



STORYTELLER'S
CONSERVATORY

2020

SELF- TAPE HACKS

HOME
SET-UPS
FOR PRO
AUDITION
TAPES



WELCO- ME TO TODAY'S HACKS!



TODAY'S
AGENDA

- 1 VIDEO
- 2 AUDIO
- 3 LIGHTING
- 4 ACCESSORIES
- 5 SOFTWARE

CASTING HAS CHANGED

THE INDUSTRY
MAY
NEVER BE THE
SAME

The longer COVID lasts and people begin to invest in equipment for their home set-up casting directors are going to start seeing a difference in quality, and we don't want to be on the lower end of that. Having the best video and audio will start to separate the pros from the amateurs. At some point the grace for adapting to self-tape auditions will dry up and CD's are going to expect more professional submissions, even from home.



But that doesn't mean you need to break your bank to get professional grade auditions. Here we've provided some examples of better equipment you can start to slowly accumulate, as well as helpful hacks to give you a sharp audition tape- all to set you ahead of actors opting to stick to the bare minimum.



TODAY'S HACKS

BRIEF
INTRODUCTION →

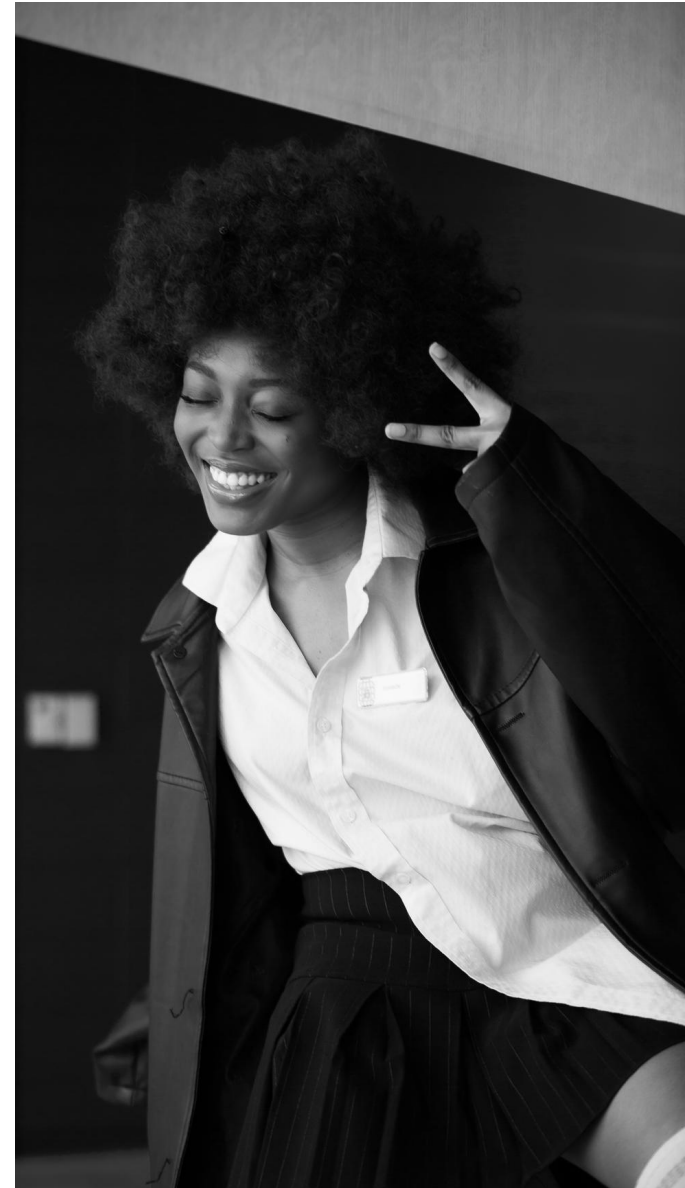
There are three pillars to a great self-tape product:

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- 1 Great Audio
 - 2 Great Video
 - 3 Great Lighting

After nailing these 3 there's just a few other elements that add an extra sheen to your presentation. We're gonna touch on all of this. So here we go...

GREAT LOOKING VIDEO

Smartphones are a great place to start, and most have excellent image quality, the only sacrifice is audio quality and that they don't allow you to easily focus solely on the actor - which is what adds that crisp cinematic effect...



TIP

Keep Camera eye-level: Whether you're using a DSLR, laptop, or iPhone, make sure your camera is eye-level. Your audience shouldn't be looking up or down at you.

