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DIY Director's Guide



The North and its landscapes have inspired generations of audiences and filmmakers alike. The Remake a Take project celebrates amazing films and television made in or inspired by the North through an interactive movie trail across Newcastle and Gateshead, an online movie map and this DIY Director's Guide.

Introduction

Welcome to the DIY Director's Guide! This guide is designed to make it easy for you to get started in filmmaking through creating your own playful takes on classic Northern movies.

First up, check out our specially commissioned Top Tips film from movie remake master Richard DeDomenici, creator of the [The Redux Project](#). From *The Matrix* to *Muriel's Wedding*, *Mad Max* to *The Bourne Supremacy*, Richard has remade movies all over the world. We spent the day with Richard visiting some inspiring *Get Carter* locations and finding out his [Top Tips for remaking movies](#).

So you want to remake a scene but you've never tried your hand at making a film before?

Or you've made your own films but never had a go at remaking an already existing scene?

This DIY Guide will take you through the whole process from production right through to editing and getting it online. Remaking a scene is a good way to learn about filmmaking because you are following a template

that's been laid down by people who already know all the rules. Though you're welcome to break them! Feel free to cherry pick from the below or throw it out entirely and find your own way. Just make sure you have fun while you're doing it. Get anything you make online using **#RemakeATake #GetNorth2018** and you could be in with a chance of being crowned Remake A Take Champion and winning the coveted DIY Trophy and a set of film goodies!

Now back to the Guide...

What scene to choose?

It's wise to focus on remaking scenes, rather than trying to get across an entire film in miniature. This makes your life a lot easier but you could try and make a short version of the whole thing or put together a trailer version. It's up to you.

You can see some great examples of that here:

Back to the Future

[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=H1B2GRz09hg&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1B2GRz09hg&t=2s)

Star Wars

[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=wG3awJsmAmw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wG3awJsmAmw)

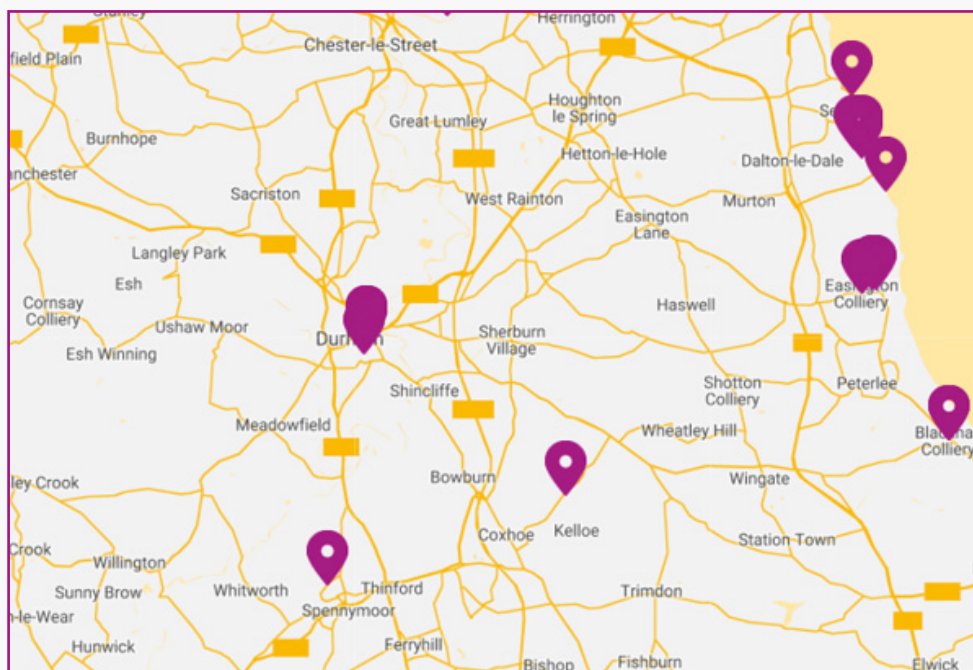
Picking a scene that's short will make your life easier but if it isn't and you need to abridge it, make sure you get the memorable bit in. Although there's nothing stopping you just parodying it and don't worry about getting the exact words right. Here's an example of Vic and Bob doing just that with a Northern classic:

Kes

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtTIQ0y
Sej4&index=1&list=RDLtTIQ0ySej4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtTIQ0ySej4&index=1&list=RDLtTIQ0ySej4)

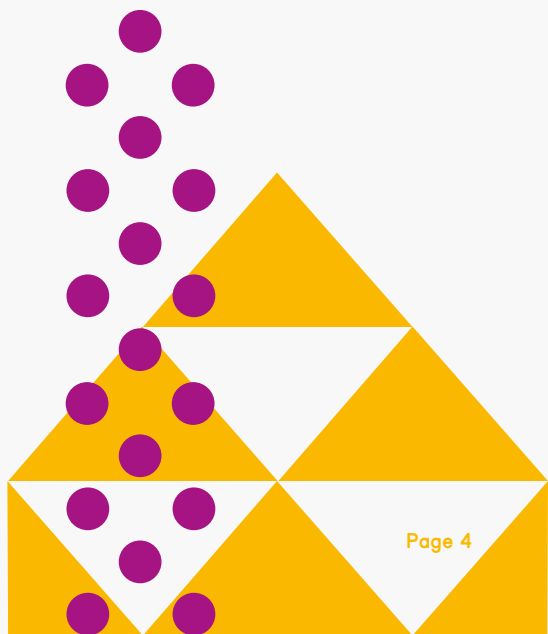


Images: Richard DeDomenici.



You can also find lots of ideas for films to remake [on our online movie map](#).

It's best if the scene is memorable in some way. In other words it has a line or shot that will be familiar to a lot of people. Don't worry if the scene has something in it that seems impossible to film or recreate. If you get the line, particular costume or shot almost like it then people will get it. One advantage of remaking is that you can use the original as a template for what and how to shoot. It's like a ready made storyboard - that moves.



Shooting Rules

Whatever you're shooting with there are a few things which will almost always be relevant and you should think about while shooting. All cameras will have a lens and a record button and almost all will allow you to manually focus, adjust the light and change the colour. Practically all will also record sound. You need to think about each of these things whenever you take a shot. Sticking it on automatic can make things easier but can also mess up the shot if they're automatically giving you a setting you don't want.

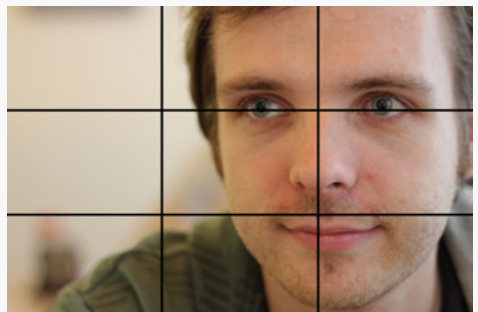
Framing

Framing – what you put in your shot and how you see it - will always be important. This information will apply to whatever you are shooting on but one very important point if you're shooting on a mobile phone – make sure you hold your phone in a landscape position, not portrait.



Position/Composition – There are some simple rules which will help with your composition. One of the most important is the rule of thirds.

When filming people try and keep the eyes about a third of the way down the screen. Very often a grid will be visible on the screen like this to help



but try and visualise it if not.

Always think about what you want an audience to focus on. You don't want that point of focus to be lost because it's badly framed or framed out.

Angle and height – Often first time filmmakers set the camera at roughly head height so when filming someone seated the camera is pointing down. Altering the height and angle of the camera can have dramatic effects. For example, a simple shot from higher up, angled down, can make a person seem small and weak, whereas the opposite – lower down, angled up – can make a person seem stronger and more intimidating.

Size – The size of things within a shot will dramatically change the effect and use of it. Typically films are made up of three types of shot. Here we have used the film *East is East* set in Salford, Lancashire to give you an example of each type of shot:



Mid-shots are the most common. Close enough to see what is going on but not so close that they have a particularly strong effect.



Close shots usually have a more emotional effect and are useful for drawing attention to things but are not great for conveying much information.



Wide shots are good for establishing a scene, showing a group of people or a large area but are not great for drawing attention to a particular person within a group. Images: Channel 4.

