

EAST  WEST

FILMING WITH A SMARTPHONE

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Introduction

This reference guide will help walk you through some tips on how to record video professionally using your phone so that the professionalism of East-West's messaging is maintained, despite what audience you may be communicating to.



***Note:**

The specific examples included in this document are taken from an iPhone, however the information herein pertains to all smartphones.

Need-to-Know Terms

1. “Native” Camera App: the stock/default app that controls your phone’s camera.
2. Framerate/Frames Per Second (FPS): the rate of playback or the rate of capture your phone video is set to (i.e. 24fps, 60fps, 120fps, etc.)
3. Exposure: the brightness setting that you can adjust while filming/taking photos (i.e. by default the setting is set to “auto-exposure”)
4. Orientation: the position you hold your phone in - horizontal (sideways) or vertical (upright). This plays a major role in how you use video!
5. Field-of-View (FOV): this refers to how wide or tight your shot is when taking pictures or filming. Most phone cameras have an FOV equivalent to a 28mm lens (which is considered wide). When you zoom in, your FOV reduces.
6. Depth-of-Field: this refers to how blurry the background is when the camera is focused on you or a subject. Shallow depth-of-field creates a more “cinematic” or movie-like image. However, phones are generally bad at producing shallow depth-of-field.
7. Resolution: the quality or pixel count of a photo or video (i.e. 720p, 1080p, 4k, etc.) The higher the resolution, the more crisp the image.

Filming

Tactics & Techniques

STEP 1: Filming Location

Before you ever press record, choose a location to film.

Important: it's important to note that your location communicates just as much as what you verbally communicate in your video. Be intentional with where you film as this will influence viewers on how they perceive your message.



Fig 1A:
Windows are a large, soft light source.

Some good things to keep in mind:

1. Lighting

The best way to get good lighting is to film by a window during the day (see Fig.1A). If necessary, draw the shades slightly or film by a different window to avoid being in direct, harsh sunlight. Also, if you must film outside, be sure not to stand in direct sunlight. Find a shaded area where the lighting is more tamed. Soft light is key to getting a more pleasant, professional look.

2. Distractions in the background

Having objects in your background that are either (*a.*) moving or (*b.*) disorganized will instantly take the focus off of you. Make sure to have a clean, organized background with no additional moving subjects (i.e. ceiling fans, people, pets, etc.).

STEP 2: Stationing Your Phone

Set your phone on something stable (i.e. against a stack of books on a desk or stool).

***Note:** if you plan on filming yourself more than once or twice, it is highly recommended to invest in stabilization. All you need is a simple tripod and phone mount (see Fig 2A). In most cases, very cheap options can be found at Walmart, Best Buy, or on Amazon.

STEP 3: Check Device Storage

Make it a *habit* to check your device's storage. If you don't have enough space on your phone, it will cutoff your recording time. You wouldn't want to be in the middle of a good take!

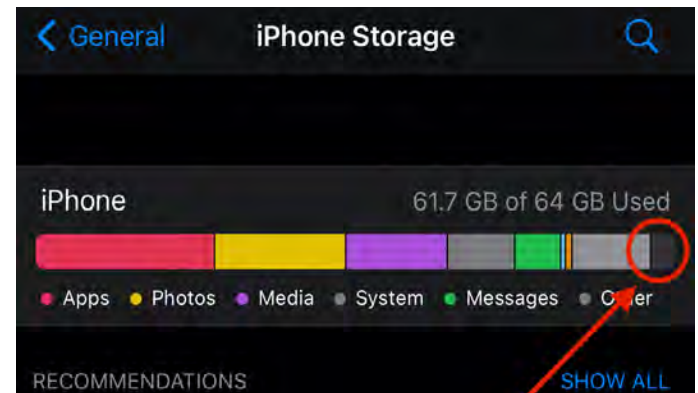
STEP 4: Choose Camera

If your phone gives you the option, choose which camera you'll be using: front-facing (selfie mode) or outward-facing.

