



Virtual Tours and Online viewings:

Using video to promote your property

## Introduction

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Virtual tours have been around for a long time in various formats but until recently, have not been used regularly. Previously, they were kept for larger, character properties and much more so in the sales department than lettings. With the recent inability for many people to attend viewings in person, the use of virtual tours in advertising has skyrocketed. Indeed, portals have been adapting by creating specific areas and tags for these to be placed in to differentiate from those that only have pictures.

With this initiative, it is important to ensure that your property is achieving the maximum viewership and so providing a video tour for your property is crucial for both lettings and sales.

Not only do video tours aid in increasing property views, but it also enables applicants to get a better feel for your property prior to visiting the property in person. As they will have seen the property and gained a feel for the layout, they will better be able to determine if the property is suitable for them. This means fewer viewings at your property (so lower time investment on your part) and a higher quality of applicant reaching the viewing stage (meaning that they are more likely to make an offer). It also helps considerably with those looking at property from abroad.

Professional video tours can take various forms depending on how much you would look to invest in them. 360° or Matterport tours give the viewer an opportunity for a more interactive experience of looking round the house, however, these come with a high price tag or expensive software requirements. For large properties, mostly in sales, this could be useful but for most properties is unnecessary and a similar experience can be achieved with a smaller budget or, if you are willing to do the work yourself, no cost at all.

The following will be a beginners guide to creating and editing a virtual tour to make it look professional without having to pay for software or production – although some suggestions of products that will improve the quality will be included.

## What you will need

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- **Smartphone** (or high-quality video capable camera)

For my videos, I use an iPhone 11 Pro as it has a good quality camera and ability to use a wide-angle view. Any modern smart phone can be substituted – of course, the newer, the better in terms of performance.



- **Gimbal** (desirable to improve quality, price £50-£70)

This will help to keep the camera steady while moving, avoiding jerky movements and enabling you to pan across shots more smoothly.



- **Free video editing software** (we use OpenShot Video Editor but others are available)

This is important because the best videos are not those that are a simple walkthrough of the house but those that have a smooth, professional presentation highlighting the best features of the property.

- **Youtube/Vimeo or other video storage/hosting site** (only if advertising the property yourself)

When advertising, a link for your video is required as portals do not allow videos to be directly uploaded to them. We use Vimeo, however, for a one-off video, using a free service, such as Youtube, is sensible.

## Step 1: Choosing your shots

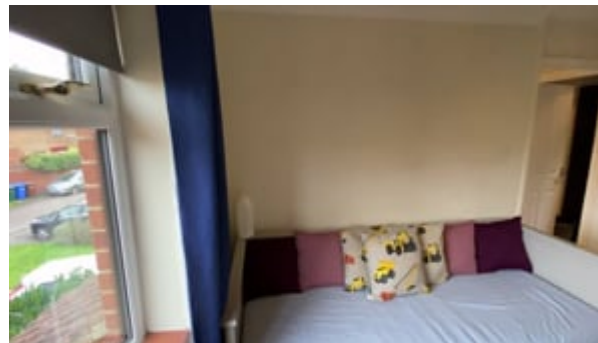
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Shooting a video for your tour is more than just walking round the property. To get the best experience from the viewer you want to choose the best angles and views for each room. In the production step (which we go through later in this guide) you will need to splice multiple videos together to create the best effect but for this to happen, you need a range of different shots to choose from.

### Room by room

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When in the property, start by taking stationary shots panning across each room from multiple angles. Normally, one from the doorway and one from the opposite corner provide you with the most complete coverage of the room while skipping the awkward moments of walking across the room that provide no benefit to the viewer.



As in the second video above, be careful to avoid views of any apparatus you are using or cut these out in editing.

### Walkthrough

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You will also want to have a complete walkthrough of the house to use as the transitions between rooms in your final video. You will end up cutting out large sections of this to replace with the specific room shots that you took but it is important for **flow**. It is often easiest to split this by floor of the property. On the ground floor, start at the entrance and (if applicable) end at the stairs. Pick the most efficient route through the house so you do not have to double back at any point. Follow this by the first floor, starting halfway up the stairs to give you an entry point for transition later.

On this walkthrough, I will only enter the doorway of each room and pan across once, then backing out of the room to move onto the next. As you will have taken other shots before, you have the footage to cover the whole room with this.



Make sure to take a video walking towards the front door to the property (or entering) and a couple of angles panning across the garden.

## Step 2: Editing the video

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As mentioned above, there are various free or paid for video editing software solutions available. Most free software will be able to provide you with sufficient editing capabilities to create a good quality tour. There are a few aspects that you need to consider when editing the video:

### Content

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The first thing you will need to consider is what footage you want to include in your video. Go through the videos taken and select the best for each room. Sometimes it is better to exclude a bad video even if it leaves you with less footage of the room. You will be able to incorporate these into your video by cutting and adding them to the main walkthrough video that you took. The main walkthrough will act as the base content and provide you with the flow of the video.

### Transitions

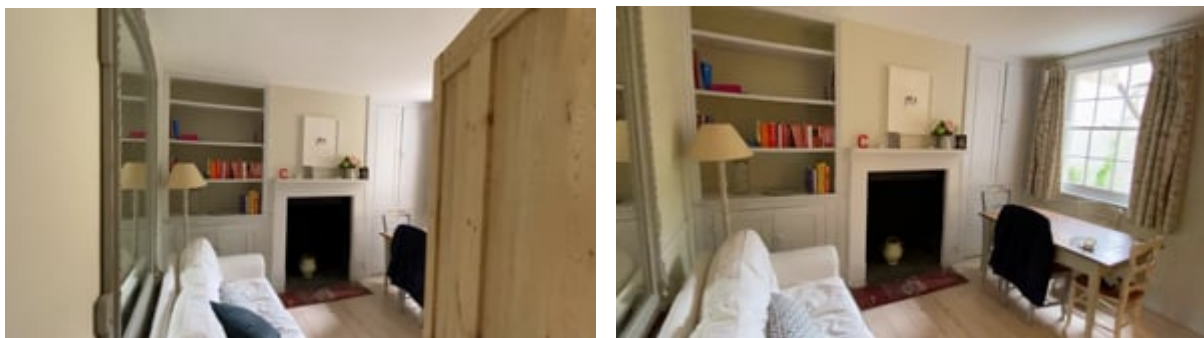
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Transitions are the most challenging, but also the most impactful, part of editing your video. Without these, you would have one continuous walkthrough including aspects that are better left off such as climbing stairs

and crossing rooms. With editing transitions into these you can cut this out completely and only show the viewer the most appealing parts.

To effectively use transitions, you will need to use the room shots that you have taken and 'splice' them into your walkthrough. Include the entry to the room, panning across from one side to the other from the doorway and then add in a video from the opposite corner (or from another angle), end the clip by backing out of that room and move onto the next room.

Below is an example of an unedited clip of a room (left) and one that has been edited to only show the best views (right).



## Sound

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You have options when it comes to sound. Some people choose to keep the video silent and some prefer to have a voice/music over the top describing the rooms. Either of these options can work well if done correctly. I choose not to have sound as I feel the video speaks for itself and sound is just a distraction. The video editing software should have the function to mute sound – make sure to do this for all clips you include.

If you use sound DO NOT use the sound recording from the clips themselves. . There is nothing more distracting than hearing echoing footsteps or breathing behind the camera. The best way to use sound would be to record the audio description separately and add this in. You will be able to upload audio files to your software and overlay it on top of your video.

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*This guide is intended to be informative. Any advice taken from this document should be followed up with a consultation with a relevant property*

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