

Top Ten Tips for Better Editing

1. Make Sure You Have Everything You Need

Editing software, a computer, and a card, firewire, or some other means of getting your media onto the editing station.

2. Establish Your Scene and Characters

If your audience doesn't know who they're watching or listening to, or where it's all taking place, they'll be confused and uninterested.

3. Be Organized

A list of all of the pieces from each take you might use will come in very handy.

4. Telling the Story Should Be Your First Priority

Technical wizardry and fancy effects can help tell your story, but don't let them sidetrack you or distract your audience.

5. Consider Captions and Voice-overs

If you need to cover a lot of information very quickly, and can't do it with the shots or audio you have, try using a caption or voice-over. This can be particularly useful for explaining jumps between places or times.

6. Try to Make the Volume Level of Each Scene More or Less the Same

If some scenes are louder than others, adjust them until their volume matches.

7. Keep It Varied

Cut together (i.e. assemble) different types of shots for a more exciting piece. For instance, try going from a wide shot to a close up.

8. Set the Pace

Simply put, lots of cuts result in a film or video with a fast, exciting pace. Fewer cuts result in a slower, more thoughtful film or video. The average TV show has a cut every four seconds or so. Too many cuts, however, can be confusing and distracting.

9. Select Good Transitions

Transitions, or effects that take you between one shot and another, will be included in most editing software. Common transitions include dissolves between pictures, fade to, and from, black, and wipes where one picture slides across another. They're well worth considering because fancy dissolves can look good, but if you overdo them, they can be distracting and take away from your video.

10. Select Needed Effects

Most editing software will usually come with a number of effects that you can add to your video, such as color changes and slow-motion. It's well worth experimenting with these to see if they might improve your video, but don't add effects just for the sake of adding them.