

density filter (VND) to reduce the light entering the camera, thus allowing for a slower shutter speed. A good budget VND option for phones is a clip-on like the Zomei 37mm ND Circular Filter ND2–ND400 (zomei.com), which can be found on online shopping sites. But for most cycling footage, I find clip-on filters too fiddly.

Camera apps & settings

The camera apps pre-installed on phones work reasonably well, and



There are lots of mounting options for action cameras, not just helmets



Video chat

Susanna Thornton

Brompton tourer

- GoPro Hero 9 Black, with ball mount
- 15cm tripod (unbranded)
- Adobe Premiere Pro
- Epidemic Sound

I started making videos because non-cycling family, friends and colleagues thought that what I do is hard and that I must be brave.

“I’m not,” I’d splutter. “Cycling is a joy! And it’s not hard. Not the way I do it.” But they didn’t believe me. So I bought a camera and started to make films.

Before I set off each time, I have a shot list in mind, aiming for a good variety of close-ups and wide shots and so on, to tell the story of the ride. On the road, I actively look for things to convey the character of a place, and what it’s like to be there – gulls following a tractor, leaves thrashing in a March gale, wild grass lit by low sun. Filming a ride makes me look harder. It’s interesting.

I shoot with a GoPro action camera. I tried adding a selfie stick and sound recorder, but it was more stuff to carry around and think about, so I went back to just my GoPro.



When I first started, I concentrated on visuals. These days I’m trying to use natural sound better too, to convey how lovely it is to pedal through a hubbub of voices and cathedral bells, or past summer hedgerows

alive with birdsong. I plan my adventures carefully, but if I do get in a pickle – held up by the odd puncture, lost or just tired – I often forget to film. The trick is to try to keep shooting even then; it makes the story more interesting and reliable.

My films are also for me. When I can’t get out, I watch my own films to relive the rides and smile.

[youtube.com/@susannathornton](https://www.youtube.com/@susannathornton)



“The key thing is to go to the camera/video settings and select the frame rate and resolution first. Avoid HDR for moving subjects”

are quicker and easier to use than the dedicated but better camera apps such as Filmic Pro, Moment Camera and Blackmagic Camera.

Although I use auto settings for impromptu shots, the key thing is to go to the camera/video settings and select the frame rate and resolution first. Avoid HDR mode for moving subjects. Use ‘most compatible (file) format’. Set a high bit rate. Turn on stabilisation if your camera has the option. And turn on ‘lock camera’ to avoid any orientation shift if you move the device.

On the camera screen, I turn off auto white balance and select it manually (about 5600K in bright daylight) to avoid colour temperature shifts. Tap the screen to bring up the focus and exposure lock. I dial exposure down to around -3 to avoid blown-out highlights.

With dedicated camera apps, you do have far more manual control. The controls take time to master and set up, so I only use them for on-foot shooting and when I have time. Simple is sometimes best. →