Important: it is key to note that the outward camera on smartphones is far superior to the selfie camera, therefore use the outward-facing camera as often as you can for the best quality.



Fig 2A:
Ex. phone mount + tripod setup.



Step 3: check your storage.

STEP 5: Camera Orientation

Choose what orientation you will be filming in: horizontal or vertical (see Fig 3A).

***Note:** there is much debate on what orientation is the best. However, for the sake of being consistent with how traditional cameras film, turn your phone sideways and film horizontally - utilizing a wider field of view.

***EXCEPTION:**

The only exception to this rule is if you are filming specifically for vertical format platforms like Instagram/Facebook stories.

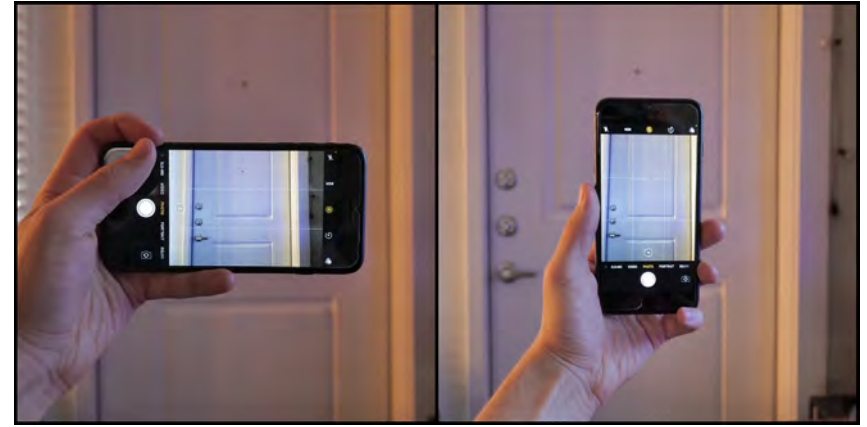


Fig 3A:

Ex. horizontal vs. vertical orientation.

STEP 6: Subject Placement

Position yourself no more than 3 ft. away from your phone (see Fig 3B). The closer you are, the less “room noise” (echo) will be heard and the clearer your phone will record your voice. This is especially important if you’re filming outside with much more noise occurring around you. If you have the budget to invest in a lapel microphone, it would be wise to do so. These can also be found at a low cost on Amazon (recommended brands for gear purchases will be listed at the end of this document for reference).



Fig 3B:

Ex. sitting 2½ feet away from phone.

STEP 7: Adjust Exposure

Once you are positioned, adjust your exposure so that the image has proper brightness and is not over or under exposed (See fig. 4B, 4C, and 4D).

Simply tap on the screen where your subject is and drag up to brighten the image or down to darken the image.

Important: pay close attention to step 8 on the following page. Most phones adjust exposure automatically. This is teaching you how to do it manually so you have control over your settings.

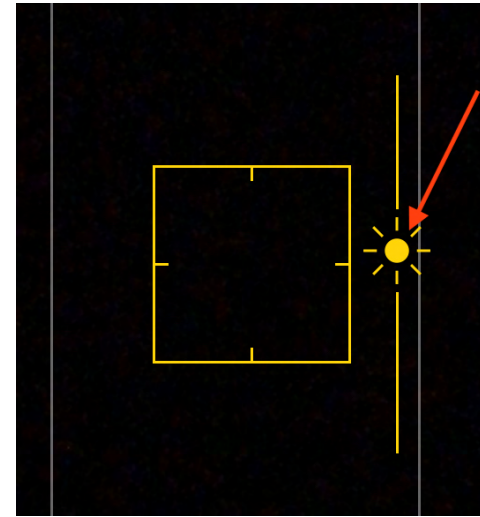


Fig 4A:

Drag up/down to adjust exposure.

*This setting may look different on other phones.

