

PERFORMANCE TIPS FOR THE CAMERA

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This document provides an tips and techniques for faculty who will delivery educational content to the camera.

Stand still. Most of us, when standing normally, see the same thing when we look down at our feet. A V-shape, with each foot pointing a bit outward and our heels closer together. This stance can lead to swaying - both side to side and backward and forward. Moving one foot in front of the other, and shifting its angle a bit, will make it almost impossible for you to sway.

Take stock of your habits. These are the habits that might distract your audience. These include: excessive blinking, flaring nostrils, over-active eyebrows, flipping hair, touching face, licking lips, sighing, crossing-arms, hands in pockets - the list is endless. Tape yourself and carefully self-scrutinize.

Don't beat up on yourself! We are all imperfect creatures. As an actor, it's your goal to choose which imperfections to showcase in your characters. Just don't let your own habits, affectations, and mannerisms get in the way of giving a great performance.

Eyes open. Start each take with a smile with your eyes open.

Check your start volume. Try to start each sentence with the same volume and pitch as the rest of your takes. Often amateurs start a take at a much higher voice volume level than the rest of the take.

Listen for "Cut". Keep going, even if you make a mistake. The director will tell you when to stop. Often editors can use segments just prior to and just after mistakes.

Practice in front of the mirror. Even pros have to practice. So, if you are not a pro, practice. Arriving with script familiarity, appropriate attire and performance practice will speed up the recording process, offering you time to experiment with other options at the end of recording.

Record yourself and critique. Almost all faculty have access to a video camera, most likely on your phone. Record rough takes of yourself performing and critique your performance.

Continue looking into the camera. At the end of a take, when you think you are finished, continue to look into the camera. Don't immediately look off camera to the director for feedback, asking, "was that okay"? Often editors will fade out dissolving to another image. Holding your gaze and eye contact with the camera will not cause a distraction when fading out, or fading to another shot.

Avoid lipsmack. Avoid starting each take with an audible tick, or lipsmack. Try for a smooth and silent take off, clear your throat, count to five and start, or wait for the director's countdown.