**Video Recorders**

**Websites that provide extensive reviews of video cameras include:**

* <http://reviews.cnet.com/best-camcorders>
* <http://www.smart-review.com/digitalcamcorders.html>
* <http://www.intellireview.com/category/catalog_electronics_camera_camcorders/?aid=318&top=10&gclid=CMfNzomRuZcCFQ0xawod01d-TA>
* <http://www.epinions.com/Camcorders--price_range_900_47216>

**Remember:**

* Always use a tripod!
* Be aware of lighting (shadows) and background (i.e., bright colors and windows)

**Media: 4 Recording System Types**

*MiniDV tape*

* Pros: compact; affordable; can preserve original quality without compression; good editing software.
* Cons: have to use camcorder for playback; winding/rewinding tape eventually degrades quality; need to transfer images to computer with large hard drive for editing.

*DVDs*

* Pros: random access to any clip; easier editing in-camera or on computer; rapid duplication of discs for sharing; convenient playback on computer, DVD players, even PlayStations.
* Cons: recording time limited to 1 hour with single-sided discs, two hours with dual layer; images are compressed when stored to disc and quality is affected; some discs allow only 1 use, others rewritable.

*Internal hard drives*

* Pros: capacities up to 60GB, internal drives can hold 28 hours of video, far more than other formats; 1-button burning of DVDs for easy sharing, transfer, playback; in-camera or in-computer editing.
* Cons: pricey; still require image compression; and what happens if that big hard drive goes down?

*Flash memory cards*

* Pros: first offered as an extra storage option for still images on both tape and disk camcorders; now coming into use as primary storage media for video as well as stills, thereby eliminating moving parts, reducing size, increasing durability.
* Cons: not yet supported by in-camera editing software; requires image compression; less storage than hard drives.

**More Useful Websites for Good Tips:**

* The Digital Video Information Network (a community forum): <http://www.dvinfo.net/conf/>
* “Don’t Shoot! 10 Tips for Avoiding Bad Home Video”: <http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-6500_7-5510172-1.html>
* “Family Oral History Using Digital Tools”: <http://familyoralhistory.us/news/C19>
* “Learn Videography, Video Editing, and Lighting”: <http://www.videomaker.com/learn/>
* “Public Speaking: Tips for Television, Videotaping, and Videoconferencing: <http://www.public-speaking.org/public-speaking-tvvideo-article.htm>
* “Top Ten Digital Video Tips”: <http://oreilly.com/pub/a/mac/2003/06/13/dv_tips.html>
* “Ten Tips to Better Video”: <http://www.camcorderinfo.com/content/ten_steps_better_video.htm#>

**A Final Word about Format:**

* **The most universal video format** is .AVI if you want to play video on a PC or a Mac. The problem with AVI files is that they are not compressed, they are rather large. If you are looking to keep your file small than your best bet is probably .MOV (what an iPhone uses now) because anyone can download a free player (a lot of HD video recorders are now recording in .MOV because of how well they can compress and how universal the video format can be).
* Also acceptable: .MP4, DIVX, and WAV as all are essentially universal—the point is that they are not as good quality like AVI
  + The point is to avoid, like for audio recorders, cameras that record in non-universal formats, typically something that is unique to the company creating the camera.
* Most cameras record, or have an option, for AVI, MP4, MOV, WAV or DIVX