

Top tips for recorders

Spend time with your tools. This may seem obvious but it is worth spending time learning your recorder. This is one of the main tools of your trade. Learn how to switch it on at a moment's notice.

- It looks so much more professional if you come up to an interview press a couple of buttons and away you go, rather than wrestling with the recorder.

Each recorder has a sweet spot, a maximum distance before the sound starts to tail off and become harder to hear.

- Practice with a television or hi-fi. Place the recorder closer then further away. Practice with different volume settings to imitate loud and quiet interviewees.
- Take your recorder into a noisy place and work out what settings you need to use. Do this well in advance of your first interview.

Watch out for ambient noise such as wind, computer fans, people tapping their fingers or a pencil on the table. These can all affect the subsequent transcription making it impossible to hear what is being said.

- I often use small earphones plugged into the device just check periodically the quality of the recording as I'm going along.