



Getting great feedback on videos

Objective

Getting great video feedback starts with submission of a great video! The following tips will help your long distance instructor give you the best feedback possible, whether that instructor is me, another instructor in my online classroom, or an instructor in another online classroom. Let's get started!

Dress Appropriately

It may seem strange that you'd need to dress appropriately for something you're just heading out to do in your back yard, but the clothes that you wear can affect the quality of the feedback your instructor can give you. If you want your instructor to be able to comment on your movements around the course with your dog, make sure that your movements can be seen. Wear bright colors that contrast with the background; for example, if you're working on a dirt surface, you don't want to be wearing brown pants, or your instructor won't be able to see your legs! If you're working on grass, avoid wearing green. And ALWAYS avoid wearing black, since it makes your body very difficult to observe on the screen.

In my videos, I make the effort to wear bright colors such as red, or blue. It's not just because I'm patriotic! I also try to wear clothing that has stripes or other features on it. For example, in many of my videos, I'm wearing a pair of athletic pants that have white stripes down the leg. These white stripes make it easier to see the angle of my legs as I move. And, I tend to wear tops that are either brightly colored and/or have stripes on them as well, so you can see my shoulders and arms better.

I try to wear clothing that is not lumpy or loose. Not only is it difficult for me to run in loose lumpy clothing, but it makes it difficult for an observer to even tell if they're looking at my front or my back end! Even if I might not feel entirely comfortable in snug fitting clothing, I know that to an observer watching my videos, snug clothing is going to make it easier to see my body, and how it's moving.

Make sure you're lit appropriately

You might not have complete control over the lighting in your videos, but you can at least avoid some of the more common pitfalls that make videos difficult to view with respect to lighting.

- Avoid backlighting situations. If you're inside a barn or building, and there's an open door, wall, or window, and the light is streaming in through it from outside, avoid pointing your

camera in that direction. If your camera is pointed toward bright light coming through the middle of a solid wall (i.e. a door, or window to the outside), then anything that is in between that light source and your camera is going to show up as a black outline, and no matter how brightly dressed you are, your instructor is going to have a hard time seeing any of your physical details. Put that bright source of light, the door, window, etc., **BEHIND** your camera.

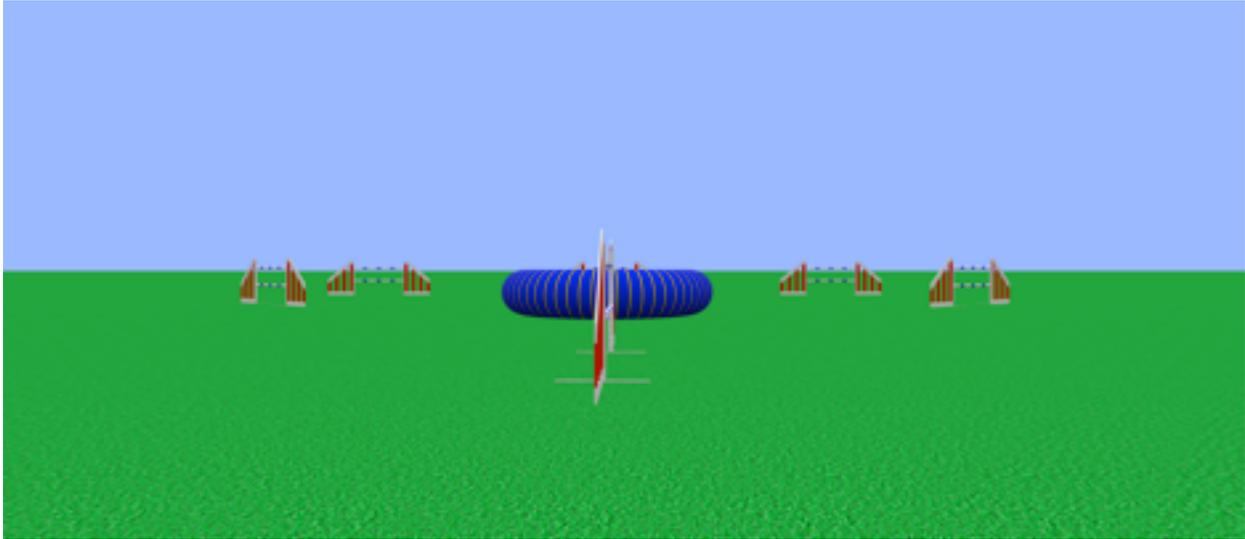
- Film when the sun is high in the sky. You might not have complete control over when you get to do your training, but whenever possible, avoid dim conditions, such as sunrise and sunset. Not only is the sun lower in the sky at these times, providing less light, but the angle of the light from the sun can lead to “flat” conditions, making it difficult for your instructor to figure out the spacing between obstacles in your set up.
- Point your camera away from the sun. Whether the sun is low or high, if you’re filming outside, be sure to put the sun behind your camera, instead of in front of it.
- Check for lens flares. Set up your camera where it’s going to be for your video, and film a short clip. Walk around in that clip. Check to see that you’re visible, and that there are no flares of light in the film, caused by light refracting inappropriately in your camera lens.

