

Atlas Camera Support System

Reviewed by: Jim Kumorek

It removes most of the weight of the camera from your arms, enabling you to be highly mobile and shoot good hand-held footage for long periods of time.

In the world of videography, if you have to shoot hand-held, you are faced with trading off between camera features and controls, and camera weight. The lighter you go, the fewer physical controls and features; the more controls, the heavier the camera. And a heavy camera leads quickly to fatigue, and fatigue leads to unsteady shots.

Camera stabilizers have been around for a while, but the more affordable units require you to fully support the camera weight through your arm. And if your camera was already heavy enough to cause fatigue, adding the weight of the stabilizer doesn't help.

Atlas Camera Support recognizes this dilemma, and came up with a support system that fills a nice niche.

It should first be noted that this is primarily a support system, not a stabilization system. It's not going to help you get smooth shoots while jogging down the street. It does, however, remove most of the weight of the camera



from your arms, enabling you to be highly mobile and shoot good hand-held footage for long periods of time.

How It Works

The Atlas Camera Support System is capable of supporting cameras with a top handle weighing in the range of five to 30 pounds. Using the system involves wearing a vest with a narrow tunnel-like casing running vertically down the center of the back. A fiberglass rod is inserted into a PVC tube and then into the casing. You pull the end of the rod over or alongside your head, and then the camera is suspended from the end of this rod via the camera's top handle using a strap. Various tubes and two different poles are included; you select the combination of tube and pole that matches your camera weight. This system does require a camera with a handle that runs along the top of the camera body; for testing purposes, I used a Canon XL2 generously lent to me by Ken Auer of Role Model Studios in Holly Springs, N.C.

So, how did it perform? The system assembled easily, and within 10 minutes I had read the instructions, assembled the system for the XL2's weight, and was mounted up.

I was able to zoom in tighter than I normally would with hand-held shots and still get reasonably stable footage.

company: Atlas Camera Support
product(s): Camera Stabilization System
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starting price: \$299

I headed outside, and shot a bunch of footage around the house. The support system enabled me to get quality footage while standing still. And without having the weight on my arms, I was able to zoom in tighter than I normally would with hand-held shots and still get reasonably stable footage. The system also helped with producing level and smooth pans, and did provide enough stabilization for small movements. Walking at a normal pace with this system while shooting did result in unstable footage, but as already discussed, this was expected.