LOOK AT THESE EXAMPLES

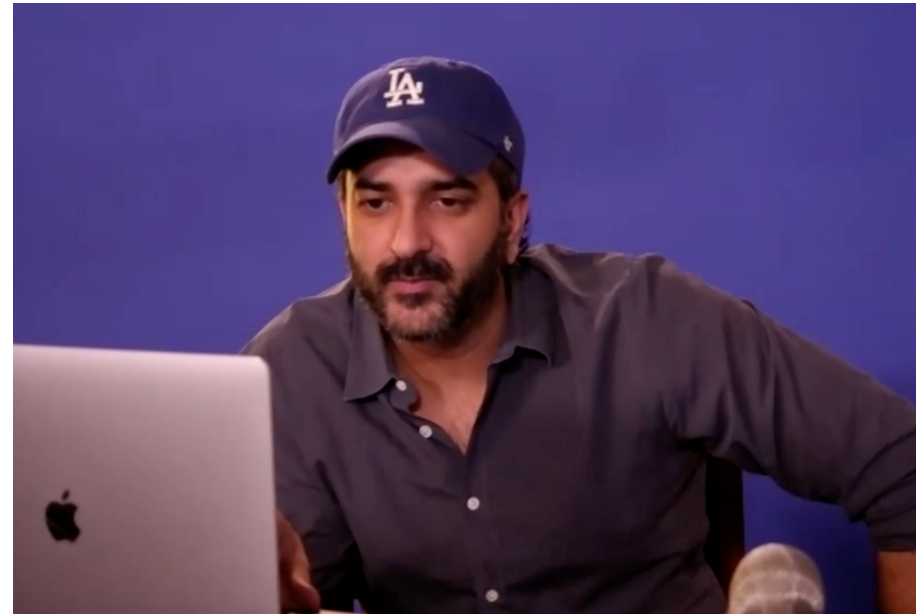


LAPTOP CAM

Just using your laptop or iPad for LIVE video auditions will prevent CD's from seeing the fine nuance of your performance, and that's a waste of all your hard work and skill.

DSLR CAM

The key is to control what people are seeing. You become more cinematic when you control what people are seeing. Camcorders and iPhones are great, but typically take everything into focus. You go to a new level when you have a DSLR camera - at least 1080p - with interchangeable lenses. This allows you to play around with the focus, using lenses to put yourself into focus and the background out of focus: controlling where your audience focuses- on you.



VIDEO

REMEMBER: IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE THE NEWEST OR FANCIEST CAMERA!



* DSLR
CAM

- There are many great brands including [Canon](#) and [Nikon](#).
- The brand and model isn't as important as the ability to change lenses, and record at least 1080p. Also find out how long it can record in one take (For example, some only record for 10min at a time).



* Adapters

- If you want to use a DSLR for a live (zoom) audition you'll need additional equipment, such as an [adapter](#) to compress the footage/audio from your DSLR/mics and transmit it into your laptop for your audience to view.

TIP

Compress your video: Compress all videos to 720p to send. It's best to capture your video at 1080p/4K then compress it to 720p to send. This way the image will turn out a little sharper than just capturing at 720p.

GREAT SOUNDING AUDIO

Many people who will forgive lower quality image won't forgive bad audio. Bad audio can kill your audition. The golden rule of audio: the further you are from the microphone the worse you'll sound. Also, the better quality mic you get, the more you eliminate room/location noise which distracts from your performance.



AUDIO INS AND OUT... PUTS

SIDE MICS

Desktop "Podcast" type mics are great for zoom auditions, but make sure you are directing the side of the mic to your mouth, not the "top" of the mic. It may be tempting to point the top at your mouth like a typical stage mic but that isn't how it's designed to capture sound.



Boom pole

DIRECTIONAL MICS

A Boom mic is a "directional mic" that should have the top/tip pointed in the direction of your voice. You will probably need a boom pole and something like a c-stand to set up your boom mic if you don't have someone to hold it for your self-tape.



AUDIO

REMEMBER: YOU ALWAYS WANT TO BE CLOSER THAN YOUR READER IS TO YOUR MIC



* Smart-phone mics

- If you're starting off by upping your Smart-Phone self-tape game, investing in a mic that attaches directly to your phone ipad or laptop could upgrade your sound.



* Desk Mics

- A desktop mic is a great addition to your LIVE call auditions where you are sitting close to your camera or laptop.



* LAV mics

- LAV mics that attach to somewhere on your person are always great options. Just watch out for rustling clothes, and have a separate mic positioned for your Reader.

* Boom Mics

- Boom mics are a favorite in the business and fantastic for your self-tape set up. If you set up a boom for your Reader and have a LAV mic on yourself- for instance- you can later edit that audio to get an optimal sound.

