

Filming Instagram Reels/Tiktoks/Youtube Shorts

Introduction

So you want to start posting videos on Instagram Reels, Tiktok, and/or Youtube Shorts... let's talk about it!

These platforms are designed for short form video content, that is, videos ranging from 10 seconds to around 3 minutes in length. These concise and digestible videos have become wildly popular, so they're a great way to engage your audience and promote your CFRC radio show!

This document will provide basic instructions, tips, and tricks to help you to create high quality short-form videos for your socials using your cell phone. The most successful videos are those with interesting content, which have been filmed in an aesthetically pleasing way.

Additionally, it's important to know that attention spans are becoming shorter and shorter, and therefore a main goal in the creation of short form content is maximizing audience retention. That is, maximizing the time viewers spend watching your video and enticing them to return for more! Making short, snappy, and engaging content is key.

Content Preparation

First, we will go over types of video content, and what makes a successful short-form video. There are so many different types of content it's difficult to categorize every single one, so here we will just go over some of the most popular forms.

Mini Vlog's

Vlog style short-form content is a great way to share your personality with your audience. In these short videos, presenters typically speak conversationally to the camera (addressing their audience) about their life, their day, their thoughts and opinions, their reaction to their current circumstances, etc. These videos often feature a few different clips which show a progression through time, and allow audience members to share in a personal journey. Including multiple short clips (as opposed to filming and posting one longer take) can help drive audience engagement and keep viewers interested through a variety of visuals. Point Of View (POV) shots help contextualize your vlogs by showing your viewers what you are looking at or engaging with! For example, exploring records in our music library, pushing buttons or doing editing in the recording studios, or stage shots from a concert you are attending and plan to cover on your show. Although you may choose to script these videos to ensure speed and clarity, your tone should be natural and authentic. There's no need to act, because the point of these videos is to give people a taste of you and your life!

Informative Videos

A great style of video for sharing your interests is a snappy and informative 'mini lesson' on something you're knowledgeable about. People are naturally curious about new things, so sharing your niche knowledge or teaching a specific skill through your videos is a simple way to

maximize audience retention. You might share thought provoking information or research, a bit of history, explain a personal theory, or even give a quick tutorial. You might even show your listeners a technique you are using to produce your radio show. Stylistically, these videos are often fast paced, scripted, and use visual aids to exemplify a point. By writing a script for yourself, you ensure your explanation is concise and clear. Scripts also allow you to speak slightly more quickly, which is helpful because you want to avoid giving a droning lecture from which people will swipe away. In terms of visual aids, you might choose to edit articles, photos, infographics, or videos over your voice. Cutting between these visual aids and yourself speaking to the camera keeps things interesting, credible, and engaging.

Trends

On short-form video platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, there is almost always a trend that creators are engaging with, mimicking, or putting their own spin on. When a video format becomes popular, the platform's algorithm can recognize it and often boosts those videos onto viewers' feeds, which increases visibility and engagement. Participating in these trends can be a great way to grow your online presence and reach new audiences!

Trends move quickly, so staying up to date means doing a bit of "market research." This can be as simple as scrolling through TikTok or Reels and noticing which sounds, songs, or audios are used repeatedly. Many short-form video trends are tied to specific audio clips. If you find one that is being used often, click on the audio to see all the videos that feature it. This will help you spot any recurring format or theme connected to that sound. Trends can also be built around a certain style of caption or phrase. For example, there was a trend where captions followed the format "God forbid a girl has hobbies" paired with a clip showing someone's bad habit or oddly specific interest, such as constantly talking about an ex. For example here is one iteration, <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMAdMhAsL/> .

Trends like this often last only a week or so, which means the sooner you join in, the better. That being said, trends are not static! Creators take the core idea, or "the bones," and push it further by experimenting, exaggerating, or tailoring it to fit their personality. You do not have to follow a trend exactly, because part of what keeps these trends alive is the way individuals adapt them to reflect their own unique perspective. It's all about how you use the trend as a framework to highlight your unique experience. Thus, when scrolling through trending content on these platforms, think about ways you may be able to adapt trends to share messaging about your radio program.

Every Video Needs a Hook

No matter what kind of video you create though, it must have a good hook. A hook is the opening moment of your video (usually the first one to three seconds) and its purpose is to grab your audience's attention before they scroll away. A good hook makes people curious, surprised, or eager to see what happens next. You might ask a bold question, make a surprising or unusual statement, use an eye-catching visual, or start with an unexplained high-drama clip from the middle of your video that acts like a teaser. For example, you might start with a spoken hook like, "I tried the strangest trick today, and you won't believe what happened," to

immediately spark curiosity. A visual hook could be something unexpected or eye-catching in the very first frame, like a stack of records being dropped on a table. Another option is to open with an unexplained high-energy moment from later in your video, such as someone reacting with shock or excitement, so viewers feel compelled to watch and find out why.

