

Published based on [2008 Camcorders - 5 Tips Before You Buy](#)

# **2008 Camcorders - 5 Tips Before You Buy**

by Jim Hofman

We attended the recent consumer electronics show, and noted with great interest various new camcorder models. With a number of new features, these new models vary in price range and offer new technological enhancements of interest to anyone considering a camcorder purchase. Our staff examined these new models and compiled a list of five factors to consider before you buy.

#### Tip One: Ask Yourself What You Need

Sony and Panasonic have rolled out new models featuring face detection technology, which may or may not be worth the added investment for you. Ask yourself if you've been happy with facial images with your current model. If the answer is no, you'll be pleased to hear that face detection technology will automatically resolve any blurring or over exposure problems.

#### Tip Two: Are You A Steady Hand?

Your current camcorder likely offers some form of image stabilization, which helps compensate for a jittery hand while shooting video. There are two types of image stabilization - electronic and optical. The more advanced and reliable of the two is optical image stabilization, and it's more expensive as well. Decide whether you're a steady hand while taking video, and determine whether or not your results warrant a higher investment in optical stabilization.

#### Tip Three: How Long Are Your Video Shoots?

When you buy, you'll likely be offered the chance to purchase an upgraded battery. Here's the rule of thumb: If you normally shoot video for more than an hour at a time, the upgraded battery is probably worth the extra expense (usually \$75 or so). Otherwise, the standard battery will be sufficient.

#### Tip Four: Large Or Small?

In general, the bigger the screen, the easier it'll be to see what you're recording. However, some larger screens don't work as well in bright sunlight, so ask yourself where you'll take most of your video. Do you tend to shoot more video indoors in consistent light levels, or outside where light can be inconsistent? The same is true if you take a lot of video in low light levels. If so, be sure you have the most appropriate shutter mode so your video doesn't turn out blurry.

#### Tip Five: Recording The Sound You Intended To Record

Most people use a camcorder to record sound as much as video. If sound and sound quality is important to you, consider a model with a zoom microphone. A zoom microphone will automatically engage when the zoom lens mode is operating. This will minimize any sound coming from you as the video operator. In other models, it's quite common for your voice to completely drown out the voices of those you're videoing. A zoom microphone eliminates that problem.

When you're considering a camcorder purchase, make sure it'll be a comfortable fit for your normal use patterns. Also consider factors like size, weight, and ease of use. Lastly, determine whether a particular feature is worth the additional price by asking yourself if the feature is critical to your enjoyment of the video. Consideration of these five tips will go a long way toward ensuring years of enjoyment with your new camcorder purchase.

#### About the Author:

New camcorder technology continues to evolve and change, much like any other technology. Make sure you carefully evaluate all models and features before buying your next camcorder. Have more questions or concerns? Visit us for more tips and reviews of the latest [new camcorders](#).

You can also find this article published on [2008 Camcorders - 5 Tips Before You Buy](#)