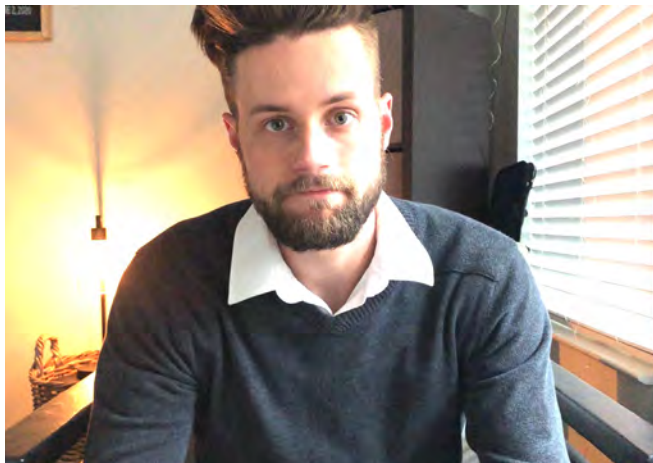


Fig 4B:

Image is overexposed.

*Notice the right-side of the face. This is referred to as “blown-out highlights.”

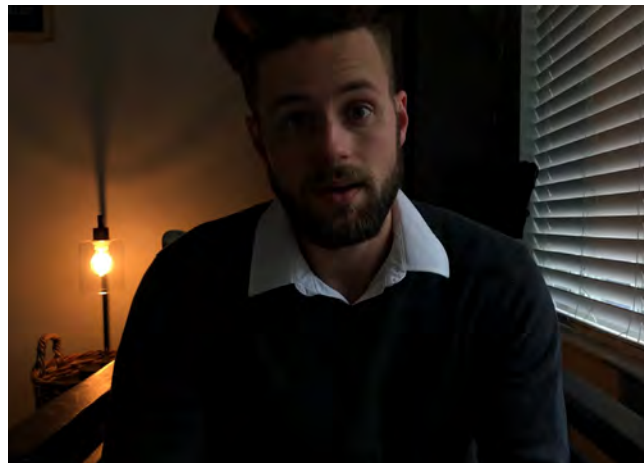


Fig 4C:

Image is underexposed.

*Notice the left of the face is hardly visible. This is referred to as “crushed-shadows.”

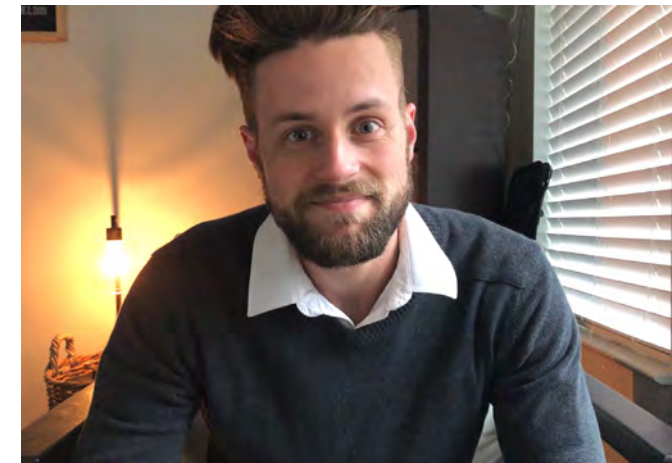


Fig 4D:

Image is properly exposed.

*Contrast is pleasantly balanced across the face from left to right.

STEP 8: Lock Exposure

Lock your exposure. Simply press and hold on the screen where your subject is and your phone will lock both exposure and focus.