Ultimately though, no matter what style of video you make, or what hook you use, you should create what feels authentic to you, and relevant to your radio program. People can tell when you feel connected to, and passionate about the content you're making. In a highly inauthentic digital landscape, that's valuable.

Platforms

Now let's talk about where these videos will be posted. Generally it's recommended to post the same videos on all platforms for maximum outreach. This saves time and ensures your content reaches people wherever they spend their time online. However, because each platform is slightly different, it's helpful to know some platform-specific guidelines so you can tailor your approach when needed.

Instagram Reels

- **Allowed length:** Up to 20 minutes (no minimum).
- **Ideal length for engagement:** 7–30 seconds.
- **What works best:** Highly polished, visually appealing clips. This is a great space for quick tips, short event highlights, and aesthetically pleasing behind-the-scenes moments. On-trend audio and smooth editing are key.

TikTok

- **Allowed length:** Up to 60 minutes when uploaded. In-app filming options include 15 seconds, 60 seconds, and 10 minutes.
- **Ideal length for engagement:** Under 60 seconds.
- **What works best:** Trendy, casual, and authentic videos. Personality-driven content and quick storytelling shine here. Don't be afraid to experiment and keep things playful.

YouTube Shorts

- **Allowed length:** 10 seconds to 3 minutes.
- **Ideal length for engagement:** 30–90 seconds.
- **What works best:** Educational mini-lessons, product demos, or storytelling with clear takeaways. Viewers here are often willing to watch a bit longer if they're learning something or following a clear story.

Don't forget to collaborate with [@cfrcmusic](#) on Instagram and [@cfrcradio](#) on Tiktok and share your shorts with station@cfrc.ca for addition to the CFRC Youtube Page! You can also do a takeover of CFRC's Instagram and Tiktok. Fill in the form [HERE!](#)

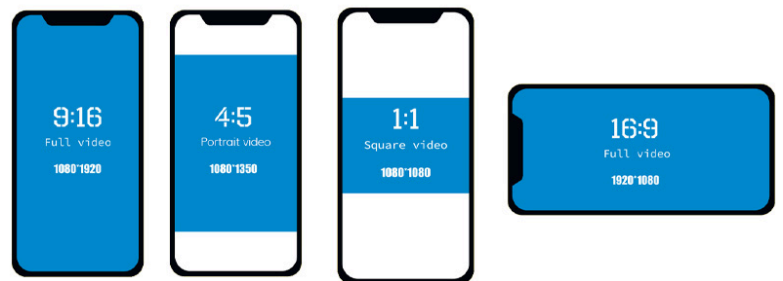
Filming

Alright, now that you know *what* you're filming, let's talk about *how* to film it! You can use a professional camera if you want, but most people find that their phone camera works well enough, and actually ends up being easier and more convenient. So for this tutorial, we'll focus on filming with a phone.

Video Dimensions

The most important consideration when filming for Reels, Tiktoks, and Youtube Shorts is the aspect ratio of your video, meaning the video's dimensions. These platforms are ALL designed for videos with an aspect ratio of 9:16, which means they display videos vertically, filling the screen of a phone held upright (see image below).

Platforms tend to prioritize videos that are fully optimized for their format, and that includes the correct aspect ratio. A video that is vertical and fills the screen feels immersive, which keeps people watching longer. On the other hand, videos filmed horizontally or with black bars on the sides feel less engaging and are more likely to be skipped. So for short-form videos, you should always be filming vertically.



Using CFRC's Phone Tripod

Using a tripod is one of the easiest ways to level up your videos. It lets you set your phone at just the right height and distance, level the camera, frame your shot exactly how you want it, and film yourself anywhere without needing someone else to hold the camera. The tripod keeps your footage steady, which makes the video appear more professional. If you are aiming for a very casual style, you can film handheld, but in most cases, stable footage is easier on the eyes. CFRC has a EUCOS Tripod Stand available for volunteer use in Control Room 2!

How to Use the EUCOS Tripod Stand:

1. Unscrew the orange leg lock by turning to the left. Open the tripod legs. Extend the shaft to your desired height. Re-screw the leg lock by turning to the right.



2. Make sure the phone clamp is securely attached and positioned horizontally. This allows it to clamp the sides of your phone, so the phone sits vertically.
3. Loosen the phone clamp, slide your phone in, and tighten it. Make sure to check that side buttons aren't being pressed.
4. You can press record directly using your phone, or use the included Bluetooth remote to record.
5. To pair the remote: power it on using the side button, open your phone's Bluetooth settings, and pair with the device labeled "AB Shutter 3."
6. Once paired, simply press the remote button to start and stop recording.

