

ACTION SCENE EDITING TIPS



Here are some tips on how to cut video transactions for action scenes.

1. **Cutting on the Action to Maintain Continuity**

Action scenes maintain continuity of action by cutting on the action. This means you cut the clip on the action before you move to a different angle so that you get a seamless sequence of events. For example, you have a two shot of your hero punching the villain. You could cut the clip somewhere on him throwing the punch. The next clip could be a close-up of the villain getting smacked in the face with a loud sound effect or him reacting to the punch in slow motion, depending on where you chose to cut the initial punch.

2. **Maintain Screen Direction**

This means when you cut from clip to clip, the subject must always move in the same direction.

3. **Parallel Editing**

Parallel editing is a powerful technique. You cut back and forth between different story lines or actions so it appears that multiple events are happening simultaneously. It is a useful technique to create suspense, anticipation and anxiety, especially where the characters in the intense action packed scenes are fighting to protect the character from harm in the parallel scene and/or the villain is getting closer to the unsuspecting character in the other scene. It is often used in horror films, suspense thrillers, and action films.

4. **Thematic Editing**

Thematic editing uses rapid impressionistic sequence of shots and/or a montage of images to convey an emotion in a very short period of time.

Case Study: *The Fifth Element* - The Diva Dance

The Fifth Element was a blockbuster movie. It used the different action cutting techniques masterfully.

Click here to watch clips from the film: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0qy3JHz6X0>. It is also available for viewing on the private membership website under the Case Studies tab in the navigation bar for this respective blog entry. This video is from *The Fifth Element*: the Diva Dance Scene. Notice how it makes use of the parallel editing technique to convey the simultaneous happening of two events and create suspense.

For a video tutorial of how to use the different editing techniques in action scenes, you can visit the following videos on Youtube and search more tutorials as you need them:

Editing Sound and Video to Heighten Tension: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrSWHabOA2s>

Editing Tips for Fight Scenes In Premier: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt7HZX2caAs>.

ACTION MOVIE SECRETS



Elements of Dynamic Action Scenes

If you plan on writing and producing an action movie, you will want to make sure you follow a proven formula for success. Set forth below are some tips to craft your action scenes so that you create a blockbuster film.

1. Most fight scenes and/or karate scenes are choreographed by experts in the field. These include police officers, karate experts, fighters, boxers, etc. You will want to hire someone to help you with these scenes so they look authentic unless you are an expert yourself.
2. There is constant movement of images and characters.
3. There is a mix between speeds of clips: normal, slow motion and fast motion.
4. They cut on the action and maintain scene direction which means the subject always moves on screen in the same direction.
5. They often use rapid impressionistic sequences and/or a montage of images to convey an emotion or tell a story.
6. They are intense and fast moving.
7. The sound effects are loud, sharp and accompanied by blockbuster music scores.
8. They use many different special effects such as lights, smoke, fire, green screen backdrops, etc.

Writing Action in Your Screenplay

When you write your screenplay, don't get consumed by putting in all the different shots. You might want to highlight certain actions with slow motion headings or inserts for emphasis and to convey a certain emotion or feeling.

The general rule is to write the action so it is exciting to read because a shot by shot description will distract the reader. Your shooting script and story board however will contain much more detail of the shots.

When you film and edit your action scenes, you will want to get creative with the different shots. Study blockbuster action scenes to see what works and then model them. But always add your own creative flare to the mix.

Case Study: Ten Different Action Movie Scenes

Click here to watch great action scenes from ten blockbuster films: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=fxCElagfoVA. You can also watch on the membership website under Case Studies for this respective blog entry.

Notice how all the elements of action movie scenes are used in these different blockbuster movies.

The mixing of normal speed, slow motion and fast motion within one continuous clip is a powerful editing technique.

Notice the mixing of types of clips: long shots, establishing shots, close-ups, inserts, obtuse angles, birds-eye view, worm's eye view, etc.

Notice how quickly they move from clip to clip to maintain the pacing of the film.

Blockbuster action movies compress time on screen. They give us a few intense and very exciting moments and take out the slower elements that slow the pacing of the film. The result is a compelling and emotional story conveyed within a short period of time. To select a few moments in time and still give us the entire story is the mark of a master.