Depth – How close or far away something is to the camera can make a big difference to the meaning and effect of a shot. The depth of a shot can also allow a mix of shot types, described above. In other words there could be a close up of something in the foreground and a wide or mid shot of something in the background. Also, as film moves the depth and size of the framing can change within a shot.

Movement – As well as the things framed within the shot moving the camera itself can also affect things in a number of ways. Tripods allow for simple pans (moving side to side, pivoting on the top of the tripod) and tilts (moving up and down, again, pivoting from the top of the tripod). Another very common shot is the track, which involves the camera moving side to side/forwards or backwards. If on a tripod this usually involves additional 'grip' equipment but can be done using simple wheeled devices such as wheelchairs or trolleys. You should always try and keep any movement as steady as possible however.

Tripods can help keep movement smooth and still shots steady, but if you don't have one just try your best to keep your hand held shots smooth and steady. Bear in mind if you plan on shooting on a public street you'll need special permission to use a tripod and things will take a lot longer.

Focus

Alongside framing it's vital to make sure your shots are in focus. Almost all cameras and phones will have an auto focus setting but these can cause problems for a number of reasons. They may focus on the wrong part of the shot and they usually have a tracking ability which means if something passes in front of the camera it tries to focus on the new thing. As often as not these things are not helpful so it's useful to know how to manually focus your camera.

Even if you're shooting on a mobile phone there is usually a manual setting which allows you to set your focus. Different phones will work in different ways but this usually involves tapping on the point in your shot you want to stay focused on.

Light / Exposure

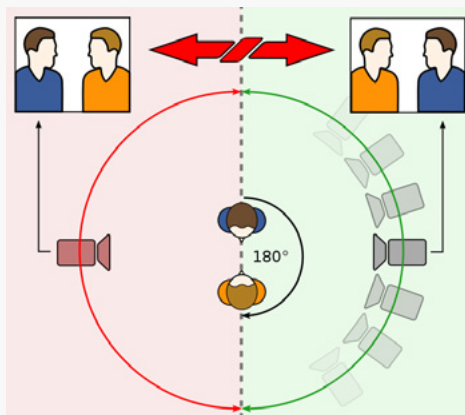
Almost all cameras will have an automatic setting for this. Exposure is how light or dark your shot is but, as with focusing, it may automatically adjust to the wrong part of the shot so it's important to know how to manually change this if you can. For example, if you have someone stood in front of a window the camera might adjust to the light outside the window making the person standing in front of it too dark (unless you have brightened them with a light). Unless you want to film someone anonymously in silhouette you will probably want to change this by shifting position or 'blowing out'/over exposing the window so you can see the person clearly.

Again, mobile phones will usually allow you to alter your exposure manually. Often this is done with an on-screen slider.

Shooting Process

You could shoot your film 'in-camera'. This means shooting it in the order you'll be seeing it. This will save you having to edit but will almost certainly end up with bits you don't want – such as people being told to start

walking or looking to the camera at the end of a take. This in itself can be funny but post production editing will make things slicker. While shooting it's worth thinking about editing (even if you're in-camera editing) which is difficult if you've never done it before but here's a rule which the original creators of your scenes will almost certainly have considered.



In a scene with two people talking you need to imagine a line running between the two.

The 180 degree rule and continuity - Imagine you are shooting a conversation between two people and you are filming them with two different shots – one of each person. You usually need it to look like they are facing each other. But how do you know that if you are only seeing one person in a shot at a time?

Because films are made up of different shots they need to be composed and put together in a particular way for them to make sense and one of the most common things to consider to make sure it will make sense is the 180 degree rule.

In a scene with two people talking you need to imagine a line running between the two. Then make sure when you are filming the two shots of the people talking the camera stays on the same side of that line.

Look here at how the Coen Brothers do it: www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UE3jz_O_EM.

Coverage

Another thing that will make your editing much easier is shooting more than you need. If an action is happening between shots you want to get the full action in both shots.

For example, someone is walking through a door in a shot from one side. Then it cuts to the other side of the door *as* they are walking through it. Unless you have multiple cameras you will be filming these shots separately. When filming those shots you want to make sure the

person goes through the full action of walking through the door in both.