Here's a great visual walkthrough of the entire setup process, including tripod assembly and Bluetooth remote pairing: https://youtu.be/0izYOM2Q_nQ?si=drjQoQBLRr5lcxyw

Framing

Framing is how you position the camera and what people see in the shot. Well-framed videos feel intentional and easy to watch, and can result in longer audience retention. Whereas poorly framed videos can make even strong content feel messy and unappetizing.

Tips and Tricks:

- Center yourself in the frame so you are the clear focal point. Leave a small amount of space above your head, called "headroom," so you don't look cramped or cut off. Leave a comfortable amount of room on the sides. Do not frame so wide that you look tiny, and do not frame so close that the video feels uncomfortably close-up and intimate.
- Include a bit of your surroundings to add interest. A plain wall can work, but a relevant background helps set the scene. For example, you might film in front of a record shelf if you are talking about music, or with a soundboard in view if you are discussing the recording process.
- Check your background for distractions. Everyday objects are fine, but you do not want anything that pulls the viewer's attention away from you, such as bright clutter or a whirring ceiling fan.
- If filming alone, use the front-facing camera so you can see yourself while recording. This lets you check your position, make sure you are in focus, and ensure that nothing important is cut off in the frame.
- Of course you may be filming in a crowd or a space where you cannot set the tripod down, and cannot set up your frame intentionally. No worries! The EUCOS Tripod Stand also doubles as a selfie stick. Just attach your phone and keep the stand closed. This way you can hold the camera about an arms length away from yourself (so you have space within the frame) and create a more casual vlog-style video.

Lighting

Lighting is another important consideration because it affects how clearly viewers can see you and can completely change the mood of your video. The right lighting makes your subject stand out, and keeps details visible.

Tips and Tricks:

- Light from the front, not from behind. A bright light behind you will cause backlighting and make you appear in shadow.
- Avoid harsh overhead lighting that can cast strong, unflattering shadows on your face.
- Avoid overexposure. If your light is too strong, it can wash out your features and make details disappear.
- Aim for soft, direct light. Natural light from a window often works well, especially if you face the window.
- Just play around! Move your light source or yourself until you find the angle where your features are lit evenly. Different skin tones and settings respond to light differently, so a quick test can help you find the most flattering look.
- If you want to add a stylized or dramatic tone to your video, try high-contrast lighting like a spotlight on you in a dark room, or a colorful LED light. Visually striking lighting techniques can intrigue viewers and entice them to keep watching.

Speaking and Performance

The way you speak to the camera or present yourself on video is personal, and you should follow your instincts. As mentioned earlier, authenticity is compelling, and viewers connect most when they feel you are being genuine. That being said, there are some tried-and-true techniques that can improve the quality of your videos and help you keep audiences attention from start to finish.

Tips and Tricks:

- Speak directly to your audience. When recording alone, it can be hard to imagine people on the other side of the screen, and you might even feel silly. However, talking directly to your audience as if they are in front of you is important in creating a sense of connection. Look into the camera lens, ask your viewers questions and invite them to respond in the comments. You could even invite viewers to call the request line at 613 533 CFRC, or comment on the video to make song requests for your program! This makes your content more engaging and can increase interaction.
- Increase your pace slightly. Speaking a little faster than you would in everyday conversation can help keep your energy up and prevent viewers from getting bored and swiping away. Be careful not to rush, because clarity still matters, but aim for a lively delivery.
- Speak clearly and confidently. If you feel unsure, rehearse your lines a few times before recording so you are comfortable with what you want to say. Viewers enjoy listening to people who sound confident and comfortable on camera.

- Let your personality come through. While polished videos have their place, people enjoy seeing a unique and genuine personality. Share your honest opinions, react naturally, make jokes you find funny, and wear clothes that make you feel comfortable..
- For playful or stylized videos, lean into creativity. You can exaggerate your facial expressions, do voices, or even run into the frame to start the video. There is so much short-form content online, so originality and fun can help you stand out.
- Try the “Gen Z shake.” This is when a video starts before the phone is fully stabilized, creating a quick, shaky intro before settling. It signals spontaneity and authenticity in a creator, and works particularly well for videos where you speak to the camera about your personal experiences. It can also be an effective addition to your hook, as it grabs a viewer's attention in the first few seconds.

