A SKATE LABS FIELD GUIDE

FILM AND EDIT WITH YOUR PHONE

Settings, framing, angles, filming safely, light, sound and a simple edit. Make clips your friends actually want to watch.

FILMING AND EDITING

12 PAGES

READ IT ON YOUR PHONE



TAPE 02 / FILMER

02 START HERE

YOUR PHONE IS ENOUGH

Plenty of classic skate videos were shot in standard definition. The phone in your pocket shoots far sharper footage than that. What makes a clip good is how you film it, not the gear.

IN THIS GUIDE

03 **Set it up first**
04 **Frame the whole trick**
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11 **Finish and export**

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ **Your phone.** Charged, with plenty of free storage.
- ☐ **A clean lens.** Wipe it with a soft cloth. A smudge ruins more clips than bad skating.
- ☐ **Do not disturb.** Turn it on so a call doesn't cut off a recording.
- ☐ **A wrist strap.** Optional, but phones dropped at skateparks don't last long.
- ☐ **A clip-on fisheye.** Optional. Your phone's ultra wide lens gets close to that look.
- ☐ **A patient skater.** Some tricks take thirty tries. Keep filming.

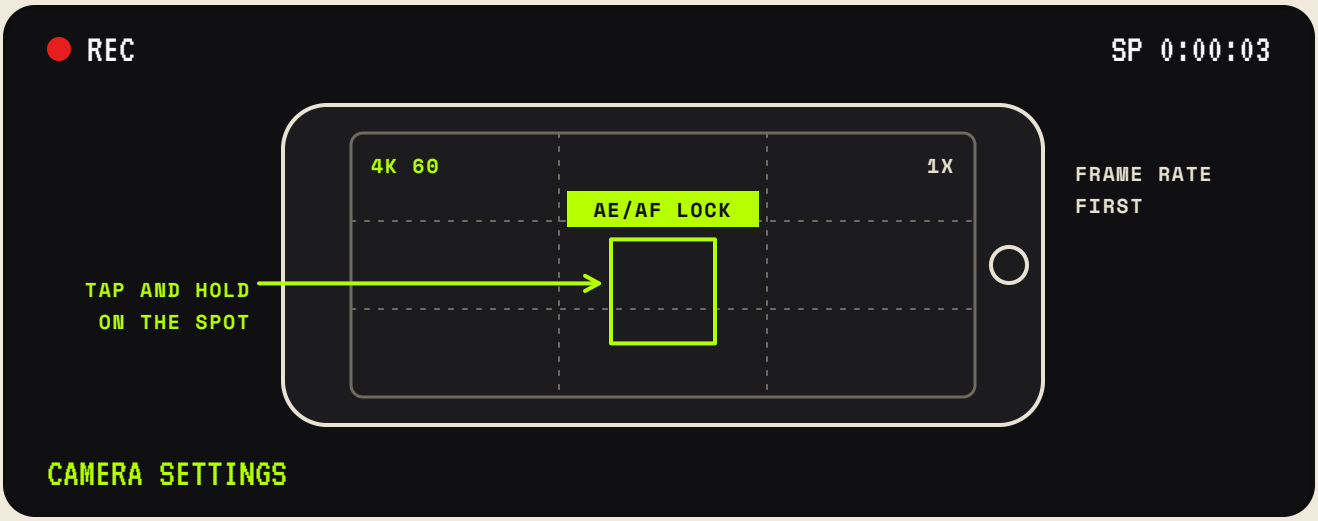
REAL TALK

The filmer is half of every clip. Being the friend who films is a real skill, and a good filmer gets invited to every session.

03 SETTINGS

SET IT UP FIRST

Thirty seconds in the camera settings before the session saves you from a lot of blurry, pulsing clips later.



01 4K or 1080p at 60 frames

60 frames per second looks smooth and lets you slow a clip to half speed later. Use 4K if you have the storage, 1080p if not.

02 Lock focus and exposure

Tap and hold where the trick happens. Most phones then lock it (AE/AF Lock on iPhone), so the picture doesn't pulse as the skater moves.

03 Pick vertical or horizontal

Decide where the clip will live before you hit record. Vertical for phone feeds, horizontal for longer edits.

