



What Gear Do I Buy?!

A Worksheet



Try not to buy anything. Ask yourself, "What am I presenting?" and "How can I connect with my audience?"

Your video should do 3 things:

- 1) Entertain
- 2) Inform
- 3) Show People Why You Are Special To Them

With whatever video equipment you have, ask:

Can my audience see me?

Can my audience hear me?

Can my audience connect with me?

When selecting a camera, ask yourself:

- a) Am I live-streaming or recording?
- c) Where am I?
- e) How much scenery do I need to see?

- b) Am I shooting it myself?
- d) What is my background?
- f) Where will I distribute this?

The easiest set up is to use your phone. If it's noisy where you shoot or if you have to be more than 3 feet from the camera, get a lavalier microphone to plug into your phone.

Get a stand for your phone unless you really need to move the camera around. Desk web cameras can work but the microphone quality can be questionable. Test, look, and listen.

If you need to blur the background, think about getting a camera with the ability to switch lenses or think about your post production editing options.

Lighting -

Shoot in consistent lighting. Make sure you have enough light on your face. Light both sides of your face. Make sure that there is enough light that the image doesn't look grainy and make sure the light isn't so bright that the definition gets blown out with brightness. LED lights abound. Get one or two with dimmers and diffusers so you can wash the light evenly over your face. Light your background specifically, but make sure your face is the brightest thing in the frame.

Sound-

Get the microphone as close as you can to your mouth. Five to eight inches is a good ballpark distance. Make sure your environment is quiet and that there isn't too much reverberation in the room. People need to hear your message. Microphone and recording technology has really improved in the past twenty years. Microphones under \$100 can most likely get the job done for you as long as you give them a good environment to work with.

Editing Software-

There are so many versions of editing software, start with the free ones and only buy a software when you want to do something the software can't do. Being able to cut, fade, and add simple titles will do a lot for you as long as you record clean audio and video. You may find that being able to edit the audio is more important to you. For that, there is also free software you can try.

The trick is to build your critical eye and ear. Look at what you have. Listen to what you have. Is it dark? Is it grainy? Is it washed out? Is it blurry? Is it too loud or too quiet? Does it look clean? Is the talent the focus? What would make it look and sound better? No one piece of equipment is good for all settings. Know what you have before you look for what you need.

