PULKIT EDITING

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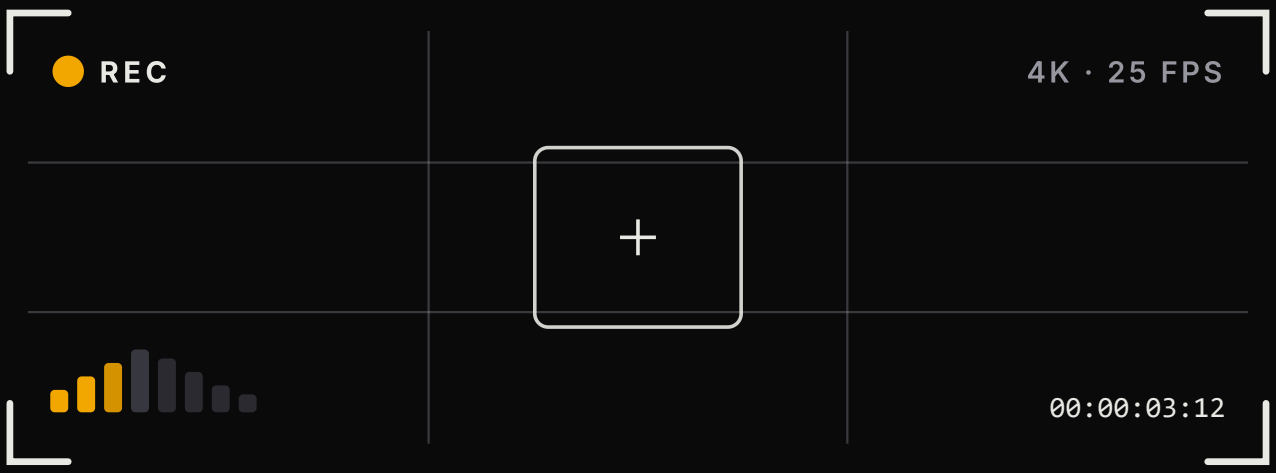

FREE CHECKLIST

The raw footage CHECKLIST

Record videos that edit well, on one page.

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Tick it off, then hit record

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50M+ organic views edited
50+ clients, incl. Invideo, Herbalife, Rio

PULKIT EDITING

The raw footage CHECKLIST

Record videos that edit well, on one page.

Your footage sets the ceiling for your edit

A good editor can make average footage look good. Nobody can make broken footage look great. Ten minutes of setup before you hit record decides how far the edit can go.

Audio matters most. Researchers at USC and the Australian National University showed 196 people the same talks with clear or degraded sound. With bad audio, viewers rated the speaker as less intelligent and less likeable, and the research as less important (USC Today, 2018). Same words, same person, less trust.

YOUR EDITOR CAN FIX	YOUR EDITOR CAN'T REALLY FIX
Pauses, stumbles and retakes	Echo, wind, traffic or a buzzing fan under your voice
Slow pacing and long answers	A face that's too dark or blown out by a window
Captions, B-roll, graphics, music	Footage that's out of focus or shaky
Mild colour and brightness changes	Your head cut off, or text that has nowhere to go
Cutting a long video into short clips	A low-resolution file sent over WhatsApp

This checklist covers the right-hand column, so your editor can spend their time on the left.

Before you hit record

Five minutes of prep saves your editor an hour, and saves you a reshoot.

PLAN THE VIDEO

- One idea per video. If you need "and also", that's a second video.
- Write your hook word for word. Everything after it can be 3 to 5 bullet points, not a script. Reading a script word for word usually sounds like reading.
- Know your last line before you start, so you don't trail off.

SET UP YOUR PHONE

Menu names are from iPhone, see Apple's guide; Android has the same options under Camera settings.

- **Use the back camera.** It's the better camera on almost every phone. Use the front one only to check your framing.

- **Record in 4K.** It lets your editor zoom in for punch-ins and crop a vertical video from a horizontal one without it going soft. Settings > Camera > Record Video.
- **Pick the right frame rate for your country.** In India, the UK, Europe and Australia, mains power runs at 50Hz, and 30 fps can make indoor lights flicker. Turn on Show PAL Formats and record at 25 fps (ProVideo Coalition). In the US and Canada, use 30 fps.
- **Turn HDR Video off** unless your editor asks for it. HDR footage often looks washed out or too bright once it's posted.
- **Lock focus and exposure.** Tap and hold on your face until you see AE/AF Lock, so brightness doesn't pump as you move. Turn on Lock White Balance so your skin tone doesn't shift.

CLEAR THE DECKS

- Wipe the lens. A fingerprint smudge makes everything look hazy, and it can't be fixed later.
- Free up storage and charge to at least 50%. 4K files are large.
- Turn on Airplane Mode or Do Not Disturb, so a call or a buzz doesn't wreck your best take.

