

Tips for the beginner Rare disease filmmaker.

Use a tripod.

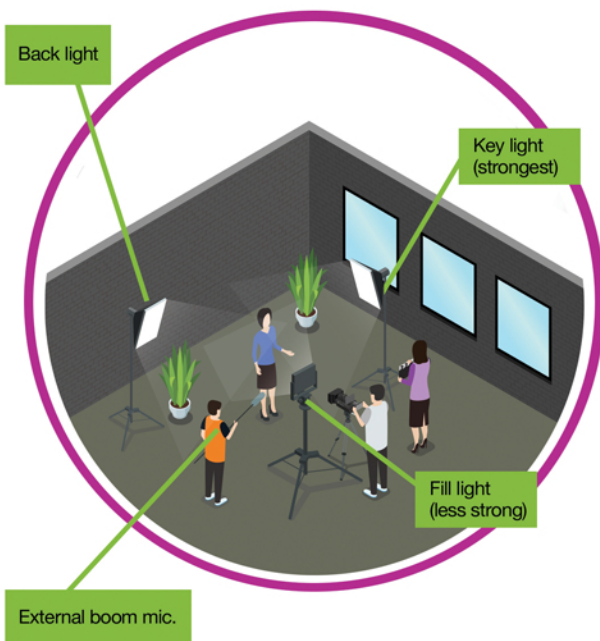
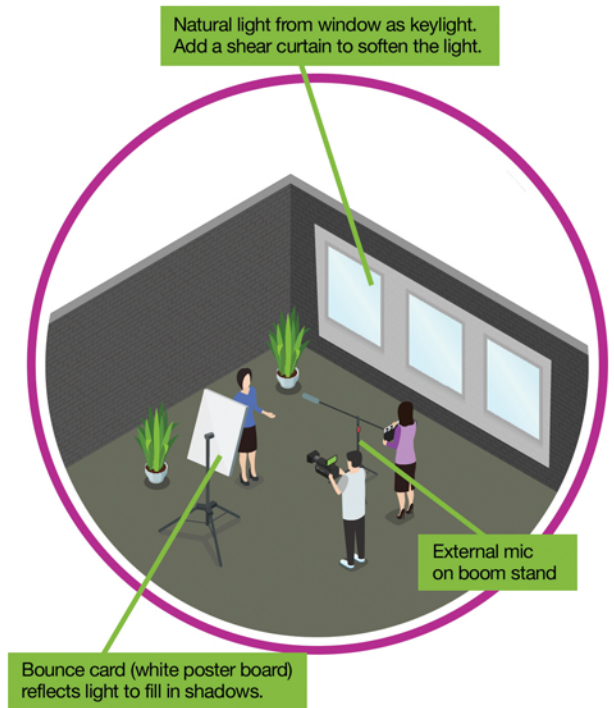
They can be cheap and adapters to hold smart phones are also cheap. Unless done for a specific effect, handheld camera footage can drive your audience away.

Note: when Hollywood goes “handheld” it’s with some pricey gyro stabilizing camera rigs, so it doesn’t look too handheld.

Use lights.

If you can't get lights, consider a sunny window with a sheer curtain. The sheer softens your main light. Position your interviewee so the light hits them well on one side. Then make or find a white bounce card (like a poster board) to go off camera on their less lit side. This will bounce some of the sunlight and reduce the shadows.

Keep the windows out of your shot, unless you're more experienced balancing for the light exposure.



Watch out for harsh shadows. Video interview light kits have become very inexpensive. But if you don't have one, even 500-watt work lights from the hardware store can work. They can get hot though. New LED versions stay cool. You probably want more light than you'd expect. More than normal room lighting. Having more light helps your camera get good colors. You can always darken your footage in editing if you want a different mood, but brightening dark footage is trickier.

If you have three lights to work with, learn the basics of “three point lighting”. There are many tutorials for this on YouTube.