Film from a good angle

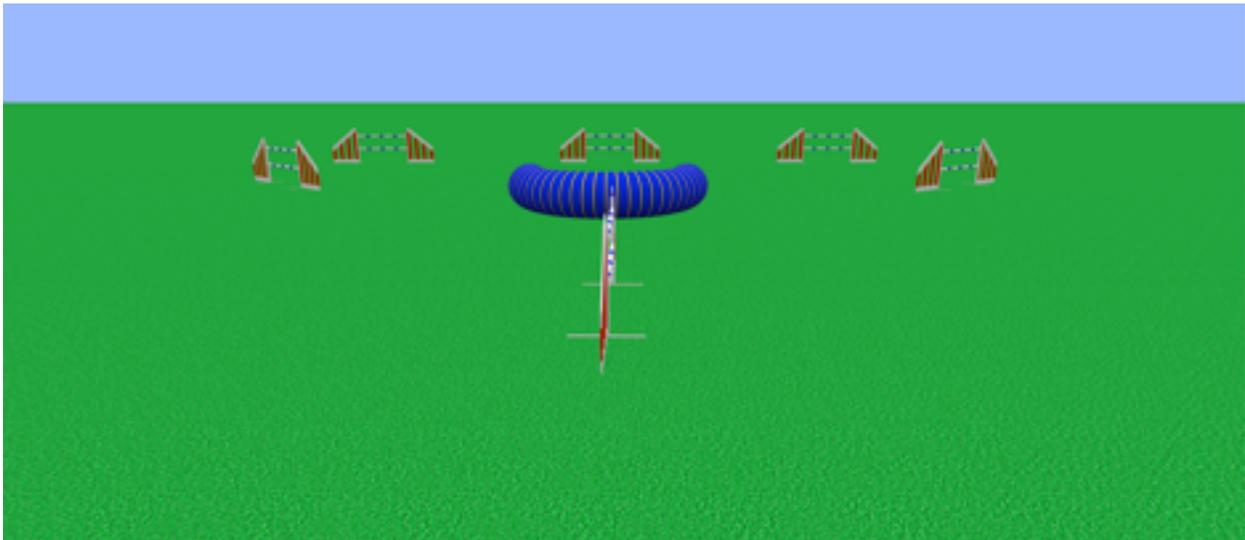
One of the biggest problems with trying to give feedback on videos is that it can be difficult to determine the spacing between the obstacles in your set up. Filming from a good angle can greatly determine the quality of the feedback you receive.

- Film from above. If at all possible, film from a height that is above your own height. If your camera is too low, it is going to be difficult for your instructor to see the whole sequence.
- Film at an angle. If you’ve got your camera set up so that it is pointed straight through the obstacles, your instructor will have a hard time perceiving any depth to your video. Film at an angle that allows all of the obstacles to be seen, with some perspective, so your instructor can get a feel for the distances between obstacles, and their spatial relationship to one another.
- Filming from directly overhead. While this may seem like a good idea, and while it can really show your lines of motion nicely, it doesn’t allow for your instructor to see fine details of your handling. A slight angle is better than directly overhead.
- Shoot from the same angle as your instructor. If your instructor has provided video examples, film your own attempts from the same angle. Plan out how you’ll set up your course and where you’ll put your camera to accomplish this. If you shoot from a different angle than your instructor, the course will not look familiar. Remember that your instructor is watching the videos of several other people, in all likelihood. And, if your instructor has provided video examples, the angle that they shot at is probably the angle that allows for communication of the important aspects of that sequence, so try to mimic their footage if at all possible, with respect to the angle and the set up.

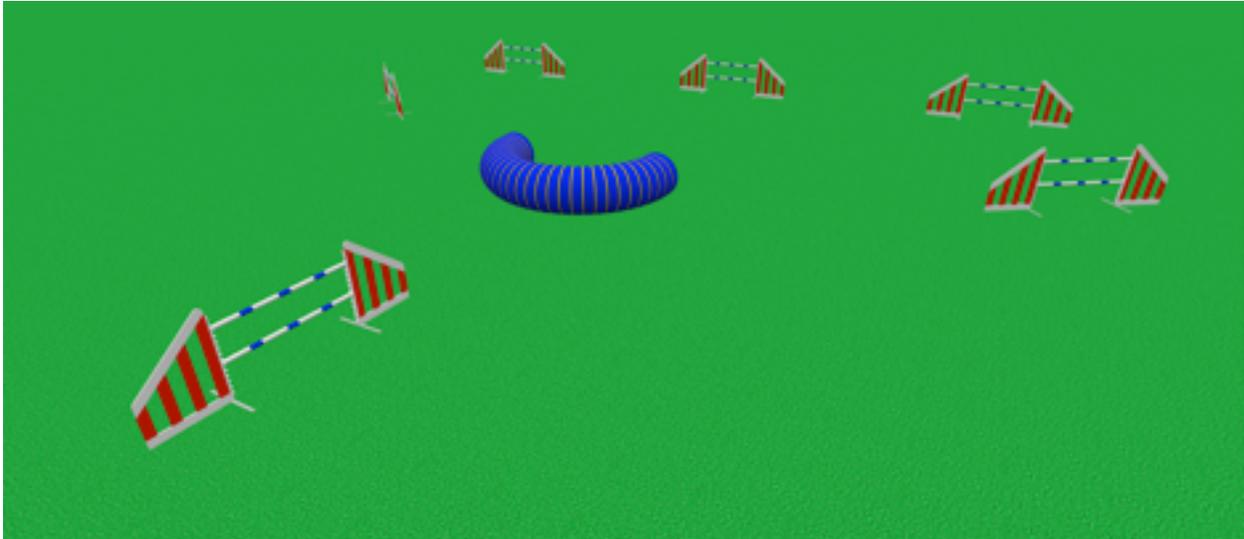
Here are some examples of different camera angles. Which ones do you think allow you to tell what the sequence is?



