



CHECKLIST: SELF-TAPES - LIGHTING

Every self tape is important!

You never know when you're going to catch the eye of the casting team so it is worth getting as much of it working to your advantage as possible.

You don't need expensive equipment – don't panic!

All you need is a basic understanding of what supports you being seen well, heard well and ultimately - received well.

Let's take a look at lighting.

Why is it important?

With screen work, it is all about reading the thoughts of the actor/character. Dialogue is often kept to a minimum (certainly in relation to theatre). It's been said that it's a visual rather than an auditory medium.

What we are getting at is that we need to SEE you clearly and most importantly, see your eyes clearly.

What we don't want...

1. Harsh shadows
2. Dim lighting
3. Glare

What we DO want...

1. A soft even lighting that casts no hard shadows (particularly on your face)
2. A well-lit space
3. A 'matt' feel with no glare

How do we achieve it?

- Firstly, find a room or space that may offer this naturally, with no extra effort.
- If you can't find a space like that, try and avoid using ceiling lights (the vertical downpour of light casts harsh shadows under the eyes!).
- Use a ring light if possible, they are not particularly expensive (these have become the actors best friend. They are effectively a ready made lighting rig without the fuss and they automatically create a soft light that enhances your features without – you guessed it – nasty shadows. They also lessen blemishes and wrinkles. Hoorah!).
- If you don't have a ring light, fear not. You can get two ordinary household lamps, one at either side of the camera, pointing directly at you (little tip: paper shaded lamps, like the IKEA round ones, are ideal as the paper acts as a natural light diffuser).
- Simply adjust the angle or your distance to the lamps to alter the effect.

Don't forget!

- Once you have set up your taping station, do a few short shoots of one or two lines and watch each one back, adjusting the lights as needed before settling on the best one.
- If there is any movement required for the tape, test it out as part of the lighting check before you settle.
- Don't moisturise minutes before you do a take, you will shine like a shiny thing on a very shiny day.
- If you use anything to cover or lessen the lamp light, it is a fire risk. Please be extremely careful.
- Eyes are everything!! That is the most important aspect of your performance in terms of visuals. If we can see your eyes, we will see the performance.