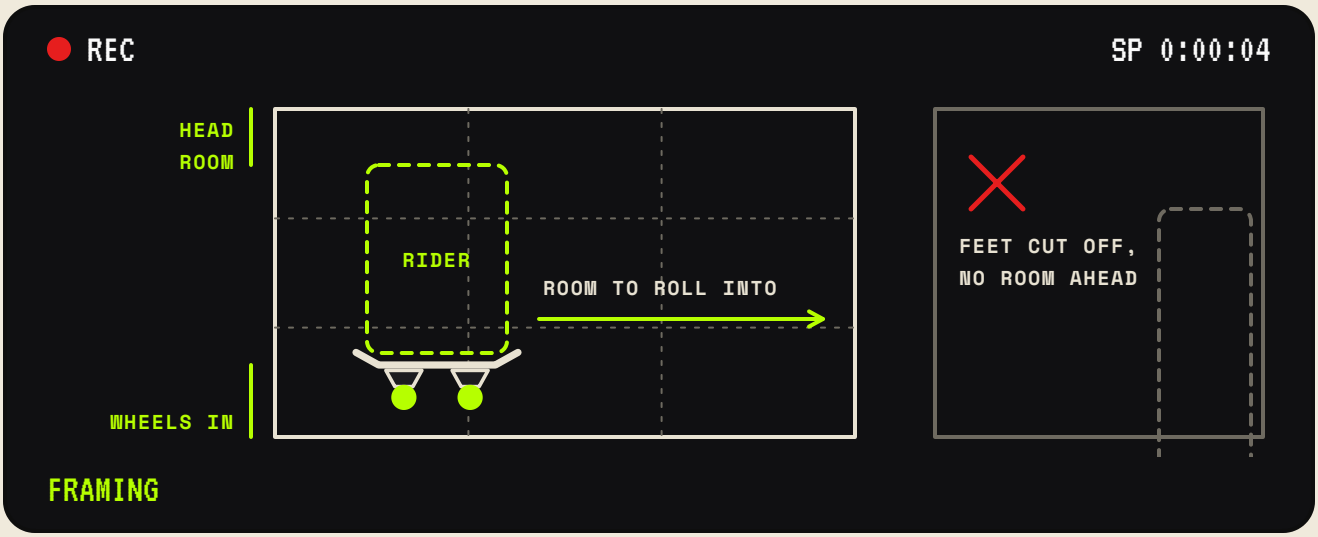
04 Skip digital zoom

Pinching past your phone's real lenses makes footage mushy. Walk closer, or switch lenses (0.5x, 1x, 2x).

04 FRAMING

FRAME THE WHOLE TRICK

A trick clip is about the board and the feet. If the viewer can't see the board, there's no trick.



01 Head to wheels

Keep the full body and the whole board in frame, from the top of the head to the wheels. Cut off the feet and the clip is gone.

02 Leave room ahead

Give the skater space in the direction they're rolling, so they roll into the frame, not out of it.

03 Roll before and after

Start recording a few seconds before the setup and keep going until they roll away. The roll away proves the make.

