

Camera Movement Terms

Pan - *Horizontal movement, left and right, you should use a tripod for a smooth effect.*

Why: To follow a subject or show the distance between two objects. Pan shots also work great for panoramic views such as a shot from a mountaintop to the valley below.

Tilt - *Vertical movement of the camera angle, i.e. pointing the camera up and down (as opposed to moving the whole camera up and down).*

Why: Like panning, to follow a subject or to show the top and bottom of a stationary object. With a tilt, you can also show how tall something is.

Dolly - *The camera physically follows the subject at a more or less constant distance.*

Why: To follow an object smoothly.

Dolly Zoom - *A technique in which the camera moves closer or further from the subject while simultaneously adjusting the zoom angle to keep the subject the same size in the frame.*

Why: This combination of lens movement and camera movement creates an effect like no other movement – It may create the illusion that the world is closing-in on the subject, or the opposite, the world and environment is expanding. Another possible ‘effect’ is as if the subject is floating towards the camera.

Truck - *Another term for tracking or dollying.*

Zoom - *Technically this isn't a camera move, but a change in the lens focal length with gives the illusion of moving the camera closer or further away.*

Why: To bring objects at a distance closer to the lens, or to show size and perspective.

Pedestal - *Moving the camera position vertically (up and down) with respect to the subject (different than a tilt, the camera remains horizontal but moves vertically).*

Why: You pedestal the camera up or down to get the proper height you prefer.

Hand Held - *Hand-held camera or hand-held shooting is a film and video technique in which a camera is literally held in the camera-operator's hands--as opposed to being placed on a tripod. The result is an image that is perceptibly shakier than that of a tripod-mounted camera.*

Why: Due to the spontaneity of the action, many news crews and most documentaries use hand-held shooting techniques. Hand held shots might serve to help create a more urgent, 'real' or dramatic feel to a shot.

Crane shot - *Basically, dolly-shots-in-the-air. A crane (or jib), is a large, heavy piece of equipment, but is a useful way of moving a camera - it can move up, down, left, right, swooping in on action or moving diagonally out of it.*

Why: Gives a bird's eye view. It looks as if the camera is swooping down from above.

Follow - *The camera physically follows the subject at a more or less constant distance.*

Why: This movement provides the audience the character's perspective throughout the action and movement of the scene.

Crab - *A less-common term for tracking or trucking.*

Aerial Shot - *An exciting variation of a crane shot, usually taken from a helicopter or cabling suspension system.*

Why: This is often used at the beginning of a film, in order to establish setting and movement.

Rack Focus - *This is a lens movement, not a camera movement. Focus on one object, like an actor's face, and have everything behind him/her out of focus. Then adjust the focus so his/her face becomes blurred and the object behind the actor becomes clear.*

Why: You are actually making a transition similar to an edit by constructing two distinct shots. You often see the rack focus used to switch from one actor's face to another during conversation or tense moments. This literally focuses the attention on part of the screen, or object/actor at a time.