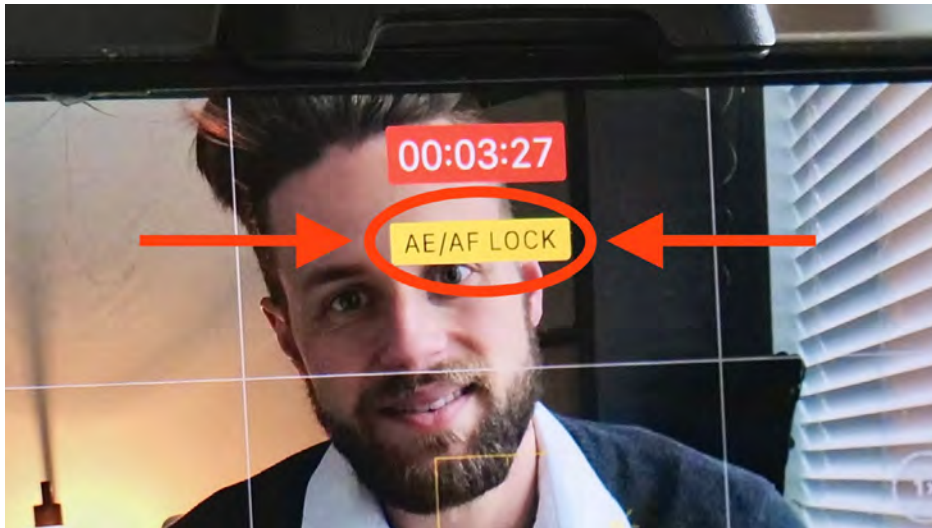


Fig 5A:

“AE/AF Lock” stands for “auto-exposure/auto-focus lock.”



Fig 5B:

Even if you move, the box will stay locked in the position you put it in, keeping the exposure and focus from changing.

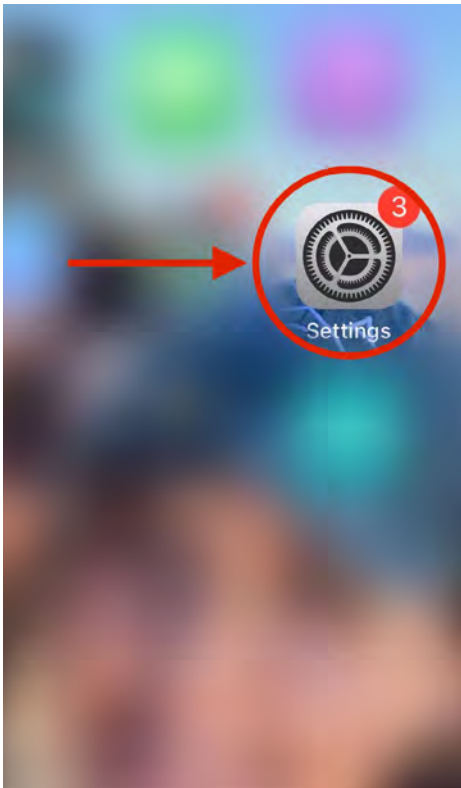
Now you are ready to film!

Advanced Camera Settings

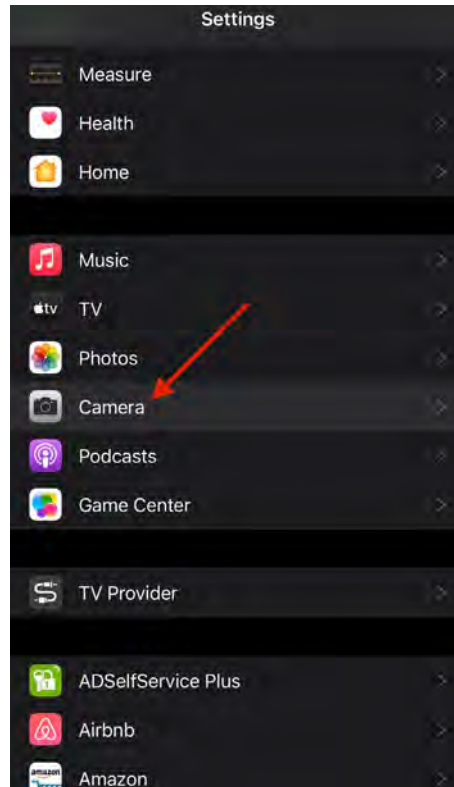
(Optional Settings for Additional Quality)

