DV to Film Look

SHOOTING:

1. Turn off electronic enhancement
2. Expose for highlights (i.e. protect your highlights)

3. Open aperture as wide as you can, use ND to open iris, recompose shots to maximize zoom/depth of field. Shooting in ways that allow you to keep your subject in focus while keeping the background out of focus. I won't go into the technical, but shooting video gives you a deeper depth of field as opposed to shooting film. Which is bad if you are trying to get a cinematic look. The widening the aperture of the camera creates a shallower depth of field so does zooming in.

Also I like to shoot in a bit over exposure because DV needs light and it is easier to darken an image and keep the quality than to brighten one up.

Overexposing video is bad because once picture info in a highlight is overexposed on video it's gone forever. If you are in a situation where your subject looks good, but your background is blown out you either need to add light to your subject or decrease the light in the background. This is one of the harder aspects of shooting video (especially no-budget video where you don't have much lighting equipment) as opposed to shooting film because film has a much greater latitude than DV.

Assuming you have colour correcting software (such as what's in FCP 3 and up) you can actually underexpose the video slightly in production, bring it back up in post and that also helps give the footage a less "video" look.

4. White balance for neutral greys.

5. MANUAL EVERYTHING i.e. manual WB, manual focus, manual exposure. keep your finger off the "Zoom" button. Instead of zooming physically move the camera closer/farther away from your subject.

6. Always use a tripod unless the scene calls for a hand held motion. i.e. 1st person running away from something.

POST:
1. De-interlace (CGM plugins, Tinderbox 3, Magic Bullet, RevisionFX deinterlacer- used for non-film outs, right?)
2. Tiny amount of diffusion. (use Magic Bullet Looksuite)
3. Up or lower contrast according to tastes. (do not blow out highlights)
4. Adjust gamma for overly dark or overly bright scenes.
5. Last but not least, a good film is only as good as it's soundtrack.

Lighting
There are many different styles of lighting, but I suggest you start by learning the three-point lighting system, which you can read up on in this magazine's monthly *Light Source* column. Learn the basics and then experiment. Proper studio lights are ideal, but halogen shop lights or photo flood lights will work. Outside, you can bounce sunlight with car wind shield reflectors or white poster board. Just about every single film you spend money to go see manipulates and controls light very carefully. If you want your video to look like them, you need to control your light as well.

Depth of Field
One way cinematographers manipulate what their audience will concentrate on within the frame is by manipulating the depth of field. Depth of field is the range of distance in front of the lens (e.g. from four feet to eight feet) that stays in focus at a given aperture setting and focal length. At its deepest, everything from the closest object to the camera to the farthest from it is in focus. The more you zoom (telephoto) the shallower the depth of field. When I want a shallow depth of field, I place the camera as far as I can from the

subject (on a tripod of course), have the subject stand at least ten feet from the background and zoom in to compose my shot. This puts the subject in focus and put objects as close as five feet in front or behind them out of focus. You'll see this technique in almost every film you watch, but rarely in projects shot in video.

Opening the iris (aperture) will also give you a shallower depth of field. An easy way to achieve this is to use neutral density (ND) filters (either an in-camera option or a screw-on filter) to cut down on the intensity of light entering your camera, thus forcing the iris to open. You can also reduce the exposure by increasing the shutter speed, which will allow you to open the iris more.

Contrast Ratio
One serious difference between film and video concerns contrast ratio. Film can handle a greater ratio of bright to dark than video can. With video, a dark shirt on a light-skinned person in a dark room is not going to work. Video cameras cannot show details in extremely bright and extremely dark objects in the same frame well. If you expose to capture the details in the bright part of the image, you will often crush the details in the dark. Though there are some cameras that may mitigate this limitation with film-like gamma curves, there isn't a lot you can do about it except be conscious of the limitation and try not to have a huge range of brightness values in your shot.

Other Methods
play with : colour correction, adding film-style grain, manipulating the gamma, shooting in PAL (25fps), frame blending, frame mode setting, adjusting shutter speed, edit with cuts and cross dissolves only and de-interlacing, to name a few. Good audio will help sell the effect and you could even use a damaged film filter (such as hair in the gate, scratches or dust), if that's the effect you want.