

Editing Tips

- **Begin with an establishing shot.**
 - This is usually a wide or medium shot. It shows where and/or who is important to the story.
- **Use shot variety.**
 - The 3 to 1 model is pretty effective.
 - Instead of using one long shot, use two or three shots of the same subject from different lengths and angles to offer perspective.
 - Try using a Wide Shot, Medium Shot and Close Up in an interesting order.
 - Each cut might be anywhere from 3-5 seconds in length.
- **Cut on action.**
 - Trim the beginning and end points of your shot to places where movement is taking place.
 - Try to match movements between shots to look natural.
- **Balance your audio.**
 - If a person is speaking, his or her voice should be clear and upfront.
 - “Nat sound” or the natural sounds of the environment are good for creating realism. They should be mixed at a lower level when someone is speaking and brought up in the mix when no one is speaking.
 - A “Nat pop” is an interesting sound that cues the viewer in to what is going on in a shot. You can increase the volume of select spots to grab the viewers attention, but they should make sense with what is happening on screen.
 - If a crowd is applauding a character in your story, you might bring up the sound of the clapping for effect.
 - Distracting noises should be kept low in the mix, especially when interviewing. They can ruin a good shot.
 - The sound of a neighbors lawnmower in the background could make it difficult to hear a person speaking.
 - Music can add emotion to a video. It should complement the “feel” of a scene.
 - Keep the music low in the mix when someone is speaking and bring it back up in the mix when no one is speaking. The editing program iMovie does this for you in many cases.
- **Use “cutaways” to show images of what is going on while the narrator or interviewee is speaking.**
 - A cutaway literally cuts away from the person speaking and shows an image of what the narrator or interviewee is talking about while he or she continues to speak.
- **The speed of your cuts controls the “feeling” you are trying to create.**
 - Short or fast cuts create urgency (a sequence of shots that are only a couple seconds in length).
 - Slow or long cuts give time for thought and reflection (one or more shots that last longer).
 - Using slow motion can make things feel dramatic and add seriousness or weight to a scene.
- **Transitions should be used for effect.**
 - These are effects used between cuts.
 - The most common transition is simply cutting from one shot to the next with no effect.
 - The second most common transition is the dissolve.
 - This is used to show the passage of time or to smooth the transition from one shot to the next shot.
 - A fade in or out from black creates a smooth intro or outro.