1. Framerate and Resolution

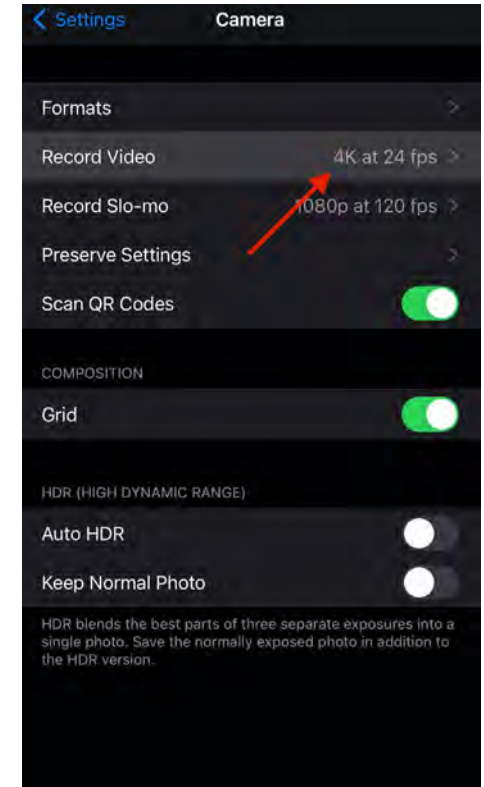
If your phone has the ability to do so, let's adjust some settings within the settings menu of your phone to optimize the video quality.*



1. Go to phone settings



2. Scroll down to camera



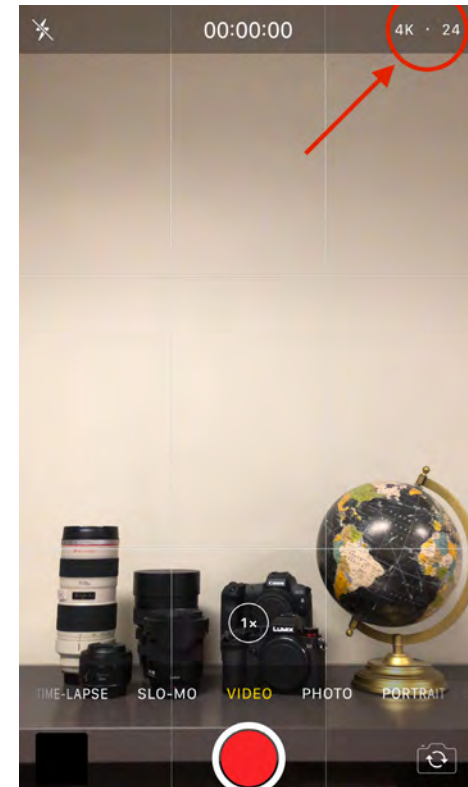
3. Tap on "Record Video"

*This step will vary across devices, however the process will be similar across any contemporary smartphone.

Framerate and Resolution (cont.)



4. Notice it's set to 4k 24fps. If your phone has the ability to shoot 4k, set it accordingly (most new phones default to 4k 30fps, so you will need to change the framerate or "fps" - frames per second). 24fps is considered the all-around best looking for viewing.

