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10 x Basic Tips - Video Editing for Beginners

If you are new to video editing, how do you know what to do?

The process does not come naturally - unless you are Stephen Spielberg.

As with anything it all starts with planning what you intended to film. This will depend on the complexity of your video - but no matter what - you should have had some plan for what you were going to film.

Let's look at simple things you can to get started.

Consider these as the rules - be aware, that you can break the rules, to bring in your personality -

But as the saying goes; *"You need to know the rules before you can break them"*.

1. Know your audience.

The single most important consideration before you start editing your video is to imagine who will be watching the video. Do they want all the details or do they want to watch the video in as short a time as possible and still experience the story?

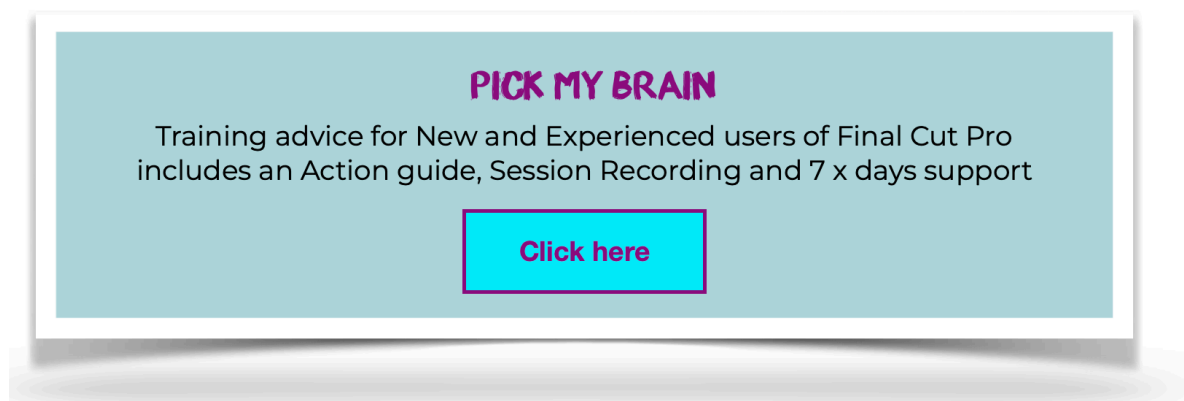
What will hold their attention?

If you have multiple audiences - then edit with more than one video.

2. Edit out the stuff you don't need – less is more.

This ties in with number 1. There are only two people who want to watch all that footage of a wedding video. The bride's mother and you. The bride's mother will even complain about scenes you missed. Everybody else will be asleep after 10 minutes

Remember, that the word "EDIT" actually means "Remove".



3. Keep it Simple.

The easiest way to edit most things is with a master shot and cutaways.

Let's say that you're making a music video.

The laziest way to do it is with one continuous shot of the entire performance synced to the audio track. This static shot by itself is boring and nobody wants to watch 3 minutes and

15 seconds of one continuous scene.

To improve the experience you also shoot “cutaways.”

After shooting your continuous shot, you go through again and shoot closeups of the guitar player grimacing musically, the singer shaking his mullet, the audience screaming and throwing their hotel room keys on the stage, and then you put these cutaways on the track above the continuous shot without interrupting the audio of the continuous shot.

The audio track that’s always synced to the continuous shot, and you can cut away to other shots to keep the video looking dynamic.

This also works with family footage and even a wedding.

Your main shot might be a 3 up-shot of the bride, groom, and the celebrant.

Then your cutaways will work best with a second camera.

They could include a medium shot of the bride’s father, a close-up of the bridesmaid crying, children fidgeting, a wide shot from the back of the hall, some panning shots across the audience.

If you don’t have a second camera then get these shots when there is a pause in the main ceremony. You could even get these shots before or after the ceremony.

This is why you need to plan the filming.

These extra shots are called “B-roll” which just means “other stuff” or fillers.

In your edit, you drop selections from your “B-roll” onto your main shot. You don’t want audio in the “B-roll” - the audio always comes from the main shot.

4. Keep each scene to only a few seconds

The audience gets bored if scenes are more than a few seconds in length. Switch from the Main shot then to “B” roll or cutaways. You can also use Still images Photos for cutaways.

5. Avoid Transitions except for fade and dissolve

Just because your computer has a star wipe transition doesn’t mean you are compelled to use it.

With the exception of a few scenes in Star Wars style video, you rarely need a transition other than a cut or a fade.

To the untrained eye, a star wipe might look cool, but that’s going to wear off.

On the other hand, if you want to create a start to a new story or show a scene that is a jump back in time, a transition could help the effect.

The real answer to transitions is - they have their place but as I said before, *“You need to know the rules before you can*

break them”.

6. Watch out for Jump Cuts

A jump cut is a long static shot with a middle section cut out. It's called a “jump” because while the viewer is looking at the shot, the person's head may jump from one place to another instantly.

One easy way to avoid a jump cut is to paste a cutaway over the edit; a cutaway can be almost anything – a close-up, a shot out the window, another person in the scene.

The idea is that the viewer isn't “looking” when the jump happens. The eye sees it but the brain does not register.

7. Watch for Continuity Errors

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8. Good editing is, for the most part, invisible

A good editor can take the viewer from point A to point B, and, when it's over, you won't remember how you got there.

Only that it was seamless and they were not distracted from the story, by some jarring editing effect.

9. Cut on the action

One powerful convention of editing is cutting on the action, this makes cuts flow together.

Of all the things that you can do to make your video look more professional - cutting on the Action will give the best results.

It's smoothest way to transition between shots, especially shots which may otherwise have nothing to tie them together.

Keep this in mind - It's the action itself that hides the cut.

A common example is a person walking up to a door and reaching for the knob.

Just as his hand touches the knob, this is the perfect opportunity to cut to a shot of the door opening from the other side.

The motion carries the viewer from one shot to the other.

It's important to pick a spot in the action that will connect the two shots.

Imagine a scene about football: obvious cuts would be when the player passes the ball, when the receiver catches it and when the defense tackles the receiver.

This doesn't mean that you have to cut there, but these are natural places to change camera angles.

Matching action is part of what is called classical cutting.

It means that, when you are cutting between action shots, all moving things - hands, heads - need to be in the same place at the end of one cut and the beginning of the next shot.

Even if you're not cutting the fast-paced action of a football game, everyday situations present plenty of motion.

people sitting down, turning, opening an oven, walking through a doorway, closing a car door.

These are all actions, and every one provides opportunities for making natural, seamless, and invisible cuts.

The action itself is a vehicle that holds the continuity between shots.

10. Organization

This should be number one or even two on your list of things you must do. Organization sounds like a boring subject and tends to be pretty erratic for beginners.

But that does not make it less important particularly as you progress for being beginners. In fact it's a "Must do" for any longer video.

I have a Youtube video that you should watch to give you a basic understanding of how to organize Final Cut Pro. <https://youtu.be/Kb7ahbgRbGo>



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“If you can’t explain it to a 6-year old,
you don’t know it yourself.”

Albert Einstein