Light

You probably don't need to worry too much about creative lighting. It can get complicated and is time-consuming but, on the other hand, it can have a huge impact on the effect of a scene and you should at least make sure you light it so the shot is clear. If you don't have a light you can 'bounce' light with a big bit of white paper or foil. If you're shooting outside you probably won't need to light it (unless it's a night scene) but bouncing the sunlight back on your subject is quite common when shooting outside.

Indoors your eye adjusts to the light so things might seem fine to you but the camera will see things differently. As mentioned above you can change the exposure on the camera up to a point but if you have lights, use them to brighten your subject. With a close shot you can use a lamp but wider shots would require a bigger light.

Set Calls

It helps to add a simple set call when shooting (unless shooting in camera). It doesn't really matter what you say as long as you indicate to everyone that you are about to record and then let everyone know that you are recording.

The most important reason for this is to make sure you're recording before your actors act. Do not press record and say action at the same time! You will often miss things you want at the start of the shot if you do that.

Don't rush to 'cut' (stop recording) either. Once the action is done, leave a small pause before stopping. In editing you can cut things out you don't need but you can't add footage you haven't shot.

Audio

If there's any choice, try and be in a quiet place. If not, try and turn away from the noise.

Get the microphone as close as you can without it being in the shot. If using an on board mic on a digital camera or a mobile phone get as close as possible to the subject.

If recording separately you should clap once on camera with both camera and audio recorder rolling. This will help you 'sync' the sound later.

Props, Costumes & Locations



Production design is often overlooked when making films for the first time but very often the thing people most remember about a film is the way it looks.

If you are working with no budget and limited access to actual locations you have to improvise something that gives the sense of the scene rather than trying to mimic these things exactly.

It's unlikely to look perfect but looking like you've made the effort – however ridiculous the final result –

is usually what works. For sets, locations and props cardboard, sellotape, duct tape, toys and clear thread are brilliant and fun to produce. For costumes and makeup, if there is something that stands out on a subject, then trying to mimic that can help. For example Harry Potter's lightning bolt scar or Marty Mcfly's 'life preserver' in *Back to the Future*.

If you are shooting in public then it's always best to let the local police know. This is absolutely essential if you're filming anything violent or with weapons! Armed response teams have been called out more than once because of people not doing this. You will also need to check the local authority's filming policy. Most councils will allow you to film if you will not be using a tripod or causing disruptions to walkways or roads.

Performance

The most important thing to do here is not to take yourself too seriously. Or at all seriously. Usually the dafter the better. If there's an accent or something familiar about the performer, then hamming that up can help as long as you don't offend anyone!

Editing

There are a number of cheap and even free editing platforms to choose from to cut your film, for example DaVinci Resolve and iMovie. It's worth doing a bit of research online to see which one suits your device best. You edit on your phone, tablet or computer and the process should be easier when remaking because you have the original film to use as a guide. Many of the editing platforms work in a similar way and there is a general process to follow to make your life easier.

Get your footage into the software. This isn't always as easy as it sounds. Some, such as iMovie, automatically recognise footage shot on the device but others need the footage to be converted before the software can use it. Check the specifications of your particular package.

Look through all of your raw clips (rushes) and, if you can, label them according to the type of shot (CU – Close Up, MS – Medium Shot, WS – Wide Shot), a brief description of what's in the shot, and the take number if there's more than one.

Look at each clip and look out for tech problems with image or sound and performance. Remember just because something might have gone wrong at the beginning or end of a clip doesn't mean the whole thing is ruined.

Assemble your clips. There is usually some kind of viewer to look at the uncut clips and a timeline to assemble your film on. When you look at the viewer there will be an option to put in-points and out-points, to select the bit you want. Do that for each clip and then put them on the time line in the order you want – usually the order of the scene you're re-making. If you've not got the correct in or out point in the viewer you can usually lengthen or shorten the clips once they're on the timeline.

At this point don't worry too much about the sound mix.