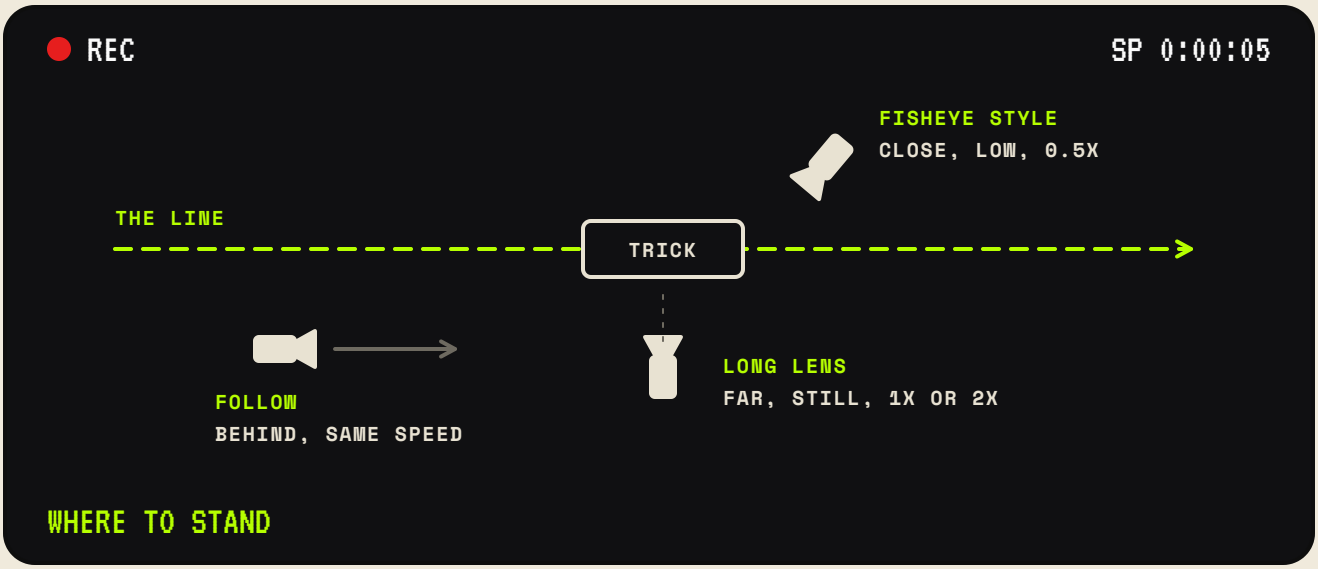
04 Follow the board

Watch the board, not the face, and move the phone smoothly with it. No jerky pans.

05 ANGLES

THREE ANGLES TO KNOW

Most skate clips come from three basic setups. Learn each one and you can film almost anything.



01
Long lens

Stand back and keep still on 1x or 2x. It shows the whole spot and how big the trick really is. Great for gaps and stairs.

02
Fisheye style

Get close and low on the ultra wide (0.5x). Everything feels fast and big. You move with the skater, so it takes practice.

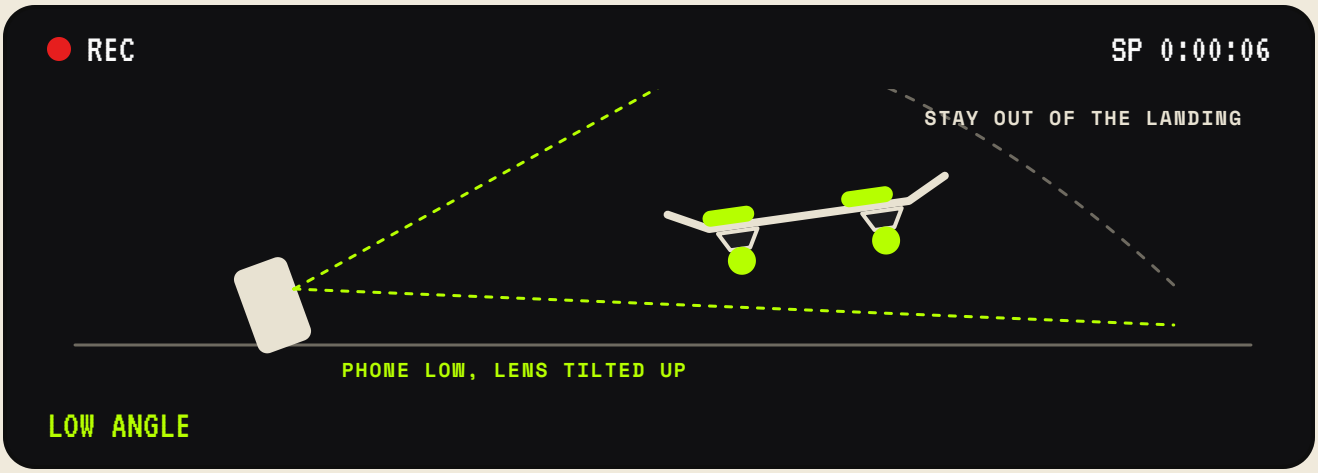
03
Follow cam

Ride along behind or beside the skater and film as you go. Made for lines and flowing park runs.

06 CLOSE UP

LOW AND CLOSE

The fisheye look is the classic skate angle for a reason.
Close, low and wide makes a small trick look loud.



