

### Checklist for equipment setup

#### *At the start*

Get into the habit of setting up your equipment and checking it before every recording session.

Make sure you have batteries in the unit and that they have enough charge for your session and some extra. That is, know how long your batteries last in your recording device, and know how long the current set have been used for. If in doubt, change them. Partially used batteries can be used for transcription or given away. Always have spares with you.

1. Listen for background noise. Is there anything you can do something about? (e.g. turn off fridge,<sup>1</sup> phone, washing machine, etc) If there's noise you can't do anything about (e.g. birds, passing traffic), can you do anything to minimise it?
2. Is your microphone connected to the recording unit? (Don't laugh, it's happened...) Is it plugged in the microphone jack (and not the headphone plug)?
3. If your microphone has its own power switch, is it on? Does it need its own battery?
4. Is there blank recording media in the unit?
5. If you are recording one person, are they sitting about 8' away from the microphone? If you're recording a group of people, is the microphone situated where it will pick up the best number of people at the best quality?
6. Do you have your elicitation materials, etc, in easy reach so you can write without shuffling papers too much?
7. Is the video tripod secure? Are the batteries charged? Is there blank media in the recorder? Are the people to be filmed in the viewfinder? Can you operate the video with a remote and still check the recording from where you're seated? Is the noise from the motor on the video likely to affect the recording quality?
8. Start recording. Check the levels on the machine to make sure you aren't clipping the signal. The signal should be as loud as possible without clipping.
9. Make sure that the pause button is not on!

#### *At the end of a session*

Have a routine for packing up at the end of a session too.

1. Make sure that the recording unit and auxiliary devices (such as microphones) are turned off, so as not to waste battery power or damage the units.

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<sup>1</sup> Don't forget to turn it back on again at the end of the session!

2. Disconnect the microphones from the unit. Stress on the microphone jacks can cause them to torque and come loose, which results in hiss on the recordings and makes the unit unusable.
3. Don't leave anything behind. The best way to avoid doing this is to pack things up in the same order each time and to have a place for everything (or a mental checklist).
4. Have a place for recorded media which you will need to do audition sheets for, and keep them separate from blank media.
5. Transfer digital recordings to your computer and back up the recording as soon as possible. If you are using flash cards, wipe the card after you have made sure that the recording is transferred and backed up, so the card is ready to go for your next session.
6. Have a quick check to see if anything is dirty; if so clean it as soon as possible.
7. Recharge batteries if necessary.