

The Media Center's Guide for Better Looking Web and Online Conference Video

A little bit of attention to camera placement, lighting, sound, and message preparation can help you to look your best on camera.

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CAMERA PLACEMENT

Your camera should be at or above eye level.

- For most people, the most flattering camera angle is one that requires them to look up slightly towards the lens. Skin under the jaw is smoothed out, and the camera is not looking up into the nose.
- If you are using your laptop's camera, raise the computer by setting it on top of a stack of books, a box, or anything else that might work.
- You don't want to be too close or too far away from your camera. Best results are usually achieved by positioning yourself about an arm's length from the camera lens.
- If you are using a stand-alone webcam, there are many affordable camera mounting devices available that can help with camera positioning.

Some commercially available camera mounts:

AceTaken Webcam Clamp Mount

https://www.amazon.com/Webcam-Clamp-Flexible-Holder-Logitech/dp/B07H2TJWW4/ref=sr_1_23?dchild=1&keywords=web+camera+mount&qid=1605113172&sr=8-23

Apyr Aoma Webcam Stand

https://www.amazon.com/apyr-aoma-Webcam-Stand-Smartphone/dp/B08DQXW1D6/ref=sr_1_67?dchild=1&keywords=web+camera+mount&qid=1605113363&sr=8-67

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LIGHTING

Avoid bright light behind you.

Use soft, even light for your face

- You should avoid setting up your web camera in a position that results in bright light sources (such as windows) being behind you. A bright light source behind you can overwhelm the exposure controls in the camera, resulting in your face appearing underexposed.
- Try to use a soft, even light to illuminate your face. You can buy lights made specifically for use with a webcam, or you can experiment with lights that you may already have available. You can even position yourself so that light from a window lights your face - a sheer curtain diffusing the light from sunny day can be a good provider of soft, even light. You can also try pointing a desk lamp at your ceiling to provide soft, indirect light.
- The goal of this should be a level of light on your face that is slightly greater than that in the background. The light should not create dark shadows on your face, which can be aesthetically undesirable.

Some commercially available lights:

Amada Webcam Light Stand

https://www.amazon.com/Webcam-Stream-Selfie-Logitech-HOMFURNISHING/dp/B082PLRVQ6/ref=sr_1_6?crd=183S9WNPNTMT&dchild=1&keywords=web+camera+light&qid=1605114245&sprefix=web+camera+%2Caps%2C162&sr=8-6

Glorious-Lite 5W LED Clip on light

https://www.amazon.com/GLORIOUS-LITE-Dimmable-Eye-Caring-Headboard-Computer/dp/B07FPK8CHC/ref=sr_1_9?crd=183S9WNPNTMT&dchild=1&keywords=web+camera+light&qid=1605114245&sprefix=web+camera+%2Caps%2C162&sr=8-9

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SOUND

A USB microphone will probably sound better than the one built into your computer.

•With so much to consider regarding looking good on camera, it is easy to forget about sounding good. Often, the microphone that is built into a laptop or desktop computer gets the job done, but does not provide crystal clear sound to your viewer. It is recommended that you use an external microphone, connected to the computer via USB, for better results. The mic can be on a boom attached to headphones, it can sit on the desk in front of you, be mounted on a flexible arm, or even be a lavalier style microphone that you clip to your clothing.

•Another thing to consider is the background noise that may be picked up in your shooting location. Try to avoid being somewhere with a noisy HVAC system, or being near an open window that can let traffic or bird sounds be heard by your microphone.

Some commercially available USB microphones:

Samson Go Mic

https://www.amazon.com/Samson-Mic-Portable-Condenser-Microphone/dp/B001R76D42/ref=sr_1_19?crd=1WGTU0S449UPP&dchild=1&keywords=usb+microphone&qid=1605202132&sprefix=usb+%2Caps%2C175&sr=8-19

JOUNIVO USB Desktop Microphone

https://www.amazon.com/Microphone-Condenser-Indicator-Gooseneck-Recording/dp/B07N2WRHMY/ref=sxin_10_ac_d_rm?ac_md=0-0-dXNilG1pY3JvcGhvbmU%3D-ac_d_rm&crd=1WGTU0S449UPP&cv_ct_cx=usb%2Bmicrophone&dchild=1&keywords=usb%2Bmicrophone&pd_rd_i=B07N2WRHMY&pd_rd_r=62b20ca0-016c-4967-9bbf-7c2e99e4ec48&pd_rd_w=A0C4y&pd_rd_wg=QdzR2&pf_rd_p=fe2d64f9-a0d4-4c62-b195-55e240bc5b7e&pf_rd_r=0Y06RKGD0GZ9YSB1JVNW&qid=1605202132&sprefix=usb%2B%2Caps%2C175&sr=1-1-12d4272d-8adb-4121-8624-135149aa9081&th=1

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PREPARATION

Make an outline of your presentation before recording.

Take a look at your image before going live

Remember to make eye contact

De-clutter the space behind you.

•An outline or a bullet point list of talking points positioned in your field of vision can be a big help when recording a lecture using your webcam. It can help to keep you on track in your presentation, and to help you to keep from forgetting important points.

•It can also be very helpful to take a look at what you look like on camera before starting your conference or recording. If you are using Zoom, you can do this by launching the application, clicking on settings or preferences, and selecting the video option. (On a Mac, click on the “zoom.us” in the menu bar, click on “preferences,” then click on “video” - when using Windows 10, launch the Zoom application, find the Zoom icon on the lower right corner of your screen near the clock (you may have to click the ^ symbol to reveal it), right click on the icon, choose settings, then choose “video.”) This can help when adjusting your lights, making sure your hair is OK, etc.

•When communicating through the webcam, try to think of the camera lens as the eyes of the person to whom you are talking. Looking at the camera is the equivalent of making eye contact. Try to arrange your computer screen so that your eyes are not being drawn away from the camera for long periods of time.

•Another thing to which you should pay attention, is what is in the video frame behind you. A mess of clutter can be distracting to your viewers, and may give the wrong impression about you.

Here are some YouTube videos giving the above advice and more:

DPRReview TV - Look good and sound great on videos from home (Zoom video conferences too!)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_Ho383acVE

HotandFlashy - How To Look Good on Video Calls | Zoom FaceTime Skype | Blogger Secrets!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACNGhPKnmok>

Happy video making !
