Film Camera Shots, Angles and Movements

Camera moves can make your project look super professional or incredibly amateurish depending on how well you use them.

Professional videographers usually follow this one rule of thumb: when it comes to camera movement, it must be motivated.

Because it looks cool, is usually not a valid reason for using tricky camera moves.

Instead, you can use camera moves to change the viewer's perspective making what you shoot look

BIGGER smaller or even **SCARIER**

You should use camera movement to tell your story better and to enhance the viewer's experience.

Common Camera Shots, Angles and Movements

Zoom Lenses

Tilts

Crane Shot

Pans

Hand Held Shots

Tracking Shots

The Aerial Shot

Pans

How: Move the camera horizontally left or right. Ideally, you should use a tripod for a smooth effect. To be a great "panner", practice the shot several times at several speeds before you feel comfortable with it.

Why: To follow a subject or show the distance between two objects. Pan shots also work great for panoramic views such as a shot from a mountaintop to the valley below.

Rule: Always start on a still shot, begin the pan, and finish on a still shot. Practice first. If there is nothing worth seeing, then the pan isn't worth shooting.

Tilts

How: Moving the camera up or down without raising its position.

Why: Like panning, to follow a subject or to show the top and bottom of a stationary object. With a tilt, you can also show how high something is. Here's a good tip. In general, when you tilt up and shoot an object or a person they look larger and thicker. The subject looks smaller and thinner when you tilt down.

Rule: Always start on a still shot, begin the tilt, and finish on a still shot. Practice first. As with pan shots, if there is nothing worth seeing, then the tilt isn't worth shooting.

Hand Held Shots

How: No tripod, monopod or other device. Professional cameras are large and rest on the user's shoulders. This balances the camera and keeps shaking to a minimum. Because of their size, most consumer cameras can't rest on your shoulder, so you'll need a few tips to shoot steady well-executed handheld shots.

Why: Due to the spontaneity of the action, many news crews and most documentaries use hand-held shooting techniques.

Rule: When shooting handheld, **do not zoom in!** The more you zoom in, the shakier the shot gets. It is better to move closer to your subject and shoot with as wide of a setting as you can.

Tracking Shots

How: Sometimes called TRUCKING or DOLLY shots. The camera is placed on a moving vehicle and moves alongside the action, generally following a moving figure or object.

Why: Complicated tracking shots will involve a track being laid on set for the camera to follow, hence the name. The camera might be mounted on a car, a plane, or even a shopping trolley (good method for independent film-makers looking to save a few £'s).

Rule: A tracking shot may be a good way of portraying movement, the journey of a character for instance, or for moving from a long shot to a close-up, gradually focusing the audience on a particular object or character.

Crane Shots

How: This works and looks similar to a construction crane. It is used for high sweeping shots or to follow the action of your subject.

Why: Gives a bird's eye view. It looks as if the camera is swooping down from above. Movie directors use this for street scenes so they can shoot from above the crowd and the traffic, and then move down to eye level.

Zoom Lenses

How: The zoom lens means that the camera need not be moved (and saves a lot of time and trouble).

Why: The zoom lens can zip a camera in or out of a scene very quickly. The drawbacks include the fact that while a dolly shot involves a steady movement similar to the focusing change in the human eye, the zoom lens tends to be jerky (unless used very slowly) and to distort an image, making objects appear closer together than they really are.

Rule: Zoom lenses are drastically over-used by many directors who try to give the impression of movement and excitement in a scene where it does not exist.

Aerial Shot

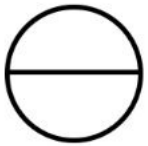
An exciting variation of a crane shot, usually taken from a helicopter, or these days a drone. This is often used at the beginning of a film, in order to establish setting and movement.

A helicopter/drone is like a particularly flexible sort of crane - it can go anywhere, keep up with anything, move in and out of a scene, and convey real drama and exhilaration.

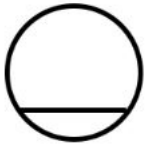


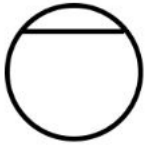
15 Essential Camera Shots, Angles and Movements in Filmmaking

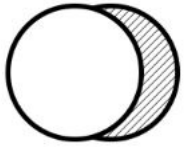
ANGLE


eye level


dutch


low angle


high angle, top angle


over the shoulder

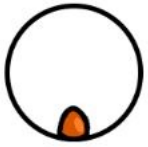
SHOT SIZE


close up, extreme


medium shot


long shot, extreme


single, two, three shot


POV

MOTION


360-degree


zoom


pan, tilt


dolly, crane


random

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Get Out and Play!

Now that you have learned the basic anatomy of camera movement remember this: the best and most versatile shots of all are the standard wide, medium and close-up stationary shots.

However, well-executed camera movements are the icing on the video-cake.

They add style, feeling and depth to a project.

Like any artist, you can invent your own reasons for using camera movements. Play around.

Get Out and Play!

Experiment. Be an artist.

And watch movies, TV and commercials with the sound off, to see how the camera movement plays out.

You'll quickly see how one shot motivates the next and you may begin to predict the next shot or the following sequence.

