

# SHOT COMPOSITION

Video Production

# CAMERA MOVEMENTS

Dolly

Truck/Track/Crab

Tilt

Pan

Arc

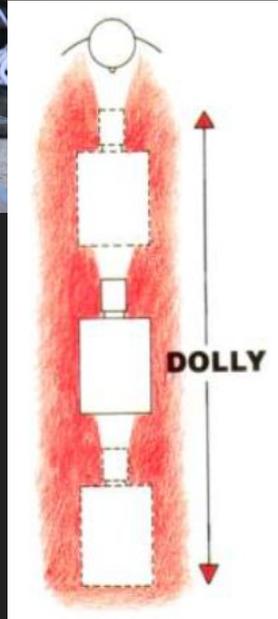
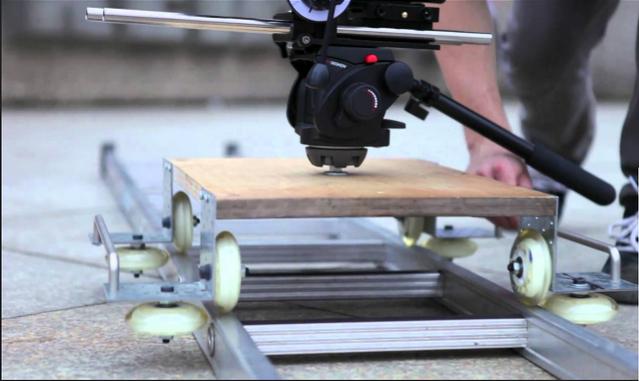
Follow

Zoom

Hand-Held

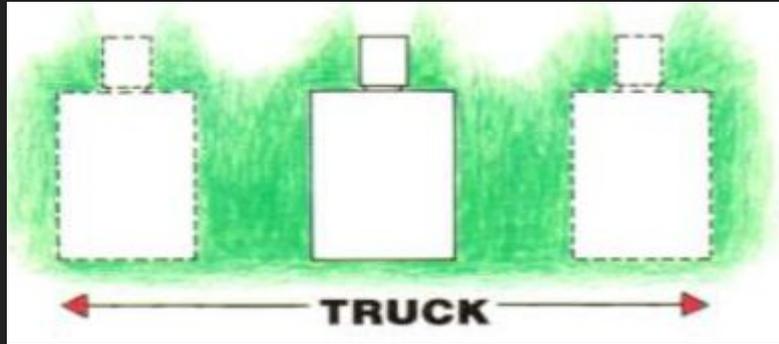
Crane/Jib

# DOLLY



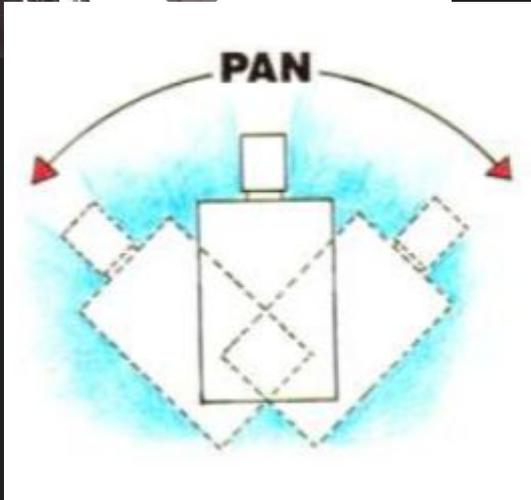
A *dolly* is a cart which travels along tracks. The camera is mounted on the dolly and records the shot as it moves. Dolly shots have a number of applications and can provide very dramatic footage.

# TRUCK/TRACK/CRAB



In many circles a ***Dolly*** is also known as a Track or ***Truck***. However some professionals prefer the more rigid terminology which defines **dolly** as **in- and-out movement (i.e. closer/further away from the subject)**, while **tracking** means **side-to-side** movement.

