



Video and Photo Shooting Tips: Make Your Footage Look Better

(Some tips modified from Magisto http://www.magisto.com/videoarticles/shooting_tips)

1. Get to know your video camera – Set aside some time to really learn how to use your video camera. Sit down with your camera and manual and go through it, trying out the features.

2. Use a tripod to avoid shaky footage –Shaky images make it difficult to read pet body language. We want the pet to be moving not the camera! When you use a tripod this also frees up your hands so you don't have to stand behind the camera—you can get in front too.

3. Practice camera movements –Practice panning from side to side and zooming in and out. Plan to use as little zoom and camera movement as possible. Use slow, steady, fluid motions. Many people zoom and pan too quickly and it will disguise your pet's body language. Frame your shot and leave the camera still to capture the action.

4. Composition- Practice getting closer video of your pet's body signals (tail movement, pupils, entire body, etc) and video that includes your pet interacting with other pets, people and environmental factors that are important. DO NOT allow a fight or aggressive behavior (bites, scratches, etc) to actually occur. If your cat is having litterbox challenges, try to capture video of the cat eliminating in or out of the box. Photos of the stool, urine, area and box can also be helpful.

5. Lighting – Lighting is incredibly important. Not enough light, your footage may look grainy and unclear. Too much, your footage may look washed out or there may be harsh shadows.

- Natural light is best, so even if you are shooting inside during the day you should try to get as much sunlight in through the windows. If you need, you can add indoor lighting to get clear visuals of body signals.

- If you are shooting outside during the day, keep the sun behind your back and shining on your subject. However, it may be best to avoid shooting during midday when the sunlight is at its strongest to avoid harsh shadows.

- At night you can use lights and lamps inside to create as much light as possible.

6. Smart Phone Direction- Please video with your smart phone held horizontal in order to get the largest video field.

7. Video potential physical issues- If I have asked you for video of a potential physical problem related to arthritis, degenerative joint disease, partial toe amputation (declawing) or other movement impairing issue please review this video www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7hnAFNFjW0 and do the following:

- Place camera on tripod or stable surface at end of a hallway, start filming

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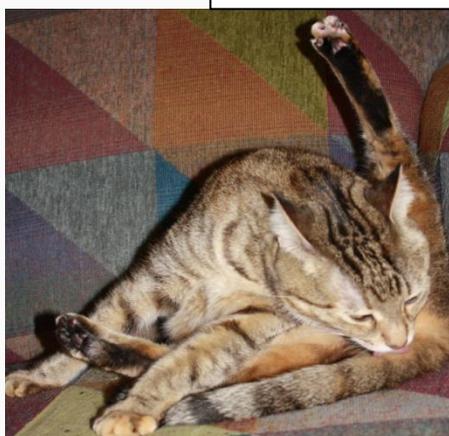
-Call your cat or use treats to get your cat to WALK a few times towards and away from the camera

- Film your cat jumping up and down on surfaces (chairs, cat trees, etc). The camera needs to be held still, not move with the cat.

- If your declawed cat will let you, photograph the bottom of the cat's paws with clear definition of the pads. You might need someone to photo while you handle the cat. Try to get the pictures while kitty is in a position they normally enjoy, at a time they normally enjoy it. For example, wait until they are relaxing on their back with their paws up, sitting on a glass-top table (photo from below), grooming with their feet sticking out, pick them up and cradle like a baby or hold over your shoulder with their paw up. However your cat can be relaxed!



Catch a photo when Kitty is resting or grooming. Or train Kitty to wave those paws!



- Some technical reminders:
 - **CLEAR HD/Hi resolution images!** If the vet can only see an image of something blob like, it isn't helpful. You need to see clear facial features, slight variations/hesitations in gait and movement, definition of colors and features in small areas like the paw pads. You need good resolution to take photos and zoom-in on small details in the image. It is better in most cases to not zoom in

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while taking the photo/video because camera movement is greatly amplified, causing distortions in the image.

- **A stand for the video device.** The video camera to be still in order to capture slight problems in your cat's movements. Videos are useless if the camera is swinging around following the cat.
- **Lights!** You have to be able to SEE the cat on the video or photo and these devices often require far more light than people realize in order to produce clear images.
- **A method of sharing the images.** Video is likely to be too large to email without compression, and you need to make sure the end product doesn't stay compressed or you lose detail. File sharing programs (DropBox, Google Drive, Hightail, etc.) can be excellent for easily sharing both photos and videos in an organized fashion. Periodically, check these services out because they change and sometimes image quality is degraded. Some clients prefer to mail me flashdrives and I then create a fileshare for them and the vet. Some clients also like to use VOIP (i.g., Skype, Google +) with me to show me things their cat is doing and I can simply record the session. This file can then be shared with the vet. Not all VOIP allow you to record the session, so be sure to check first.