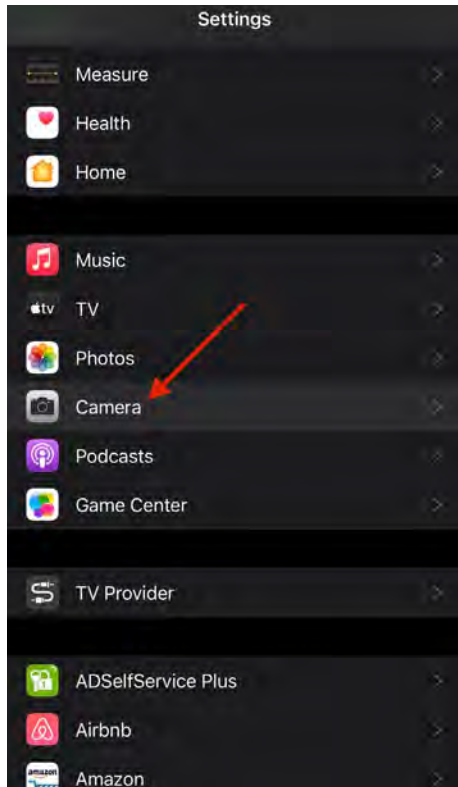


5. When you open the native camera app, you'll see these settings reflected in the top corner of the screen when in video mode.

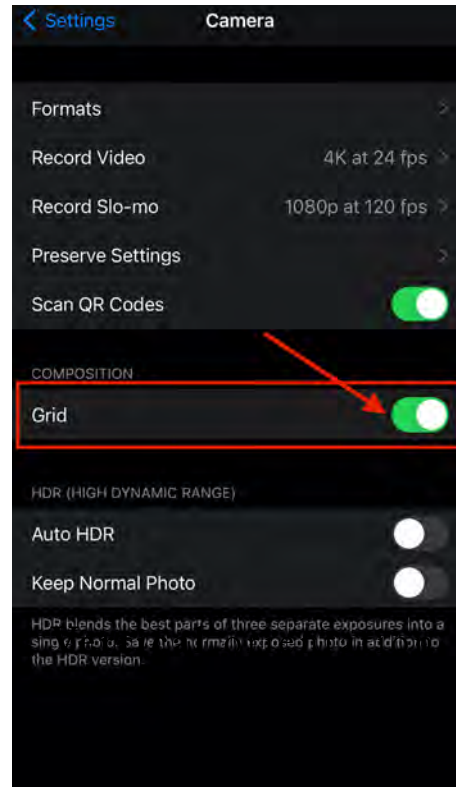
*4K video is becoming more standard today. It produces a sharper image and is a way to upload videos with future-proofed quality.

2. Grid Lines and File Formats

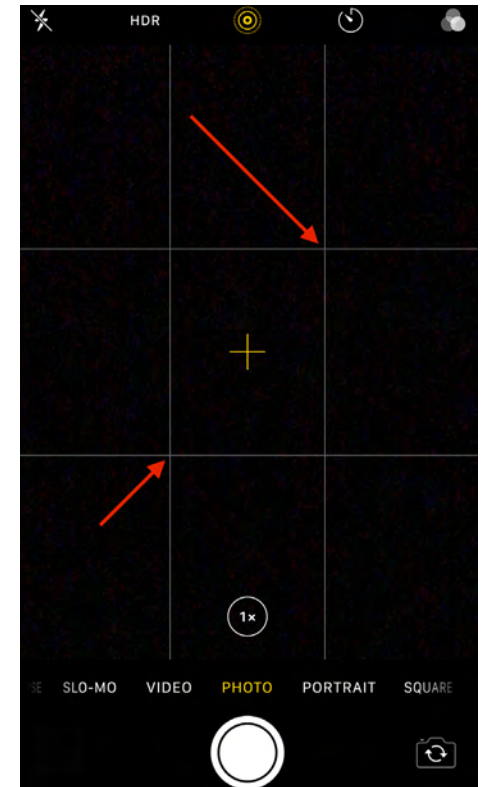
Again, if your phone has the ability to do so, let's make a couple more changes that will ensure more professional results.