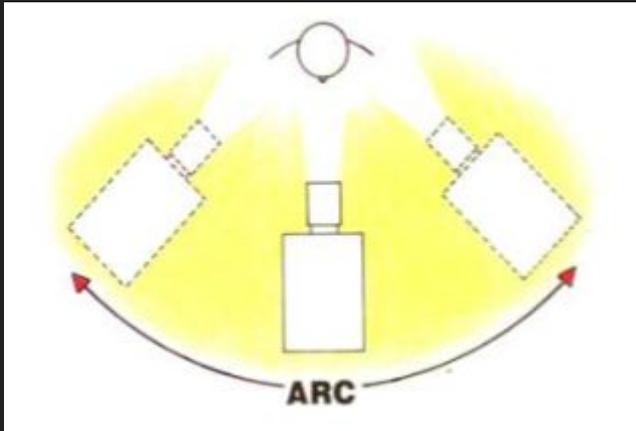
# PAN



A *Pan* is a horizontal camera movement in which the camera moves left and right about a central axis. This is a swiveling movement, i.e. mounted in a fixed location on a tripod or shoulder, rather than a dolly-like movement in which the entire mounting system moves.

To create a smooth pan it's a good idea to practice the movement first. If you need to move or stretch your body during the move, it helps to position yourself so you end up in the more comfortable position. In other words you should become more comfortable as the move progresses rather than less comfortable.

# ARC



An **Arc** is a camera move around the subject, somewhat like a tracking shot

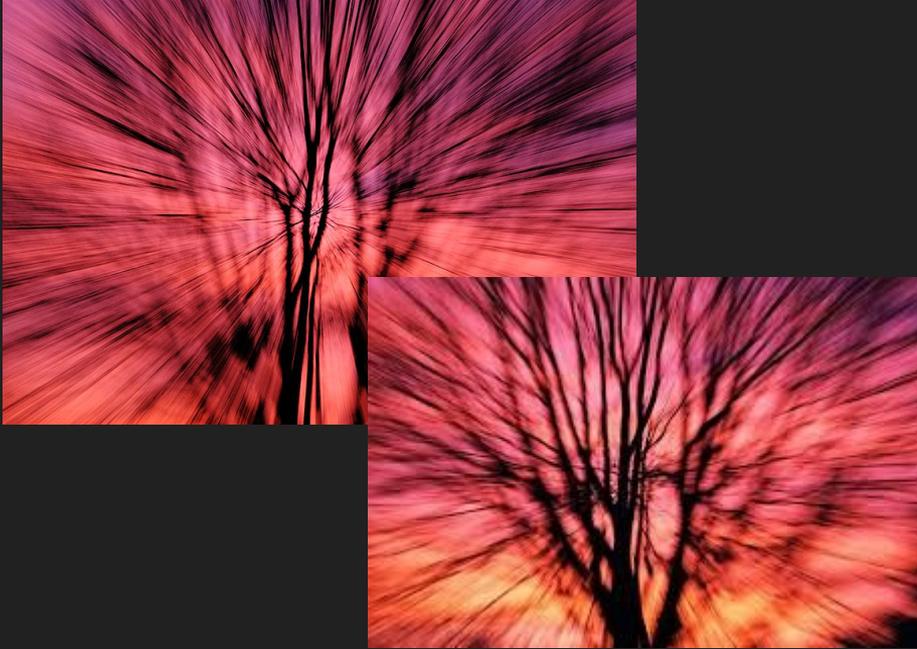
In mathematics, an arc is a segment of the circumference of a circle. A camera arc is similar — the camera moves in a rough semi-circle around the subject.

Some definitions of the arc shot describe it as being tracking and dollying at the same time, i.e. simultaneous side-to-side and in- and-out movement.

