

Lighting (Studio) – Advanced Techniques

When taping a subject, shoot a bit above or below eye level, to get more of a 3-D angle.

Keep the light source as large as possible to get the softest shadow. Diffusion sheets, found in our studio, are one option.

Have the backlight on the exact axis as the camera lens.

In film, typically the brightest light is behind the subject and becomes the key; it feels more natural to the talent.

Remember that video cameras aren't as sensitive as film and require more light. Less light makes the subject orange.

Generally speaking, you need to give video more color. Use purples or blues for the background; avoid yellow or orange as they too closely resemble skin tone. Green's a mediocre color. White is bad, red is ok (the stigma against red lingers from the smearing caused by vhs recording and bad camera CCD's).

Darker people need more light or lightening make-up. The Director of Photography often takes the blame for bad lighting when it's possibly bad makeup.

When you have unrehearsed talent and movement, your main option is to flood the area, and if necessary position a crew member with a floor light who moves it around.

Nine Point Lighting? Whoever heard of such a thing? Here's how to do it:

Place a key light (1) and a back light (2) at the appropriate spots. Add a backlight (3) on the subject, and a background light (4) on the surface behind them. Add two rim lights (5,6) about 45 behind and off the subject's shoulder, aimed at the face. For men this gives a more sculpted look - women don't really benefit - and when covered with a slight orange gel can give that "sunset" look (add to the background light as well). A filler light (7) can be placed low and in front of the lens, on axis. It has to be *real* soft and cannot cast additional shadows. Use either a low power light or a light aimed down at an angled reflector. This fills in chin, nose, and wrinkles. An eye light (8) right above the camera puts the sparkle in their eyes. Make it small, about 100W, and avoid if they are reading off a TelePrompter. The final (9th) light is either a second background light or a light aimed at their clothes.