



Tips, tricks and FAQs for Home Filming

- 1) Pick the right camera. For nearly everyone who has one, your best choice for home video recording will be your smartphone. Smartphone cameras have become shockingly good in the last few years. Enlist a quarantine partner to act as a videographer, or prop your phone up to frame a shot—don't be afraid of duct tape! Other options include digital cameras with a video mode or using a laptop's webcam (especially if you want that Zoom-chic look). Mac computers have a program called "Photobooth" and Windows computers have a program called "Windows Camera" pre-installed that can save video recorded from your webcam. Try all your options to get some test footage and see what you like the best.
- 2) Sound above all. If your performance involves speaking, singing, or playing music, your first priority should be the clarity of your sound. Viewers will forgive poor image quality but will rarely stick around for a video that they can't hear or understand. Find a quiet place to record, avoid large rooms, and stay close to the camera. Filming outdoors can be beautiful but beware a windy day or a noisy street. For some purposes, especially spoken word, the microphone built into a pair of headphones may be your best option for a "selfie-style" video.
- 3) Thoughtful lighting is more important than an expensive camera. Backlight can ruin images! Find a place with strong, even lighting on your face. Try placing lamps around a room to provide accent lighting on you and the background. Shooting video outdoors or in a sun-room can get great natural lighting, but be mindful of the direction of the sun.
- 4) Choose work that gets to the point. Think about the way you consume videos on social media: the first few seconds are often all you get. This is a tragic but true reality of viewing art through the attention-monetizing grinder of big tech. Choose imagery, music, or performance elements that dive right into your art and don't be afraid to put yourself forward.
- 5) Let your personality shine through. Digital video is often much more intimate than a live performance on a stage. You are in your home connecting one-on-one with someone in their home. Openness and vulnerability help give life to expression otherwise mediated through a glass-and-plastic rectangle. We don't expect artists' home-videos to be concert-hall performances. Kids and cats coming into frame are okay!
- 6) MOST IMPORTANT: Have fun! Don't lose the spirit of play and creativity in your work by getting hung up on your technical limitations. Audiences understand the bind we are all in. They are willing to live with shaky cameras, spotty lightning and studio-imperfect audio. What we most crave is connection and inspiration, so experiment with the form and prioritize your artistic voice. Good luck and thank you for the art!



Frequently Asked Questions

What file type should I send?

Mp4 works best but we can work with almost any video format. If your camera gives you options for multiple file qualities to send (like on a phone), choose the highest quality option available.

Are videos better in vertical or horizontal format?

Horizontal please!

What format should I film in?

1080p 30fps is ideal. 4k is alright too if you have the equipment and the ability to transfer large files.

Should I submit one long video or multiple videos?

Multiple short videos are fine! They can make the file-transfer process easier. Please label them with numbers that indicate the order they should appear in, e.g. *1_mySong.mp4*, *2_myStory.mp4*, *3_myDance.mp4*. **For all videos but especially short videos:** take a couple moments after the recording starts before you begin! It's easy to trim off a few seconds of silence but impossible to add a smooth transition if there's an abrupt start or end to a video.

Where do I upload my video?

The Programming team has created a unique Google Drive folder for each group, permission to contribute and a link to the folder should land in your inbox from Programming@nwfolklife.org. Please get in touch if you do not see this email by April 5th.

What if I run into issues uploading?

Email programming@nwfolklife.org or leave a voicemail at our programming hotline (206) 684-4189) and we can troubleshoot or discuss alternate upload methods.