

Microphone Tips for Zoom and Other Web Conferencing Applications

From the Media Center

Are you using a desktop or a lavalier microphone when teaching or conferencing? Try the following tips to make the microphone more effective for you and your audience.

LAVALIERE MICROPHONE

(clip-on microphone)

Don't wear the mic too near or too far from your mouth. For a good idea of where it should be, take a look at the newscasters the next time that you watch the news, and note where their microphones are situated. Your particular microphone may require more or less distance, but the distance used by news professionals is generally appropriate.

Make sure that the microphone does not come into contact with your clothing, jewelry, or hair. Objects touching a live mic can make sounds that are both loud and unpleasant for your audience. A good lavalier mic should have a clip that distances the mic a few millimeters from your clothing.

TABLETOP MICROPHONE

Experiment with positioning your microphone so that it picks up your voice, but not extra noise from the room. You'll also want to note if your microphone is visible to your camera. This may not be a bad thing, as long as it does not cover your face in a way that would look silly your viewers.

When using a table top mic (or the mic built into your computer, laptop, or monitor), avoid banging your hands on the table in front of you, as well as drumming your fingers or playing the drums on the table with your pens and pencils. The surface vibrations caused by this will travel up the microphone mount, and be picked up (along with the noises that you hear), and be especially annoying to your viewers.

This may be a good way to wake someone up whose attention is waning, though.

No matter which type of mic you use, be sure to test it before you start your conference. Doing this will allow you to hear how the microphone sounds in order to ensure that it is working, and to experiment with the mic's placement.

To test your audio in Zoom without being live, launch the Zoom application on your PC or Mac. On a Windows computer, right click on the little blue and white Zoom icon that should show up on the bottom of your screen on the right side near the clock. Select settings, then select audio in the window that opens. Follow the instructions for testing the mic. On a Mac, you can access the audio settings by launching Zoom, then clicking on the zoom.us heading in the menu bar at the top of your screen. Click on preferences, then click on audio, and follow the instructions for testing your mic.

These tips should help you to get the most out of your external microphone.