Framing and camera

Put the camera at eye level, lock it down, and leave room for the app's buttons and your captions.

- **Vertical or horizontal?** For Reels, Shorts and LinkedIn mobile, shoot vertical (9:16). Need both? Shoot horizontal in 4K with yourself in the centre. A vertical crop of 4K is still 1215 × 2160 pixels, sharper than the 1080 × 1920 the apps use.
- **Eye level, looking at the lens.** Raise the phone to your eye line. A camera looking up at you from a desk is the least flattering angle there is. Look at the lens, not at yourself on screen.
- **Mount it.** Use a tripod, or a phone clamp on a stack of books. Handheld talking-head footage wobbles, and the wobble gets worse when your editor zooms in.
- **Frame from mid-chest up.** Leave a small gap above your head, with your eyes about a third of the way down the frame. Your editor can push in from there, but can't add back a forehead you cut off.
- **Respect the safe zone.** On Reels, the app covers roughly the top 14%, the bottom 20 to 35%, and 6% on each side with names, buttons and captions (Billo's guide to Meta's safe zones). Keep your face, and anything you hold up, in the middle.
- **Step away from the wall.** Sit 1 to 2 metres in front of your background. It softens shadows and gives the shot depth. Tidy whatever is in view; viewers notice clutter.
- **Check before the full take.** Record 10 seconds, play it back, and check framing, focus and sound. It's the cheapest insurance there is.

Lighting

One big, soft light in front of you, a little to one side, beats any amount of gear behind you.

- **Free option: face a window.** Sit facing a window, or with it slightly to one side, so daylight falls on your face. Avoid direct sun, which throws hard shadows. Overcast days are perfect.
- **Never put the window behind you.** The phone exposes for the bright window and turns your face into a silhouette. No edit brings that face back cleanly.

- **If you buy one light, place it like this:** about 45 degrees to one side of the camera, just above eye level, angled down at your face, 0.6 to 1.2 metres away, with a softbox or diffusion in front of it (NEEWER lighting guide).
- **Kill the ceiling light.** Overhead bulbs put dark shadows under your eyes, and their warm colour clashes with daylight. Mixed light makes skin look orange on one side and blue on the other, and that's hard to correct.
- **Glasses?** Raise the light higher and further to the side until its reflection disappears from your lenses. Ring lights straight in front are the worst for this.
- **Keep it consistent.** Record a batch of videos in one session, in the same spot and with the same light, so your content looks like one brand. Window light changes by the hour, so batch in a 1 to 2 hour window.

Audio: the part people notice most

If you spend money on one thing, spend it on a clip-on mic. Viewers forgive soft video; they scroll past bad sound.

THE MIC

- **Use a clip-on (lavalier) mic, wired or wireless.** Your phone's built-in mic, a metre or more away, records the room as much as it records you.
- **Clip it above your sternum** (Shure), about 20 cm (8 inches) below your chin (Videomaker). Too high and your chin muffles it; too low and the room creeps in.
- **Wear cotton or wool.** Silk and synthetic fabrics rustle against the mic and can add static (Videomaker). Keep necklaces, lanyards and hands away from it.
- **Turn on the backup.** Many wireless mic kits can also record onto the transmitter itself. Switch that on, so a dropout doesn't cost you a take.

THE ROOM

Echo comes from hard, flat surfaces: bare walls, tile floors, glass. Soften them (Evetech):

- Record in a room with a rug, curtains, a sofa or a full bookshelf. Avoid empty rooms, bathrooms and glass meeting rooms.
- Hang a duvet or thick blanket on the wall behind the camera, facing you.
- Get the mic closer to your mouth before you buy anything else.

THE NOISE

- Turn off the AC, fans and anything that hums for the length of the take. A steady hum can be reduced in the edit, but rarely removed without making your voice sound thin.
- Close the windows, and put your laptop and phone notifications on silent.

THE TEST

- Record 10 seconds and listen back on headphones, not the phone speaker.
- At the end of the shoot, record 10 seconds of the room in silence. Editors use this "room tone" to smooth over cuts.

Delivery: how to talk so it cuts cleanly

You don't need to be perfect on camera. You need to leave your editor clean places to cut.