# FOLLOW



# ZOOM



Zooming is one camera move that most people are probably familiar with. It involves changing the focal length of the lens to make the subject appear closer or further away in the frame. Most video cameras today have built-in zoom features. Some have manual zooms as well, and many have several zoom speeds. Zooming is one of the most frequently-used camera moves and one of the most overused. Use it carefully.

**WHY DO THIS?** Zooming is the easiest way to get from far to close, or the other way around. You might start with a wide shot of a concert to set the stage and then zoom in to show one of the performers.

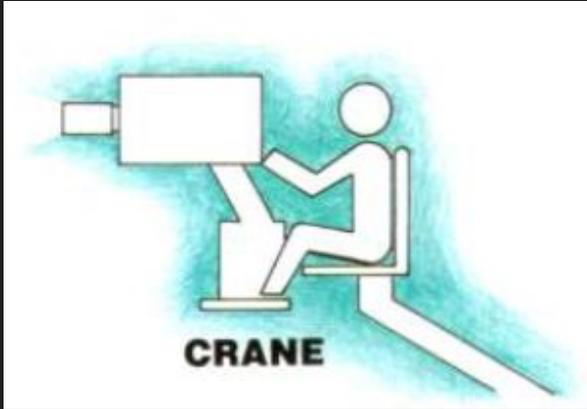
# HAND-HELD



Sometimes the action is moving too quickly or too unpredictably for the camera to be on a tripod. This calls for making the camera more mobile and able to follow the action of a scene. Most times the camera will simply be held by the operator, who will then employ a number of basic camera moves by moving the feet, trucking in and out, dollying in one direction or another, tilting, panning, zooming, and performing combinations of all of these.

**WHY DO THIS?** Handheld shooting can be very bouncy, giving the viewer a sometimes subtle feeling that they're watching news or a documentary. Check out the handheld shooting in the 2008 horror flick *Cloverfield*; the goal of this isn't to be fancy, but rather to make us believe the movie was shot by an amateur (and is therefore real)

# CRANE/JIB



A crane can be used to lift a camera (and operator, if it's big enough) from low to high shooting positions. Less expensive jibs can support the weight of a camera and lift it several feet off of the ground. Sometimes a crane will be called a boom, but the boom term usually applies to the device that holds a microphone aloft. For an extreme version of this elevated angle, consider using a drone to capture an aerial perspective.

WHY USE IT? You want to show things from a different angle. One example is the crane shot at the end of Robert Zemeckis' 1985 "Back to the Future" where genius inventor Dr. Emmet Brown, played by Christopher Lloyd shows off his new and improved Time Machine, built out of a DeLorean, and takes off down the road—and as the camera cranes up, it starts to fly showing that in The Future, where we're going— cars travel in three dimensions.

# CAMERA SHOTS

XWS

VWS

WS

MS

CU

MCU

ECU

Cut-In

Cutaway

2Shot

OSS

Noddy Shot

Weather Shot

Establishing Shot

# XWS (Extreme Wide Shot)



The view is so far from the subject that he isn't even visible. Often used as an establishing shot.

# VWS (Very Wide Shot)



The subject is visible (barely), but the emphasis is still on placing him in his environment.

# WS (Wide Shot)



The subject takes up the full frame, or at least as much as comfortably possible.

AKA: long shot, full shot.

# MS (Mid Shot)



Shows some part of the subject in more detail while still giving an impression of the whole subject.

# XWS (Extreme Wide Shot)



The view is so far from the subject that he isn't even visible. Often used as an establishing shot.

# MCU (Medium Closeup)



Half way between a MS and a CU.

# CU (Close Up)



A certain feature or part of the subject takes up the whole frame. A close-up of a person emphasizes their emotional state. Whereas a mid-shot or wide-shot is more appropriate for delivering facts and general information, a close-up exaggerates facial expressions which convey emotion. The viewer is drawn into the subject's personal space and shares their feelings.

# XCU (Extreme Close Up)



The ECU gets right in and shows extreme detail.

