



## Tips for recording at home

This is aimed at readers for CVTN who are recording at home due to the isolation during the Covid19 restrictions. The aim is to get high quality voice recordings without extraneous noises, without bumps and thumps, and without reverberation from a 'harsh' room environment. This is perfectly possible and simple, if some straightforward steps are taken, whether you are using a purpose built recorder or a phone or computer.

### The room and 'desk'

This is the main influence on reverberation and should be a quiet space. The first requirement is a room that you can use alone with the door shut (if others are in the home!) and remote from any other household noises from people or washing machines or the like. The second is for a lot of soft furnishings such as carpet, curtains etc. to avoid sound reflection (reverberation). A bedroom often works well.

Next you need to choose where to sit and record. This is best at the side of the room, a metre (yard) or so from any wall or other hard surface, but not symmetrically in a corner. If possible face something soft like the curtains, and if you can arrange something soft behind/around you as well that's excellent! Perhaps a duvet or rug hung on something behind you. If there are cupboards full of sound absorbing clothes – open the doors! Really, it works! It may also help to partly draw the curtains.

You will probably want to use a support for your script to avoid handling noise, so a small table at a height about level with your eyes is good. If you have to turn a page, please leave five seconds of silence both before and after doing so, so the techy can remove any noises.

### The recorder

First is positioning it. If this is a phone or purpose built small device, it is best placed on a table or bed using a tripod or other support, and with a cushion or other soft item under that. This avoids vibration from the floor or other source from causing thumps. You could use the same support as for your script, as long as you can avoid touching it while speaking.

Next, arrange it to be about half a metre (18 inches) from your mouth, at about the same height and somewhat to the side of your face, so you do not puff or blow straight at it! This too causes bumps and thumps, especially from pronouncing 'Bs' and 'Ps'. The microphone(s) should point at you.

### Doing it!

Finally – the actual recording! Obviously you will want to make sure you are familiar with how the recorder works, in terms of starting and stopping recording, and if applicable, how to set the recording level. Some purpose built recorders have a 'lo-cut' switch – if so put it to 'on'. If there is a recording level control, try it out to get a high level without distortion of your voice. You have to experiment to do this, and it is best to listen through headphones or earbuds, as the quality is far superior to the 'loudspeaker' on your phone or laptop. Most devices have an 'auto' setting for level, and this is often the best to use. Try it out, and if you want to send some results to Tony or Brian for comment, please do. You do need to end up with a high level recording, but not distorted at the loud bits.

So, to the real thing – the sequence is first to get comfortable and arrange everything, then to start the recorder, sit back and wait five seconds. Then read the piece, and at the end stop speaking, wait five seconds and only then stop the recorder.

If you make a big mistake during the recording, or cough or sneeze – please keep silent for five seconds (count them to yourself) and then go back to the start of the sentence and read on. The techy will be able to see a five second gap and sort out the problem.

A final point – try to keep an evenish level of speech. It is very easy to start off quite loud and fade, and then sometimes repeat that for each paragraph or section. Listen to your recordings critically, and try to make your presentation fairly even. This doesn't mean 'flat and boring' – it's a volume thing, not an expressive one.

Have fun! It's really not as difficult to do as to describe, and once you have sorted out your 'studio' you will find it quite simple.

*PS For Android phones, there are several recording apps – Hi-Q MP3 Rec is very good, Easy Voice Recorder simple; for iPhone or iPad the built-in Voice Memo App can be used.*