01 Go wide

Switch to the ultra wide lens (0.5x on most phones). Wide lenses hide a shaky hand.

02 Get low

Hold the phone near the ground and tilt the lens up a little. A low angle makes pop look higher.

03 Talk it through

Agree on where the skater will roll, pop and land, and where you'll be. No surprises.

04 Move with it

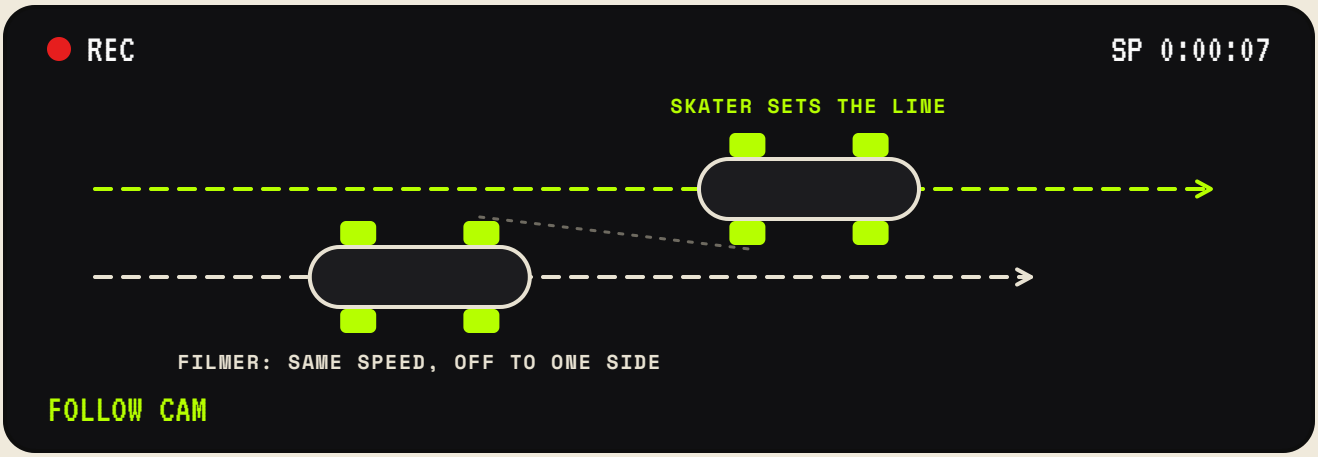
Start a little back, then step or swing with the trick so the board stays in the middle.

SAFETY Close filming means boards fly at your face and phone. Stay out of the landing, watch the skater and not just the screen, and be ready to move.

07 FOLLOW CAM

FILM ON THE MOVE

Following a line on your own board is the most fun way to film, and the easiest way to slam. Build up to it.



01 Be steady on your board

You need to push, carve and stop without thinking before you film while rolling.

02 Low and wide

Ultra wide lens, phone held low in both hands, or one hand with a strap. Bent knees soak up bumps.

03 Keep the gap

Match the skater's speed and hold the same distance, off to one side so you never ride into their landing.

04 Pick smooth ground

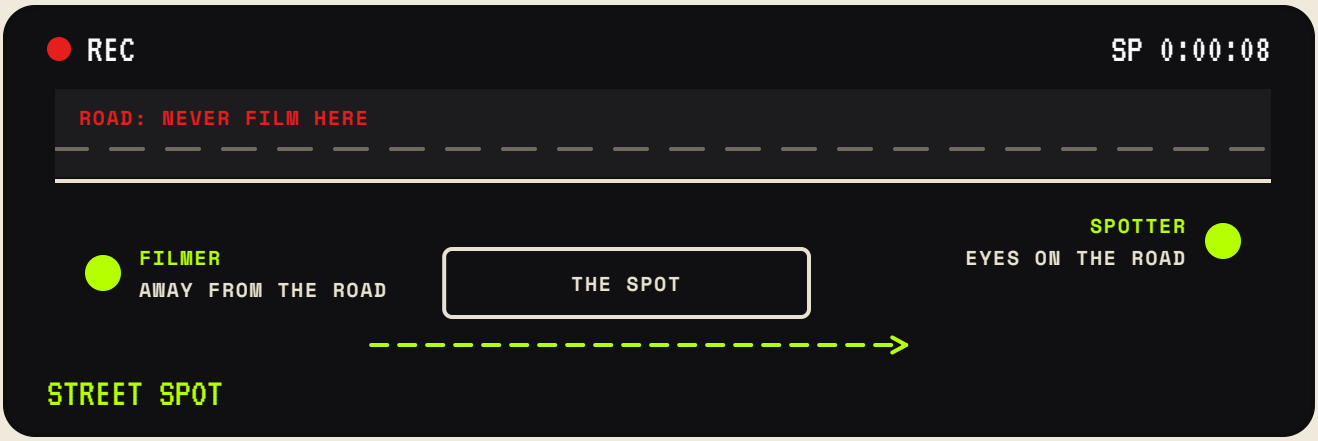
Follow filming only works on smooth ground. Cracks and pebbles will throw you.

