

Roger Loh's
Easy eSeries

**"6 MISTAKES TO AVOID
WHEN YOU SHOOT YOUR
HOME VIDEOS!"**



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Web Resources:

<http://www.RogerLoh.com>

<http://www.Easy-eSeries.com>

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Roger Loh's
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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	4
Introduction	5
Mistake #1 – They do not compensate for incorrect lighting levels	6
Mistake #2 – They do not provide shade to their camcorder.....	9
Mistake #3 – They do not know how to keep their camcorder stable	10
Mistake #4 – They allow outside noise to decrease the audio quality	12
Mistake #5 – They use digital zooming instead of optical zooming.....	13
Mistake #6 – They do not conserving power while shooting.....	15
ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ROGER LOH	17

Introduction

When we create home videos with the purpose to share, we want to make sure the content of our movies, the story we want to tell, gets through to our viewers.

Unfortunately for many beginners, this is not the case. Taking good video requires some skill and knowledge. In fact, shooting great video is more than just pressing the record button.

Here are the 6 common mistakes that you want to avoid:

1. They do not compensate for incorrect lighting levels
2. They do not provide shade to your camcorder
3. They do not keep the camcorder stable
4. They allow outside noise to decrease the audio quality
5. They use digital zooming instead of optical zooming
6. They do not conserving power while shooting

Let's get started...

Mistake #1

– They do not compensate for incorrect lighting levels

For beginners starting out, many of them do not realize that they need to compensate for incorrect lighting levels. In fact, there is a huge difference between shooting outdoors and indoors.

Here are two situations that you need to watch out for and some actions you can take to compensate for them.

SITUATION #1: The first common lighting issue is when filming indoors.

When shooting indoors with external windows in the day, a common problem most of us face is the high difference in contrast levels. This issue happens as the sun is many times brighter than artificial lighting in the room. And most of the times we do not even turn on our lights in the day, so the problem is worse.

Most modern digital camcorders have automatic exposure controls. When a window comes into the shot, the exposure control will sense too much light and reduce the amount of light that gets into the camcorder. For example, if we are shooting a subject against an open window, the subject often becomes a silhouette. Here's an example of the problem.



On the left shows what happens when you shoot your video on a subject against a window without proper lighting.

The photo on the right shows the subject clearly with proper lighting. This is what we want.

There are 3 easy ways to solve this problem.



1. The first is to cast lights onto the subject, compensating for the difference in the contrast levels.



2. The second is to use reflectors to bounce light from the window back to the subject, reducing the difference in contrast.

3. The third is to not shoot the video with the subject against the window, keeping the windows out of the shot. This eliminates the problem altogether and actually improves the lighting on the subject as light from the windows is cast on the subject.

Another common problem when shooting indoors is lighting on the subject's features. Since indoor lights cast light downwards, they cast shadows that can hide important features. For example, top-down lighting may cast ugly shadows on the eyes and under the nose, affecting the appearance of the subject.

So it's important to cast lighting on the subject's face, or simply move the subject where the shadows are reduced to the minimum. You can also use reflectors to bounce light back to the subject's face.

Having a well-lit subject helps views connect with the subject and what your video is trying to show.

SITUATION #2: The second common lighting issue is filming in low light conditions

At night, what may look like enough light to our eyes is often not enough for camcorders. Remember, our eyes are much more sensitive than camcorders and can take in more light due to our wider point of view.

Take video is all about lighting. All camcorders work by recording reflected light, so its best not to film when lighting is dim or not available.

But if you do need to film in low light conditions, you can do 2 things: Make do with the existing light available or add more. But before even filming, turn off your camcorder's autofocus. Autofocus works by zooming your camcorder to the optimal level so the subject at the center of the camcorder remains sharp. In low night conditions, there is little light available and the camcorder can't see clearly what is in its center of view. So it will continuously zoom in and out to attain a sharp image, which is not good.

Using Low Light Mode

Some camcorders have features that can make the most of dim lighting. Different manufacturers have different names for this feature. Low light modes however produce jerky and blur video due to slowing of the shutter speed to capture more light, so this method is not suitable in situations when the subject is moving.

Shooting in Infrared

Some camcorders have infrared LED that projects infrared light onto the subject. The camcorder can then capture that infrared light which the camcorder can detect but human eyes can't. The videos produced are smoother compared to shooting in Low light mode. But still the video is in a grey-green color, like the ones you see in TV news or war movies using night-vision cameras.

Adding more light

The last option is to simply illuminate area. Use a portable lighting or move the subject to any available source of light. Filming a subject under a lamp is better than nothing.

