few zooms are seen on TV unless it serves a specific purpose. A zoom should draw in the audience or reveal information.

#5: Postcarding, framing people in long, wide shots for interviews- drawing focus to the background
Solution: Tight composition, use waist or head & shoulder shots. Use the Rule of Thirds.

#6: Eyeleveling: all your shots are done at eye level, either on your shoulder or with a tripod.
Solution: Use some shooting variety, tilt your camera, set it at various heights for better effect.

#7: Instashooting: setting up your camera at the first convenient spot, without awareness of the surrounding environment.

Solution: Be observant and take your time; look for distracting objects in the background, check where your light source is coming from. Listen closely for sounds (like an air conditioner) that you are unconsciously tuning out.