SAFETY Only follow film where there are no cars, and keep looking up. If you're watching the screen, you're not watching where you're going.

08 SAFETY

STREETS AND TRAFFIC

Street spots give you great clips, and they're where filming goes wrong fastest. No clip is worth getting hit by a car.



01 Never stand in the road

Find an angle from the sidewalk side, or skip the spot. Don't stand in a lane for the shot, even on a quiet street.

02 Bring a spotter

Have a friend watch the road and call out cars, bikes and people. The filmer's eyes are on the skater.

03 Go when it's quiet

Early mornings and empty lots beat busy streets. If the traffic doesn't stop, move on.

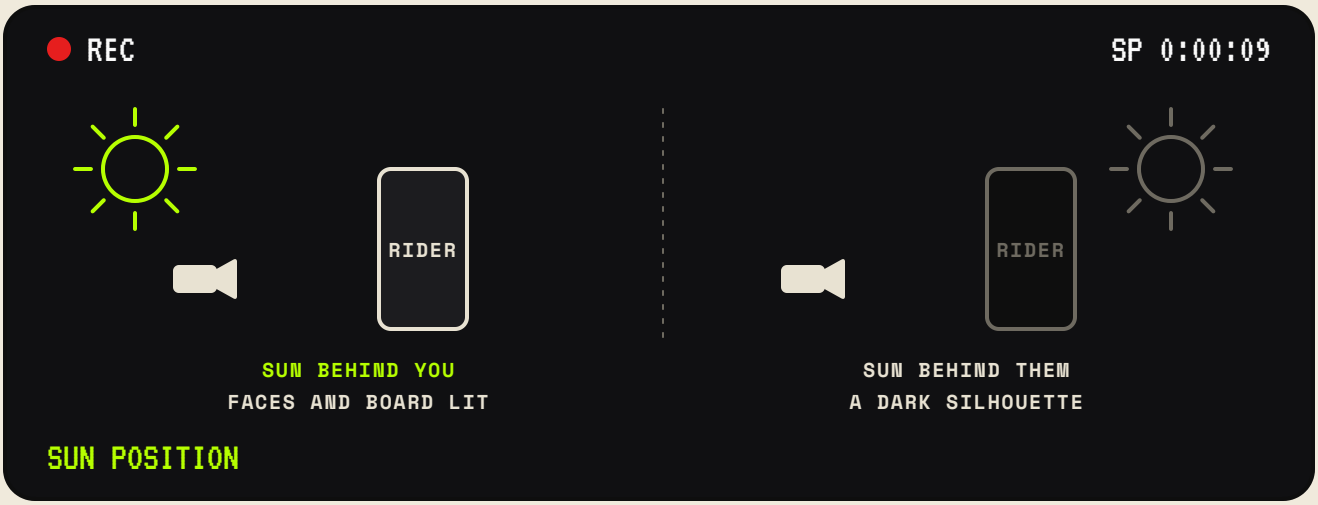
04 Let the board go

If a board rolls into the street, stop and look both ways before you go after it. Never run out blind.

REAL TALK Respect the spot. If someone asks you to leave, go. Watch out for people walking by, and leave the place the way you found it.

LIGHT AND SOUND

Good light does more for a phone clip than any setting. Good sound does the rest.



Light

Keep the sun behind you or off to one side so it lights the skater. Filming toward the sun turns them into a dark shape.