Mistake #2

– They do not provide shade to their camcorder

When you move out into the sun from a dark room, do you experience the "washing out" effect where everything seems to turn white?

The same thing happens to your camcorder too when you have sunlight or any particularly strong source of light shining directly on the front of your lens. This will deteriorate the quality of your video if you don't shade it.

We wear sunglasses to block out excessive outdoor light. Likewise camcorders have lens hoods custom designed by your camcorder manufacturer. Examples of lens hood (left) and a camcorder with a lens hood on(right) is shown below.



If your camcorder does not accept a lens hood, you can use your hand to block out the excessive light from the sun. If you are not using a tripod or monopod, this can be difficult, so get one! You can also move yourself and your camcorder to a shady area to prevent lens flare.

Mistake #3

– They do not know how to keep their camcorder stable

Another common problem of home videos made by beginners is that they do not know how to move the camcorder when recording action scenes. This causes most home videos looking shaky, putting viewers off. No one likes to watch shaky videos. No matter how interesting the video actually is, you can't get much through your video to your viewers if they can't focus on the subject due to excessive movement.

Most of us do not really understand how shaky our hands can be. Just try to holding a spoon of water in your hands and trying walking around without any water dripping off. If we can't handle a spoon of water, we wouldn't be better off holding a heavy camcorder for long periods of time. And when you zoom in, the shakiness will be much worse.

On top of that, you will sometimes fiddle around the buttons on the camcorder itself, and whenever you do that the video will experience an "earthquake" due to the movement, unless you are incredibly gentle when pressing the buttons.

Most modern camcorders have image stabilization, but they can only work so much.



The best solution is to get a tripod (left) with a fluid head (below).

Fluid heads allow you to secure your camcorder to the tripod and using the handle, you can smoothly pan the camera around when you need too.

With your camcorder attached to it, your videos will much smoother, and look professional.

A tripod however can be quite heavy, and can take up quite a bit of space with set up. Not very ideal when you are filming moving subjects.





The next best solution will be to purchase monopod. They are simple, compact and almost as effective as tripods when it comes to stability.

They can be very compact when kept and easy to move around too. Again, look for one with a fluid head.

If you do not have a tripod or monopod and do not want to get one, try to stabilize yourself when taking videos. Lean against something such as a wall or sit down, resting your elbows on your knees or anything else stable.

Mistake #4

– They allow outside noise to decrease the audio quality

The fourth most common issue with home videos is the quality of the audio that is recorded. Many beginners do not ensure good sound and did not realize that bad audio sticks out like a sore thumb.

Most camcorders are equipped with microphones, but the audio they record are generally of low quality. Coupled with uncontrollable background/environmental noises, it gets worse.

Many people also do not realize that their own breathing, the sounds produced when they push buttons on the camcorder, the noise produced by the camcorder's drive mechanism, all may get recorded by the on-board microphone as well.

The best solution will be to use an external microphone, either wireless or with a cord, to capture the audio. It will even be better to have a headphone jacked into the camcorder as well to monitor the sounds being recorded.

There are various types of microphones you can use, each suitable for different situations. Here are some examples.



To the left is an example of a standard microphone.



A Lavalier microphone, which you can clip onto cloths for hands free operation.

If external microphones are not practical for the situation, use the classic method of positioning the camcorder as close as possible to the subject.

Mistake #5

– They use digital zooming instead of optical zooming

Don't use Digital Zoom

Some of us are impressed by companies touting their camcorder's huge digital zoom numbers, which is nothing good at all. It's a very poor substitute for optical zooming, sacrificing quality significantly.

When using digital zooming, the camcorder actually crops further and further into the center of the image, enlarging that cropped center so it fills up the screen, achieving that "zoomed" effect. But you get nothing but grainy, pixilated video which looks really ugly and puts viewers off.

The pictures below compare the video quality of using optical zooming (left) against digital zooming (right).



As you can see, the quality of using digital zoom is significantly reduced.

Just don't use digital zoom.

Use only your camcorder's optical zoom which relies on the lens for magnification. Most camcorders have the option to turn off digital zooming. Do it to avoid accidentally using it. If you need to get even closer, move yourself and your camcorder closer to the subject.

Use zooms only when needed

The availability of features unconsciously encourages us to use them even when we do not have to. Similarly, it may seem fun to keep zooming in onto subjects, but don't use it all the time. Use it only when needed. Remember, viewers don't really like being taken for a ride zooming in and out for nothing.

Zoom Slowly

When you zoom in and out quickly, it will be very disorientating for your viewers. Our eyes are not used to this type of movement and can cause sea sickness.

