

Technical Note

Video Projects To Get You Started



The Basics

So you are new to smartphone videography but you want to make good videos—good for you. The first objective then is to get to know:

- Your smartphone camera and app
- Bringing your video clips into your editing program
- Editing your clips to make a good video story

There are too many phones, apps and editing programs to cover in a short note like this. A good starting point is to search YouTube for how to videos for your particular phone, camera app, and editing program. I would recommend ProShot as the camera app and Adobe Premiere Elements for editing.

I do suggest that you do your first edits on a desktop or laptop as you will find that much easier. Once you are more skilled you can look at editing on your phone (using VideoShop or MovieMaker) or on the web with WeVideom.com.

The Projects

One learns mainly by doing. In that vein, I would suggest three starter projects:

- A room in your house;
- Your garden or park;
- A person you know.

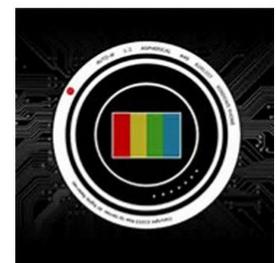
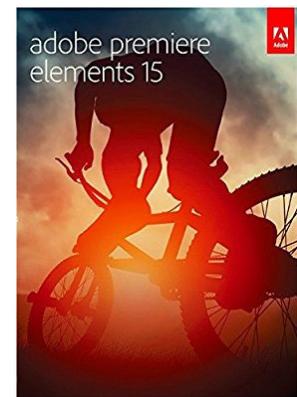
Video projects are a bit like essays we did at school. The teacher gave the same essay title and got 30 different stories back—and I am sure she appreciated the variety.

Just as with essays, you start with some research, scratching your head and planning. There is no wrong answer, it your story to tell your way—as long as it has a beginning, middle and end.

The first project

For your first project **keep it really simple**. Let's assume you want to showcase your favourite chair on your veranda.

1. Start with a wide shot of the veranda from a distance to set the scene.



*Premiere Elements and
ProShot*

2. Next, take a medium shot on the veranda showing your favorite chair.
3. Finally, take a close-up showing chair, with a book lying on the seat, and maybe a steaming mug of coffee on the side table. Stage it so that it looks really enticing.
4. Shoot each shot for 10 minutes so that you can edit out the shaky bits later.
5. Bring your clips into your editing program, place them on the timeline in sequence, trim unwanted bits as needed.
6. Now add a title at the beginning “It is calling me...” and an end title “Gotta go, it’s calling me!”
7. Round it off by adding lovely background music. Turn the volume of the audio associated with the video down.
8. Render and export.

Congratulate yourself, you’ve made your first real project. While relatively simple to make, your video has all the elements needed. It has an intriguing introduction, and tells an effective story.

Remember, this was just my idea, you can come up with different approaches to telling a video story – just keep it simple. The purpose is to get the know the process of shooting video, bringing it into the editor, and making it into a watchable video story.

An important part of the learning process is to get feedback. Ask your family and friends to view and critique your work.

More Advanced Projects

As you gain experience you will want to tackle more advanced projects and include narration, interviews, photographs, transitions and animation.

With advanced projects your planning needs to be more rigorous. It is a good idea to create a folder on your computer where you save everything associated with the project. Collecting your initial ideas and research in a document is called a *treatment*.

The treatment is then refined further to produce a shot list or a storyboard. If your video is really dialog-intensive, you may want to consider creating a script.

Further Reading

I am a big fan of reading to gain knowledge while working on your projects. The more experience you gain, the more you will be able to appreciate the advice contained in books.

Coming up with project ideas is not always easy. I would like to recommend two excellent books, both written before smartphones were invented, but still very valid today. They discuss the process of initiating video projects. They also list many exciting projects and how to go about executing them:

1. How To Make Real Life Videos, for the class and home – Matthew Williams
2. CNET Do-It-Yourself Home Video Projects, 24 cool things you did not know you can do – Troy Dreier

Assistance

There is a lot to learn, and to carry to locations. It is not a bad idea to team up with a friend.

Also, if you have older kids, it can be fun to involve them in your projects...