Early morning and late afternoon give soft light and long shadows. At night, find the brightest spot you can. Phones get grainy in the dark.

Sound

The pop, the roll and the landing are half of a skate clip. Keep your fingers off the phone's microphones.

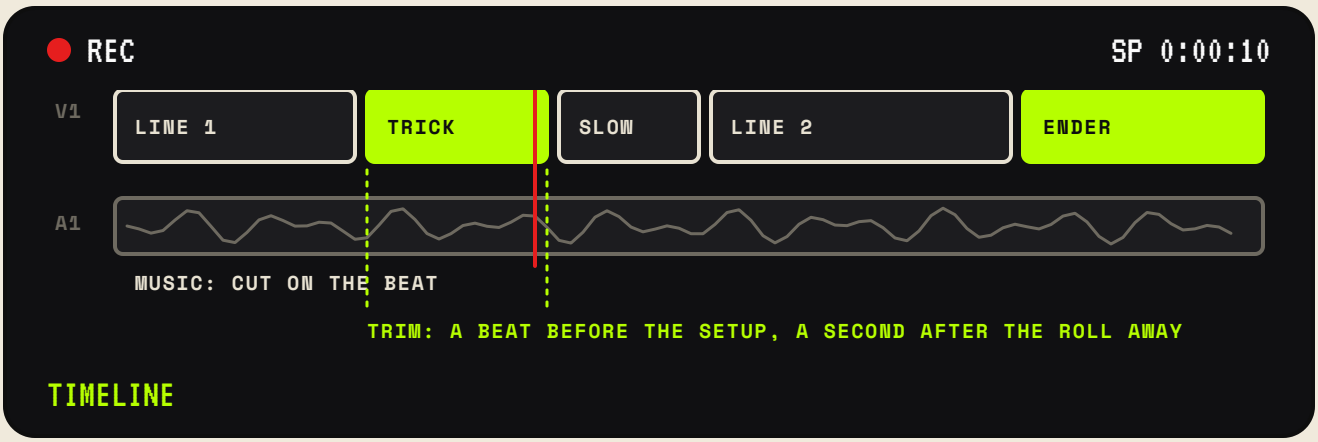
Wind wrecks audio, so shield the phone with your body on windy days. Get closer for sound when the trick allows it.

> **TIP** Filming at night? A phone flashlight won't light much. Pick a spot under strong street lights, or have a friend hold a small light off to the side.

10 EDITING

CUT IT TIGHT

Any editor with a timeline will do, including the one that probably came with your phone. Good edits are short and get to the point.



TIMELINE

01 Pick the makes

Go through your clips and keep only the clean makes. One great clip beats five okay ones.

02 Trim each clip

Start a beat before the setup and end a second after the roll away. Cut out the walking back.

03 Order it

Open strong, keep the middle moving and save the best trick for last. It's called the ender for a reason.

04 Slow-mo, once

If you slow a trick down, do it once, for the best moment. A whole edit in slow motion drags.

REAL TALK Shorter is better. A quick edit packed with makes beats a long one that nobody watches to the end.

11 FINISHING

FINISH AND EXPORT

The last bit of work is what makes an edit feel finished. Keep it simple.



STEP	WHAT TO DO
Music	Use music you have the rights to, or the licensed sounds inside the app you post to. Other songs can get a clip muted or taken down.
Color	A small boost in contrast is plenty. Heavy filters hide the skating.
Credits	Name the skater and the filmer at the start or the end. Credit matters in skating.
Export	Export at the frame rate you filmed at, and at least 1080p. Keep the trick away from the edges, where app buttons sit.
Backup	Save the original clips somewhere else before you clear your phone.

THE LAST PAGE

NOW GO FILM

Settings, framing, angles, safety, light, sound and a tight edit. Film your friends, film a lot, keep it short, and send us the edit when it's done. Tag @skatelabshq.



NEXT

More field guides

Field Guide 01 covers your first tricks, from stance to the drop in. Field Guide 03 walks you through building and caring for your board.

PLAY

A Game of SKATE

Filming tricks anyway? Global SKATE lets you play a Game of SKATE by video with a friend anywhere. It's in testing now at skatelabs.app.

See you out there.

SKATE LABS FIELD GUIDES