Zoom slowly and gently when required. Move the viewer closer or further away from the subject gradually as if the viewer is there walking towards and away from the subject. When you zoom slowly, you also give time for your camcorder to refocus, avoiding the situation when you zoom in suddenly and actually see the refocusing in action, which does not look professional to your viewers.

Stability

When the camcorder is zoomed in, any movement of the camcorder is greatly exaggerated. So it's very important to make sure your hands are steady or use a tripod/monopod as we have discussed earlier.

Mistake #6

– They do not conserving power while shooting

What's the use if you have prepared all the equipment needed but you run of the single most important thing your camcorder needs?

What's the use if you brought out your camcorder out on a family vacation to record those special moments, when you have run out of power?

So when you use your camcorder, it's important to conserve your camcorder's battery life whenever possible. Without battery power, your camcorder is practically a dead weight.

Get batteries which last longer or extra ones

Buy long lasting battery cells which have a longer lasting battery life. This is the easiest way to ensure you have enough power to last you throughout.

And always have a spare battery in handy. You will almost always run out of battery power due.

Charge your battery before using it

Camcorder batteries can lose their power when they have been stored for a long time. This is especially so when your battery has been used for quite a while. When a battery has been used for than a year, the amount of charge the aged battery can carry is significantly reduced.

Even if you have stored the battery at full charge the day before, make sure they are still fully charged before you move out to get the most out of your battery.

Use the Viewfinder

Flipping open and using the LCD screen is very tempting when you are recording. It's both convenient and easy on the eyes too.

However the LCD screen uses a lot more battery power than when you use your camcorder's viewfinder. So close that LCD screen and use the viewfinder instead.

Review your movies later

It is also very tempting to watch a special event you have just recorded. That would involve flipping open the LCD screen and turning it on, wasting precious battery power.

So for the moment wait until you can get your camcorder plugged into AC power source before you view your videos, ensuring that you have more battery power to record more special events later on.

Don't use your camcorder unnecessarily

Just by switching your camcorder on and off, or zooming in and out can use up your battery power. Use the zoom only when you need to, as mention earlier, and switch off your camcorder only when you are not going to use it for a while.

Signing Off...

We have come to the end of this ebook.

Take good videos with the sole purpose of presenting something to your viewers, videos which they can watch with ease.

So when you shoot your videos, be sure to keep the issues discussed here in mind.

Have fun!



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ROGER LOH



After graduating from a local University in Singapore as an engineer, Roger went to work in a 9 to 5 job like most people.

When an ex-colleague predicted that he would one day go into business, Roger literally scolded him saying that he'll work until he retire! Reflecting back, Roger thought, "If only back then, I knew about wealth creation and passive income instead of just trading time for money, I won't have to spin my wheels and struggle for so many years."

Soon after, his ex-colleague was right...

After more than 12 years of corporate life, Roger finally got sick and tired of the routine work and the office politics and he wanted out badly.

By a leap of faith, he started a small business that specializes in implementing computer networks and solutions for his clients. However, after several years, business became so competitive that he often had to work 15 hours a day. "It was worse than having a job! Not only did I have to constantly worry about cash flow, whenever my client's server went down, I went down with it. And somehow, that often happens during weekends!"

Enough is enough. Roger realized that it's time for another change. But then, what next?

Thank God that his ex-classmate introduced him to network marketing and he soon realized that it is big business according to Robert Kiyosaki's cash flow quadrant. He learned as much as possible and worked hard for a few years trying to build a passive income stream. However, he failed miserably despite several attempts in different network marketing companies. But he never gave up.

And then he discovered Internet marketing and the attraction of an online business: "Making money 24 hours a day, whether you're awake or asleep!"

Soon after, he chanced upon an Internet MLM opportunity and immediately recognized its enormous potential: It is both a network marketing business as well as an Internet marketing business!

These are two emerging trends in the world today that had come of age. The network marketing industry has been around for more than 50 years while the Internet marketing trend is already more than 10 years old. Both are billion dollar industries that had already created many millionaires around the world.

Roger quickly assembled a core group of business partners and applied both his network marketing and Internet marketing skills he acquired over the past four years.

By personally enrolling 12 students and helping some of them enroll others, Roger himself advanced to the rank of Director in just 17 days, surpassing and surprising many others in and around his team!

In his testimony speech at an Internet marketing workshop in Singapore on April 19th, 2007, Roger said, "If you ask me how I did it in one word - it's a 4-letter word spelled as TEAM that stands for 'Together Everyone Achieves Miracles'!"

Since then, Roger has branched into other areas of his passion such as:

- Creating easy-to-understand, easy-to-use, step-by-step guide books and resources for beginners in various fields
- Creating self-help guide books and resources to help young adults get a headstart in life by maximizing their potential at an early age

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