This camera angle is too low - you can't even see all the obstacles! It's not a great angle for getting great feedback!



This camera angle is a little higher, and you can see all the obstacles, but it's difficult to get any sense of perspective for the obstacles (their relationship to one another in space). Again, it's better, but not a great angle.



This camera angle is a little higher, AND at an angle to the exercise. It's easier to get a feel for how far away obstacles are from the camera and each other, here.



This camera angle is from nearly directly above. It's a great angle for seeing your movement through the course, and for seeing the spatial relationship of all the obstacles. However, it may be difficult for your instructor to see the finer details of your handling.

The last two images above are the best angles to choose from, if you can, because they offer the best view of the sequence. In my videos, these are the angles I try to shoot from.

Again, if possible, shoot from a similar vantage point to that of any demo videos your instructor has provided, so that your instructor can compare your handling to that of their own.

Edit Edit Edit

So you've shot your footage. You were wearing the right clothes, you had great lighting, your camera was set at a great angle, and now, you need to edit your footage for submission to your instructor. Here are some tips to help you with editing.

- **Get rid of unnecessary footage.** Edit out any footage of you taking your dog to the start line, playing with your dog, etc. If you're not doing the exercise with your dog, your instructor doesn't need to see the footage. Get rid of empty frames (frames where you and your dog aren't even in the view of the camera! Unless your instructor asks to see footage of you playing with your dog, etc., don't include it.
- **Include just a couple attempts.** In general, two attempts at each exercise are sufficient, unless your instructor specifically asks for more. If you include try after try after try, your instructor is not going to know which attempt to comment on and will start skimming through your video.
- **No slow motion.** Again, unless your instructor specifically asks for it, no slow motion. Your instructor can slow down playback on his/her own if necessary.
- **No music.** Part of your handling is your verbal cues. Your instructor needs to hear this. Don't cover it up with music.
- **No fancy titles or transitions.** Just the basics. Label each attempt so your instructor knows what figure he/she is looking at, particularly if you shot it at a different angle than the example footage. And stick to fade or cross dissolve for your transitions. No bubbles or stars necessary :)
- **Keep it short.** You're likely to get better feedback if you've got a succinct video. Videos that are two minutes long or less will keep the attention of your instructor better. It's not that your instructor doesn't want to pay attention, but 2-3 minutes is better than 10 minutes or even 5 minutes, for keeping the focus and attention of anybody observing your footage. It's just human nature, and if your instructor has several videos to go through, it's likely that he/she is going to skim through only 2-3 minutes of your video in any case, to pull material from for feedback.
- **Don't shoot for perfect!** You don't need to include your BEST attempts. If you're going to include two attempts, include your best and your worst. This is about feedback on what you can't do, not just kudos for what you can do! If you nail an exercise, you nailed it, but your instructor won't be able to give much feedback other than congratulations! On the other hand, if you tried an exercise 10 times, and had a similar error each time, just include footage of that error **once**, and then use editing to make a quick note that this one time is representative of how it went for you 9 other times.

All these editing guidelines will produce a video that may seem boring to watch - but remember, you're not making this video to be clever, or to produce an emotion from the viewer, or to highlight you and your dog to the world. This video is for feedback from your instructor! Be greedy, and get the best quality feedback you can from your instructor, by keeping editing distractions to a minimum. And, if you want to make a more interesting video, with music or fun

edits, go for it! Make a second version for the general public, and save your feedback version for your instructor.

Conclusion

Hopefully, these guidelines will help you get the best feedback possible on videos you submit in the course of an online learning experience. Again, these guidelines might not produce the fanciest or flashiest video, but they **WILL** help you produce a video that will be more likely to get you the great feedback you're looking for, which will in turn help **you** improve your handling and training, and get the most bang for your online learning buck!

Interested in more?

If you're not currently a student in my Online Classroom, take a look at what's offered there!

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