Video Editing

Editing is where you take your raw footage and make it more polished, clear, and engaging for viewers. Even small adjustments can make a big difference in the final look of your video. Most basic edits can be done right in the Photos app on your phone, though there are also apps like CapCut (available on CFRC computers) or Clips (usually pre-installed on iPhones) that offer more tools for combining different photos and videos together, adding transitions, adding voiceovers, and styling your footage. Canva is another free and easy application to use for less complicated videos.

It is also worth noting that both [TikTok](#) and [Instagram](#) have their own built-in filming and editing tools. These editing tools are available on phones, but not on desktop computer browsers. You can record directly in the app, trim and arrange multiple clips, add audio or music, insert text captions, record voiceovers, and apply filters or effects. These features can make editing quicker and allow you to match your video perfectly with trending sounds or styles without leaving the app. Both platforms ‘How To Edit’ tutorials are linked above.

Basic Edits in the Photos App:

- **Open your video:** In the Photos app, find the clip you want to edit and tap to open it.
- **Enter Edit mode:** Tap the Edit button (looks like slider bars) to access the editing tools.
- **Auto-Enhance:** Tap the ‘Adjust’ icon, then tap the magic wand icon to let Photos automatically adjust light and color. You can toggle this on or off to compare the difference.
- **Adjust light and color:** Within the ‘Adjust’ tool kit, make small changes to exposure, highlights, shadows, contrast, and warmth with the slider bars until your subject looks clear and natural. Subtle adjustments usually look best. For example, if you filmed in a slightly dark room you could use the exposure or brightness slider bars to increase the light.
- **Crop, straighten, and set aspect ratio:** Tap the crop icon. Then tap the multi-rectangular Aspect Ratio icon. Choose 9:16 for vertical video. Straighten the video if needed, then adjust the frame so you or your subject are centered.

- **Trim start and end:** Tap the 'Video' icon. Use the sliders at the bottom of the screen to remove extra time at the beginning and end of your recording. This is especially useful for cutting out the moments where you press record or stop.
- **Adjust or mute audio:** Tap the speaker icon to mute the audio if you plan to add music or voiceover later in another app. Leave the audio on if your recorded sound is important.
- **Apply filters:** Tap the Filters option to test different styles. Keep the intensity low for a cleaner, more professional look.
- **Review your edits:** Press and hold the screen to compare the edited version with the original. Make sure your subject is bright enough and properly framed in 9:16.
- **Save or revert:** Tap Done to save your edits. If you want to return to the original later, go back into Edit and select Revert to Original. To keep both versions, duplicate the video before you start editing.

Posting

Now that you've filmed and edited, it's time to get your content out there! Posting your video is the final step, and the way in which you do it can make a big difference in how many people see and engage with it. Each platform works a little differently, but there are some general best practices that apply to all.

Captions and Hashtags

- Longer captions can help increase watch time because while people read, the video keeps playing in the background. This boosts your engagement and watch rate. Use longer captions to give more context, share extra details, or include a short story that connects to your video, especially when you are promoting your radio show
- Use hashtags that are specific and relevant to your content. This will help platforms' algorithms route your content to the feeds of genuinely interested individuals.
- Tag any collaborators, featured guests, bands you will air on your show, or other relevant accounts like local venues to increase reach. Be sure to collaborate with or tag CFRC!!
- Refer to the "Hashtags, Tags and Emojis" section in CFRC's volunteer resource **Best Practices for Social Media Promotion** for more detailed guidance.

Posting on Instagram Reels

1. Open Instagram and tap the + button, then select Reel.
2. Either upload your edited video from your camera roll or record directly in-app.
3. Make final edits: Add audio, text, stickers, or captions if needed.
4. Write your post caption, add hashtags, and tag collaborators or guests.
5. Toggle "Invite Collaborator" if you want the Reel to show up on both accounts.
6. Choose whether to also share the Reel to your main feed.
7. Choose your cover image for the video thumbnail.
8. Tap "**Share**" to post.

Posting on TikTok

1. Tap the **+** button to start a new post.
2. Upload your video or record in-app.
3. Make final edits: Trim, add music, captions, and effects if needed.
4. Write your caption and include hashtags.
5. Tag any relevant accounts.
6. Choose your cover image for the video thumbnail.
7. Select your privacy settings (public, friends, private).
8. Tap **Post**.

Posting on YouTube Shorts (YouTube Studio App)

1. Open YouTube Studio and tap the **+** button to create a new post.
2. Select your vertical (9:16) video from your camera roll, under 60 seconds for Shorts.
3. Add a title, description, and relevant hashtags such as **#shorts**.
4. Set your audience and visibility (Public, Unlisted, or Private).
5. Tap **Upload Video** to publish.
6. Send the video or a link to your short to station@cfrc.ca so it can be shared on CFRC's Youtube page!

And you're done! Congratulations, you're ready to become TikTok famous!