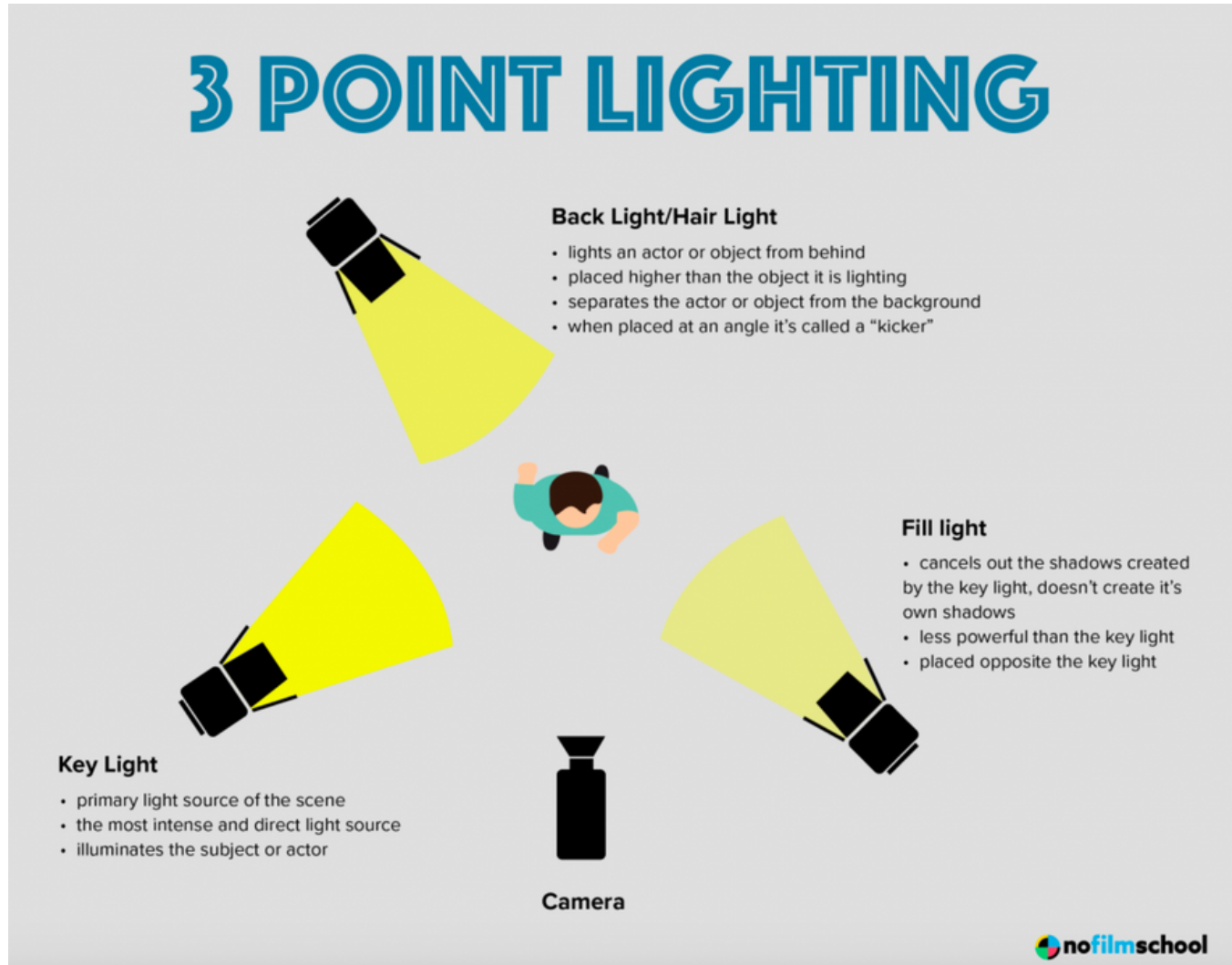


GREAT LOOKING ~~LIGHTING~~

Correct lighting will ensure your audience sees the detail of your performance. There are a few different simple ways to set up great lighting for your self-tape...



LIGHT IT UP



3-Point Lighting

Three point lighting creates beautiful 3 dimensional illumination for your video image.

BACK-LIGHT / HAIR-LIGHT

Gives you a nice separation from the background.



Can also be set behind to point at the backdrop to eliminate shadows.



LIGHTING



* Ring Light

- A ring-light is a popular option for self-tapes, just be sure to
- position it well, so it doesn't leave a distracting ring of light
- in your eyes. This will really take the attention off your brilliant performance.



* LED Panels

- LED light panels (with orange/tungston, or white light) are a
- great option for your self-tape setup. Just one of these
- panels would probably be enough, as long as you have a good back light to go along with it.

**REMEMBER: YOUR BACKLIGHT AND
FILL LIGHT SHOULD BOTH BE 1/50
LESS POWERFUL THAN YOUR KEY
LIGHT**

ACCESSORIES

TELEPROMPTER ↓



A teleprompter isn't necessarily needed unless you're doing a lot of Host or Commercial work where you're required to look directly into the camera when you speak.