1. Go back to camera settings (Settings menu > Camera).

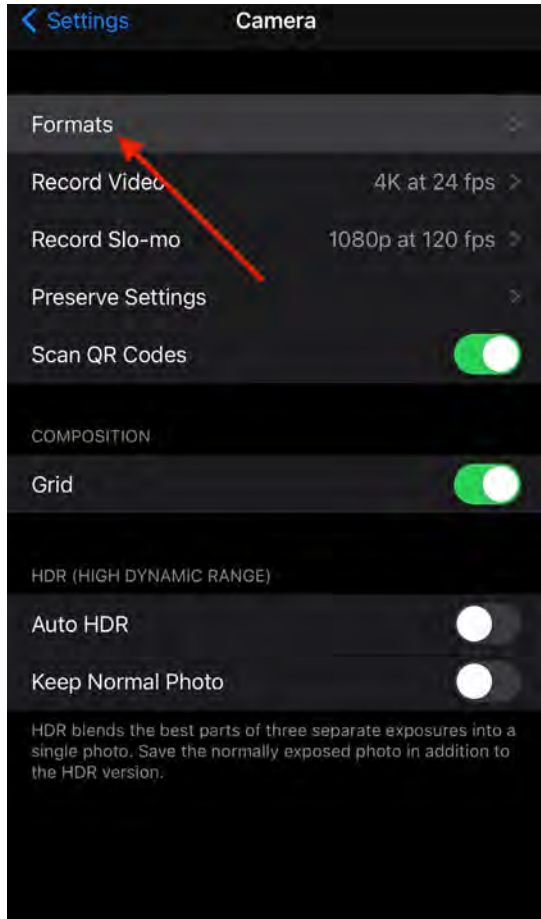


2. Enable grid lines. This will appear as thin, horizontal and vertical crossing lines in your camera app.

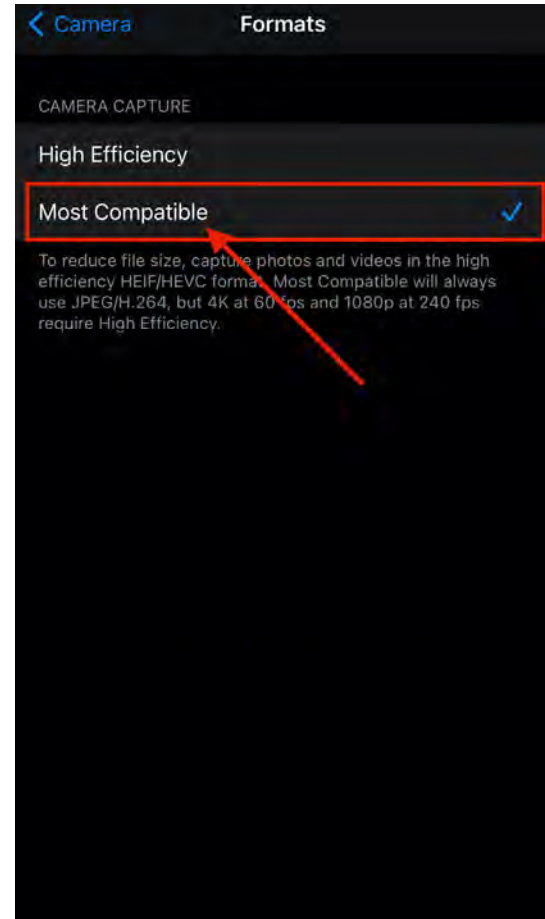


3. When you open your camera again, you'll see a grid dividing the frame in thirds. This is a reference tool to help you get symmetrical, well composed shots.

Grid Lines and File Formats (cont.)

