

Camera Technique and Technology

The Steadicam Shot – The invention of the Steadicam in the late 1970s has enabled directors precise control of camera movement bringing a virtuosity and sweeping grandeur to tracking camera movement never before experienced in the cinema Famous examples of the expressive use of the steadicam occur in the work of directors Stanley Kubrick and Martin Scorsese.

THE SHINING (1980): (00:41:11 to 00:41:50)

Stanley Kubrick employed a low angle steadicam to place us in the exact perspective of a young boy as he drives his tricycle through the corridors of the haunted Overlook hotel.

GOODFELLAS (1990): (00:30:15 to 00:33:09)

In this celebrated shot, Scorsese used the steadicam in an extended long take to follow the young couple as they move through the corridors of the nightclub. The camera movement is majestic and exhilarating perfectly communicating the glamour, excitement and romantic feeling of the young protagonist as he sweeps his girlfriend of her feet.

PANIC ROOM: (00:15:02 to 00:17:40)

A long take using a highly mobile tracking camera to explore the interior space of the large house – a shot achieved through digital special effects. This is the scene early in the film where the three burglars arrive at what they think is an empty house, unaware that Jodie Foster and her daughter have just moved in.

Hand-held Camera Technique – the jerky, hand-held camera made famous by the documentary filmmakers of Direct Cinema or Cinema Verite is the precise opposite of the Steadicam. Many contemporary directors use a hand-held camera to generate various emotional and psychological effects such as a greater feeling of realism and immediacy, a restless energy, or a feeling of events spinning out of control

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT: (00:45:23 to 00:16:50)

This film is photographed in documentary style as the protagonists are actually making a documentary about a local folk legend. A hand-held camera is used throughout to create the feeling that the story is 'real'. The black and white photography, jerky movement and off-kilter framing of the camera is very effective at communicating the terror of the unknown threat that menaces the main characters as they explore the dark woods.

POINT BREAK: (01:04:33 to 01:07:30)

The speed, violence and dramatic force of the bank robbery is communicated by the fast-moving hand-held camera movements. A hand-held camera is also employed during parts of the daring chase sequence along with Point of View camera to place us in the perspective of the protagonist and communicate his adrenalin-fuelled state.

Camera speed

Film's ability to manipulate time is one of its most distinctive qualities. Slow and Fast Motion cinematography are achieved by varying the speed of the camera during filming. Directors can use camera speed for a variety of expressive purposes. Action movies will often employ slow motion to extend the feeling of terror or suspense in key scenes of high drama and emotion. The director Sam Peckinpah employed slow motion to stunning effect in his western *The Wild Bunch* and has inspired contemporary directors such as John Woo to make frequent use of this technique in high octane action movies such as *Face Off*.

Viewing Extract 1 - TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY

The moment where Sarah Connor comes face to face with her greatest fear is extended by the use of slow motion.

Viewing Extract 2 - PANIC ROOM: (00:54:58 to 00:56:40)

The race against time is one of the most common sequences of the action genre. When Jodie Foster decides to run out of the Panic Room to get her mobile phone to call for help, she has only seconds before the three burglars (who are on the bottom floor of the house) realise that she has left the room. The director stretches time and wracks up the suspense as we wonder will she make it back into the safety of the Panic Room in time?

Viewing Extract 3 - FACE OFF: (01:49:08 to 01:51:54)

This is the climatic scene of the film when the final showdown takes place between the hero and the villain (who have actually swapped faces). The sequence has an operatic quality created by the slow motion, the music soundtrack and the editing together of evocative shots (i.e. the close-up on the crucifix).

Viewing Extract 4



[Do Armed Robbers Have Love Affairs 5](#)

In this the final sequence of the film, the director's uses slow motion to extend the climax and convey the hopelessness of the two men's predicament as it becomes clear that they have walked

into a trap – a iconic moment in the history of cinema made famous by the Western, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

Viewing Extract 5



[Rules of Golf 4](#)

The speeded up, fast paced moving camera of the film's opening sequence races through the city. Cut to a pumping musical score, the speeding camera conveys a sense of exhilaration and excitement – the energy rush experienced by joyriders, the subject of the film.