The Sound Mix

Now, worry about the sound mix! The sound on different clips may differ quite a bit so there should be some way of adjusting the volume level on each clip to make them sound similar. You will almost always be able to build up layers of sound. The audio

connected to your clips will be on one layer but you can add other sounds on other layers. Don't get too carried away with this but it can be handy to add a relevant sound effect and music if needed. You will also have to sound mix these things so you don't drown out something you want your audience to hear.

You could record something yourself or download a free sound effect from somewhere like www.freesound.org/browse/tags/sound-effects.

For more sound effect inspiration check out www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO3N_PRIgX0.

Adding extras

You might want to create titles and credits. For remakes a silly cardboard version of the original can be fun but most editing software will give you the option to add titles. They often work in different ways so check your software.



Music

Music can be a minefield legally. Technically you're not supposed to use any music without permission and this usually involves paying a fee. However, there is flexibility with 'fair use' use of copyrighted material which is when you use music in a 'transformative' way which includes parody.

Even if you do this however, if you plan on putting your clip on Youtube, the platform can recognise certain pieces of music and automatically mute your audio if the platform thinks there is a copyright breach.

One way to avoid automatic muting or legal problems is to redo the music yourself in a fun a cappella way. There's often some recognisable 'hook' to a movie soundtrack so as long as you get that in you should be fine.

Sharing Your Film

When you are happy with your edit you can export it. Exporting is when you send your assembled film out of the software as a video where everything is put together. When you shoot digitally the footage is

recorded in a particular format. This is why some editing software needs to convert the footage before you can cut it. You usually don't need to worry too much about that but you do need to worry about it when you export the film.

When you export you will often have the option to export in the format you've shot and edited on. This is often going to be your best quality version but different platforms for screening your films have preferred settings that you should be aware of. This is a headache but, to keep it simple, just make sure you have an export of the best settings and then consider what you're most likely to screen your film on. These days that will be online, for example on Youtube or Vimeo. H.264 is a commonly used video codec (compression method) but you can check online for each platforms settings.

If all of the above seems too complicated the sites will convert your film for you when you upload. This usually takes some time but works fine.

And Finally...

Bear in mind doing a remake should be fun above anything else, so if all this info has put you off or made you think it's all more complicated than you thought then our last bit of advice is - ignore it.

With remakes doing it wrong is part of the fun and can make the end result funnier. It's also the best way to learn. In remaking one stupid (but fun) scene with your phone with your friends you'll learn most of the above in the process. So do it anyway.

We would love to see your remakes! Please post on social media with [#RemakeATake](#) [#GetNorth2018](#) and be in with a chance of being crowned Remake a Take Champion (and winning a bunch of cool prizes!).



Images: Richard DeDomenici.

Want to know more? These are just some of the organisations that can help you progress your interest in filmmaking:

North West

FACT

www.fact.co.uk/get-involved/young-people-and-schools.aspx

Signal Film & Media

www.signalfilmandmedia.co.uk

HOME

www.homemcr.org/events

Yorkshire

Sheffield Doc/Fest

www.sheffdocfest.com/articles/437

Screen Yorkshire

www.screenyorkshire.co.uk

South Yorkshire

Filmmakers Network

www.syfn.org

Leeds Young Film

www.leedsyoungfilm.com

North East

Beacon Hill Arts –

BFI Film Academy

www.beaconhillarts.org.uk

Northern Film + Media

www.northernmedia.org

Tyneside Cinema –

Film Academy

www.tynesidecinema.co.uk/learn/young-people-fiction-academy

National

Creative England

www.creativeengland.co.uk

Creative Skillset

www.creativeskillset.org

BFI Network

www.network.bfi.org.uk

BAFTA

www.bafta.org/supporting-talent

Shooting People

www.shootingpeople.org

INTO Film

www.intofilm.org

Channel 4

www.careers.channel4.com/4talent

NFTS

www.nfts.co.uk

Guiding Lights

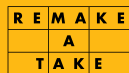
www.lighthouse.org.uk/guiding-lights

ACTION (Working Title)

www.workingtitlefilms.com/action

Edinburgh TV Festival

www.thetvfestival.com/talent-schemes



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NORTHERNMEDIA.ORG



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for Great Exhibition of the North 2018
www.northernmedia.org