BACKDROP → ↓



ALL OF THE LINKS/PICS ARE JUST EXAMPLES OF THE TYPES OF EQUIPMENT OUT THERE. WITH RESEARCH YOU CAN FIND THE MODEL/PRICE THAT WILL WORK BEST FOR YOU

Whether you use a backdrop, or paint your wall, make sure you use a color that is a good contrast to your skintone. For instance, don't do white on white!

↓ C-STANDS



C-Stands help with setting up and positioning anything from lighting to boom-mics.

SOFTWARE

AND

APPS



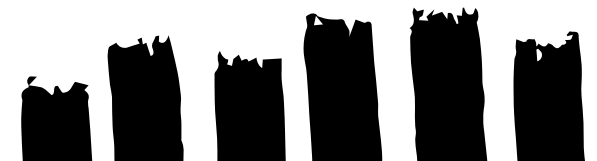
Upgrade you editing game from iMovie with FREE Davinci Resolve. This will allow you to fine tune your self-tape, perfecting audio, color and transitions before shipping it off to the CD.



If you're doing a lot of teleprompter work, Promptsmart will sync your smart device and give you full control of your teleprompter.



Occasionally you'll need to compress or convert your video before you can send it in. This program will make sure you have the right *kind* of file, and *size* of file to turn in to the CD.



ZOOM TIPS



INTERNET CONNECTION

01

Make sure it's FAST! Best way to kill a smooth audition is to lose connection, or have choppy connection. And of course- you'd also be losing the most important connection of all for an actor: your connection with the Reader.

VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS

02

Don't use them. They're distracting and cheesy. They'll only detract from your performance. Just use the lighting and backdrop tips we've already gone over.

SAVING THE CHAT

03

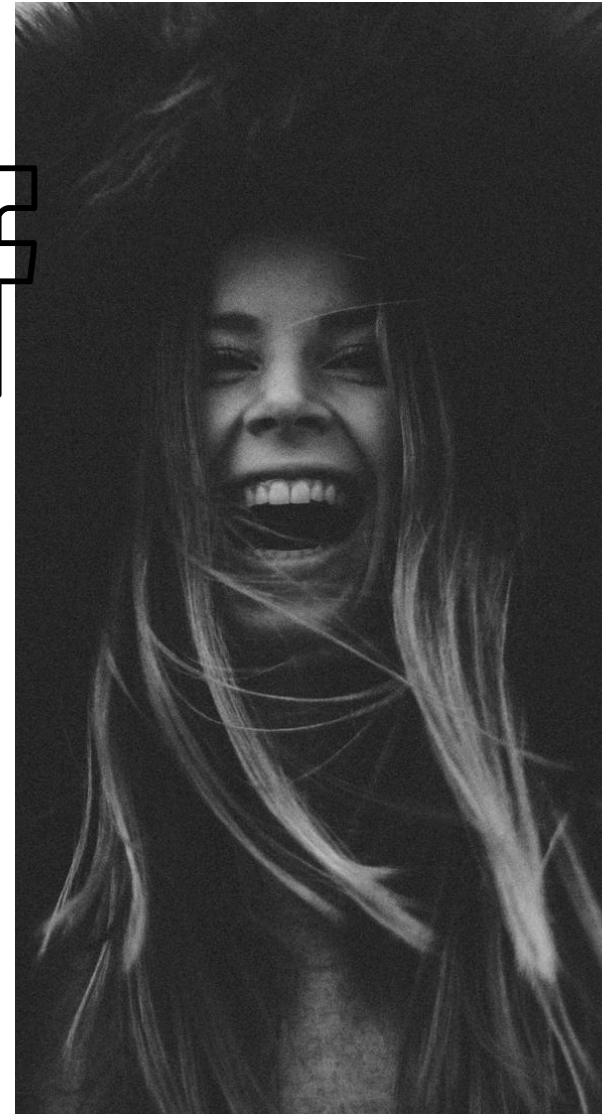
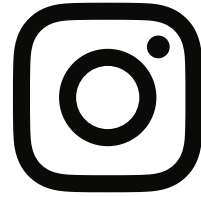
If you have been getting good notes or info in the chat, there is an option to save the chat in a text doc onto your computer. Just remember to do it before you log off the call!

CHAT PROTOCOL

04

There's a way to select whether you're chatting with everyone, or sending a private message to someone specific on the call. Make sure you have the right option selected before you push "send." And be careful, anyone who "Saves" the chat and looks at it later will see everything that was said in private messages too!

NOW GO KILL THOSE SELF TAPES!



Hope you feel more prepared to be a cut above the crowd! Check out the Storyteller's Conservatory SM and PODCAST for more hacks to help **ACT LIKE A PRO!**