1. **Pause between thoughts.** Leave a one-second gap after each point. Those gaps are where the cuts go, and they get trimmed out anyway.
2. **Messed up? Stop, pause, restart the whole sentence.** Don't patch from the middle of a word. A full clean sentence can be swapped in; half a sentence usually can't.
3. **Mark your retakes.** Clap once before you redo a line. The clap shows up as a spike on the audio, so your editor finds every retake in seconds.
4. **Keep rolling.** Don't stop and start the recording for every mistake. One long file with clean restarts is faster to edit than 30 short ones, and your framing stays identical.
5. **Look at the lens.** If you need notes, put them right below the lens, or use a teleprompter app. Eyes darting to the side read as unsure.
6. **Bring a bit more energy than feels natural.** The camera flattens people. Speaking a notch louder and brighter than a normal conversation looks normal on screen. Standing up helps.
7. **Record your hook 3 times.** Try different wording or energy. Your editor picks the strongest, and you can test the others in later posts.
8. **Hold still at the end.** After your last line, stay looking at the lens for 2 seconds before reaching for the phone. That gives a clean ending frame.
9. **Recording audio on a separate device?** Clap once at the very start, on camera. Your editor uses it to line up the sound with the picture.

B-roll and extras

B-roll is the footage that plays over your voice. It's what turns a talking head into something people keep watching, and you're the only one who can film your world.

FILM 5 TO 10 SECONDS OF EACH, PHONE STEADY, SAME ORIENTATION AS YOUR MAIN VIDEO

- Your hands doing the work: typing, writing on a whiteboard, sketching, packing an order
- Your workspace, office or shop, plus a slow walk-through
- Your team in a meeting or on a call (ask them first)
- Your product up close, from a few angles
- You arriving, walking in, or setting up, for openings and transitions

SCREEN RECORDINGS (FOR SOFTWARE, DASHBOARDS, SLIDES)

- Turn off notifications and close unrelated tabs first.
- Zoom the browser or app to 125 to 150% so text is readable on a phone.
- Move the mouse slowly, and pause on the thing you're talking about.

SEND THESE ONCE, AND YOUR EDITOR REUSES THEM

- Logo files (PNG with a transparent background, or SVG)
- Brand colours and fonts, if you have them

- Screenshots of results you mention: revenue, reviews, messages. Blur client names and private numbers before sending.
- Headshots and photos from events, launches or the early days

Sending files to your editor

Send the original files, sorted, with a short note. It saves a day of back-and-forth.

KEEP THE QUALITY

- Use Google Drive, Dropbox, WeTransfer or AirDrop for full-size files.
- Don't send video as a normal WhatsApp video. Even the HD option compresses it and lowers the resolution. If WhatsApp is the only option, attach it as a Document instead, which sends the original file (iDownloadBlog).

SORT IT

One shared folder per shoot, with the date and topic in the name:

```
2026-10-07_pricing-mistakes/
  01_main-camera/
  02_audio/
  03_b-roll/
  04_screen-recordings/
  05_brand-and-screenshots/
```

ADD A NOTE (A FEW LINES IN THE FOLDER OR THE CHAT)

- What each video is about, and who it's for
- Which take of the hook you liked best, if you have a favourite
- Anything to cut (a client's name, a wrong number) with the rough timestamp
- The call to action and any link that should appear
- Where it will be posted, and when you need it back

The one-page checklist

Screenshot this and run through it before every shoot.

BEFORE

- [ ] One idea, hook written word for word, last line decided
- [ ] Back camera, 4K, 25 fps (India, UK, Europe, Australia) or 30 fps (US, Canada)
- [ ] HDR off, focus and exposure locked, white balance locked
- [ ] Lens wiped, storage free, battery above 50%, Airplane Mode on

SETUP

- [ ] Camera at eye level, on a tripod, framed mid-chest up
- [ ] Face and anything I hold up in the middle of the frame, away from the edges
- [ ] Facing a window or a soft light at 45 degrees, nothing bright behind me, ceiling light off
- [ ] Clip-on mic above my sternum, cotton or wool top, backup recording on
- [ ] AC and fans off, windows closed, 10-second test recorded and checked on headphones

WHILE RECORDING

- [ ] Pause between thoughts; restart whole sentences; clap before a retake
- [ ] Eyes on the lens, a notch more energy than normal
- [ ] Hook recorded 3 ways; 2 seconds of stillness at the end
- [ ] 10 seconds of room tone, plus B-roll and screen recordings

AFTER

- [ ] Original files in one dated folder, sorted, with a short note for the editor

Want me to check your setup?

I'm Pulkit. I edit short-form and talking-head videos for founders, coaches and brands, with 50M+ organic views across 50+ clients including Invideo, Herbalife, Rio and RiteBite. I also have my own studio for product shoots.

Send me a 10-second test clip and DM me the word **EDIT** on LinkedIn. I'll tell you what to change before you record the real thing. It's free, and there's no pressure to hire me after.

Book a call | **See my work at pulkitediting.com**

Sources

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- How to choose the best lavalier microphone, Shure
- Sound reasoning: lavalier lessons, Videomaker
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- How to send full-resolution photos and videos on WhatsApp, iDownloadBlog