Video Recording with a Camera

Camera Type

Webcam

Laptops (and mobile devices) have built-in webcams. These are great for recording yourself on camera, but they have limitations. The biggest is problem that the camera is built into the laptop's screen frame, and so the position of the camera is determined by that of the laptop. This leads people to stack laptops on books or boxes, but in turn makes the keyboard and touchpad impractical.

External webcams

Mobile Phone

Probably the most popular choice for video recording nowadays is a mobile phone. Even inexpensive phones can have good cameras, at least for many purposes. The two main operation systems, iOS and Android each have decent camera apps capable of recording video with different focus modes and some other basic features. And there are third-party camera apps that can add features, too. Plus, editors are available as part of camera apps or as standalone mobile apps. In all, it’s possible to record, edit, upload, and share video all from one’s smartphone.

Suggested Apps:

Xrecorder for Android

I’m not sure how far we want to get into this. It could be a lot, to record our own tutorials for camera apps, editors, and even lighting or sound setup. I suppose one option is to look for tutorial content from the app developers.

Camcorder, Mirrorless Digital Cameras, and DSLR

Any digital camera can potentially record video. These vary widely in form and quality, so that it’s too much to cove here, beyond noting that these are perfectly good options. Plus, if you own this hardware, you probably know how to use it for video! For example, if you use a DSLR for still photography, the steps are mostly the same as those for static images.

Lighting

Rather than recommend specific gear, it’s enough to say here that lighting is an important consideration. If you just start recording you may notice that your video is either too dark, or harshly lit (usually from one side, with dark shadows on the other.) Three recommendations:

1. Have plenty of light. You can buy gear, but arranging desk lamps, camp lanterns, or other light sources you already own, might do the job.
2. If you want semi-professional lighting, check out YouTube tutorials for the basics. There’s a lot of great advice from channels (see our favorites).
3. Experiment. If it looks good to you, it’s great.