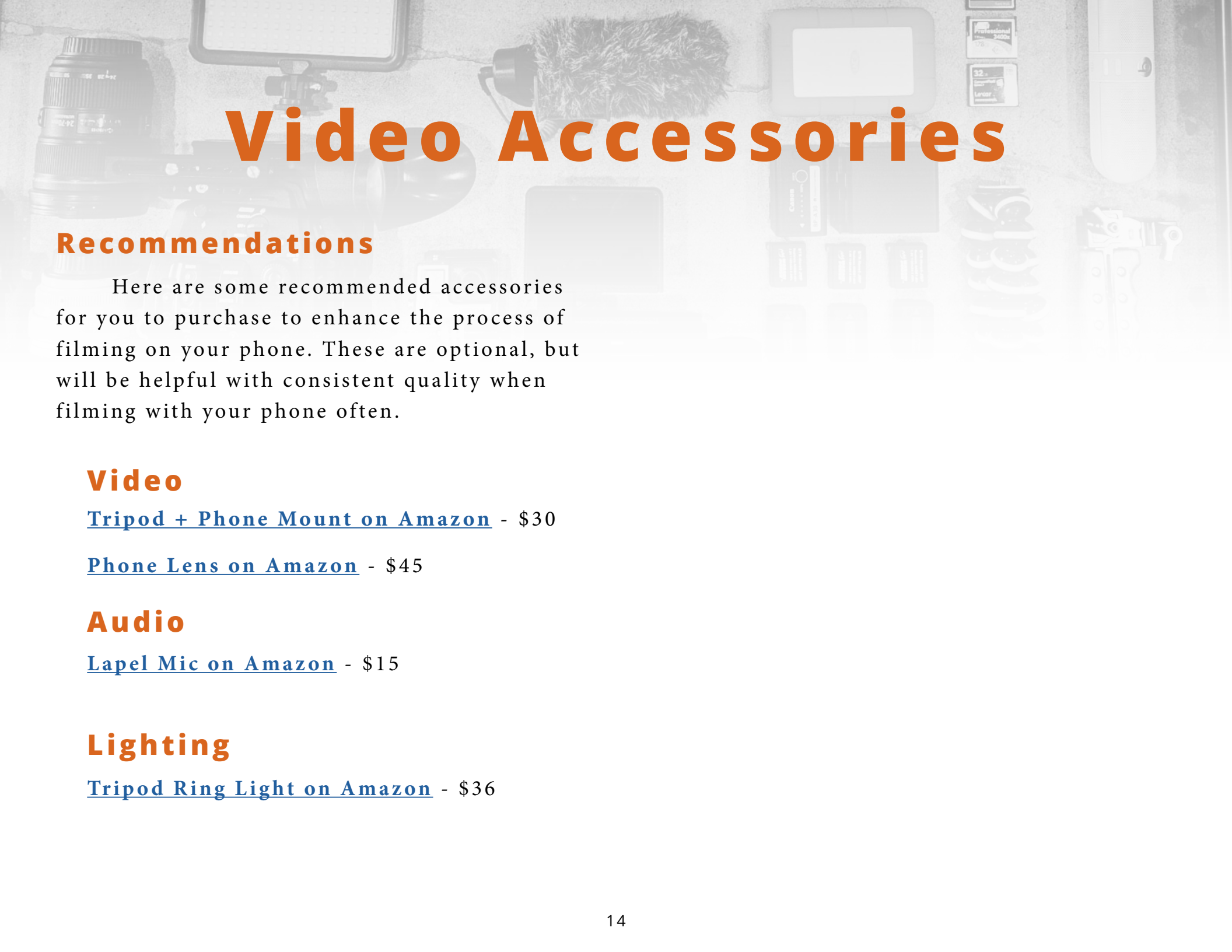


4. Go back to the camera settings menu and then tap 'Formats'.



5. Change the format of camera capture to 'Most Compatible.' This will make video files a little larger but will allow videos to store more information, thus making their quality better for editing in-post.*

*These adjustments won't produce a night and day difference, however they will be effective in going the extra mile to put quality first.



Video Accessories

Recommendations

Here are some recommended accessories for you to purchase to enhance the process of filming on your phone. These are optional, but will be helpful with consistent quality when filming with your phone often.

Video

[Tripod + Phone Mount on Amazon](#) - \$30

[Phone Lens on Amazon](#) - \$45

Audio

[Lapel Mic on Amazon](#) - \$15

Lighting

[Tripod Ring Light on Amazon](#) - \$36