

ACTING:

SELF TAPING DOS AND DON'TS

Self taping is becoming an increasingly popular audition method among casting directors. Here are some basic tips to make self tapes look professional, so you can focus on your performance and book roles!

1. Do memorize the script. Be prepared and know the material so you can give a winning performance.
2. Do find a partner to perform with. They shouldn't be onscreen with you, but you want someone you can really "play" with and respond to even if they're just reading lines. Keep your focus on them and look slightly to the left or right of the lens. Make sure they can see your entire face!
3. Do make sure the camerawork is solid. You can use a smartphone to tape yourself, but make sure to use a tripod so the camera is stable. You want to frame the shot as a medium close up (from the mid chest).
4. Do stay within the frame. It's OK to move your head and use your hands and body. You don't want to stand stiffly—be natural—but you also shouldn't be running around off-camera.
5. Do dress the part (or at least suggest it). A lawyer in a suit, an undercover cop in a leather jacket, a Washington socialite in a cocktail dress. Wear a shirt, dress, or sweater in striking solid color. It's more memorable to be in sapphire blue than a dull gray or black. Avoid patterns that can make the camera go out of focus and be very distracting.
6. Don't hold the script and read. You will eventually look down or away, losing focus while you check a line. They'll assume that you aren't prepared.
7. Don't get too hung up on technique. Don't be afraid to move or use your body while staying within the frame of the shot. Casting directors, producers, writers, and directors all want to be excited and inspired by your creative choices and energy.
8. Don't wear your old and dirty t-shirt. Unless you are absolutely sure that's what the character would wear.
9. Don't forget to powder. A shiny nose or forehead might project nervousness, not just that you have oily skin.
10. Don't announce your name and then start "acting." Aim to be in character when the camera starts rolling, not caught in a static, stunned, or stiff position. If possible have another take where you state your name and then edit it together with the scene.