



2. A TOUR OF THE JR

Before you take your Steadicam out of the box...

We'll begin by describing the purpose of the system and identifying the major components. Then we'll cover the procedure for safely unpacking and unfolding the unit. So leave it in the box for now!

Camcorders are unstable because the human beings holding them are always in motion. Small rising, falling and side-to-side movements don't really show unless there's some object close in the foreground, but tilting the camera up, down or side-to-side by a similar amount will noticeably affect the framing.

- Activate your camcorder, go fairly wide-angle and frame a scene across the room. Keeping the camera level, try raising and lowering it about an inch by slightly bending and unbending your knees, then moving it side-to-side the same amount by slightly shifting your weight from one foot to the other. Note that the effect on the framing is slight.*
- Now tilt the camera half an inch or so to the left... to the right... up... down. Note the dramatic effect on framing of these tipping motions.*

Hand-holding a camera, particularly a little camera, results in angular motions (little tilts and corrections) which are quite disturbing because the human eye doesn't see the world with the shakes. The Steadicam embodies an elaborate scheme to disconnect you from your camera, retaining only enough angular influence to aim it where you want.

Diagram 1