You would normally need a specific reason to get this close. It is too close to show general reactions or emotion except in very dramatic scenes.

# Cut-In



Shows some (other) part of the subject in detail.

Can be used purely as an edit point, or to emphasise emotion etc. For example, hand movements can show enthusiasm, agitation, nervousness, etc.

# CA (Cutaway)



A *cutaway* is a shot that's usually of something other than the current action. It could be a different subject (eg. this cat when the main subject is its owner), a close up of a different part of the subject (eg. the subject's hands), or just about anything else.

The cutaway is used as a "buffer" between shots (to help the editing process), or to add interest/information.

# 2-Shot



Often used in interviews, or when two presenters are hosting a show.

Two-shots are good for establishing a relationship between subjects. If you see two sports presenters standing side by side facing the camera, you get the idea that these people are going to be the show's co-hosts. As they have equal prominence in the frame, the implication is that they will provide equal input. Of course this doesn't always apply, for example, there are many instances in which it's obvious one of the people is a presenter and the other is a guest. In any case, the two-shot is a natural way to introduce two people.

A two-shot could also involve movement or action. It is a good way to follow the interaction between two people without getting distracted by their surroundings.

# OSS (Over the Shoulder Shot)



This shot is framed from behind a person who is looking at the subject. The person facing the subject should usually occupy about 1/3 of the frame.

This shot helps to establish the position of each person, and get the feel of looking at one person from the other's point of view.

It's common to cut between these shots during a conversation, alternating the view between the different speakers.

# Noddy Shot



Common in interviews, this is a shot of the person listening and reacting to the subject. In fact, when shooting interviews with one camera, the usual routine is to shoot the subject (using OSS and one-shots) for the entire interview, then shoot some noddies of the interviewer once the interview is finished. The noddies are edited into the interview later.

# Weather Shot / Establishing Shot



In this type of shot the subject is the weather. The sky takes up at least 2/3 of the frame. This type of shot is common in television programs where the weather is of particular interest, e.g. sports shows. Although the usual purpose of this shot is to show the weather, it is also useful as an establishing shot, for setting the general mood or for overlaying graphics.

A weather shot doesn't have to show the sky. Other shots often used to illustrate weather include:

- Puddles, drain spouts or any example of rainwater flow.
- Trees or anything else blowing in the wind.
- People sunbathing.
- Snowmen, snowball fights, snow sledding, etc.

# CAMERA ANGLES

Eye Level/Normal

High

Low

Bird's Eye/God's View

Slanted/Canted/Dutch Tilt

Subjective/POV

# EYE Level / Normal



This is the most common view, being the real-world angle that we are all used to. It shows subjects, as we would expect to see them in real life. It is a fairly neutral shot.

# High Angle



A high angle shows the subject from above, i.e. the camera is angled down towards the subject. This has the effect of diminishing the subject, making them appear less powerful, less significant or even submissive.

# Low Angle



This shows the subject from below, giving them the impression of being more powerful or dominant.

# Bird's Eye



The scene is shown from directly above. This is a completely different and somewhat unnatural point of view, which can be used for dramatic effect or for showing a different spatial perspective.

In drama it can be used to show the positions and motions of different characters and objects, enabling the viewer to see things the characters can't.

The bird's-eye view is also very useful in sports, documentaries, etc.

# Slanted/Canted/Dutch Tilt



This is where the camera is purposely tilted to one side so the horizon is on an angle. This creates an interesting and dramatic effect. Famous examples include Carol Reed's *The Third Man*, Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* and the 1960's *Batman* series.

Dutch tilts are also popular in MTV-style video production, where unusual angles and lots of camera movement play a big part.

# Subjective / POV



A subjective angle puts the camera in the place of a character's point of view. When used effectively in a dramatic production, the angle can have a great impact on the viewer. A camera inside the driver's cockpit, showing the audience what the driver actually sees as the car races around the track.