

REMOTE VIDEO BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWEE OR PRESENTER

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So You're Broadcasting From Home Or The Office...

EQUIPMENT

Here's what you'll need for a remote video call:

- Computer
- Streaming app/software/URL (your producer/contact will let you know what platform you'll be using)
- Internet connection (ethernet preferred, but WiFi is totally fine)
- Webcam (can be built in to computer)
- Microphone (can be built in to computer, but Apple type earbuds with a built in mic is preferred)
- Headphones (optional, but preferred)

TESTING

- Test your speed on a site like Ookla Speedtest (<https://www.speedtest.net/>). Ideally your connection will be at least in the 10Mbps range. (If you have at least 25Mbps, you might be ok on wifi.)
- If you share an internet connection with family, roommates, or colleagues (in the same room), ask them to hold off on streaming or downloading while you're testing/broadcasting/recording.

PREPARATION DO'S AND DON'TS

DOs



Have a background that reflects a bit about who you are and your area of expertise. Is it a bookcase, a microscope, a moon globe? It should look professional, but personal.



Dress professionally, but comfortably. Your attire should be close to what you'd wear for an in-office meeting with an outside visitor. Avoid wearing all black or all white (webcams will try to compensate and over/underexpose your face) and tops with checks or thin stripes (those patterns can cause camera distortion). Don't be afraid of soft, solid colors!

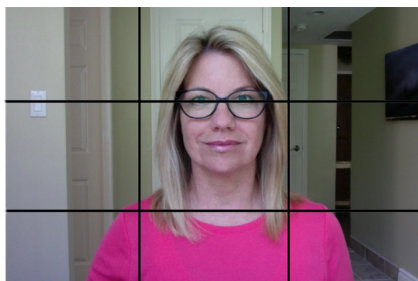
Good news—you can indeed go barefoot. (We would, however, recommend wearing pants. You never know when you might have to stand up!)




Use extra lights! If you've got them, set up a couple of light sources on either side of your computer, just above your eye line and about 3 feet apart. This will give you a nice, even light.






Position your laptop, monitor, or webcam just above your eyeline. This forces it to point slightly down and gives you a more natural look.



Frame yourself! Position your eyes right at about the top third of the screen. Imagine a 3x3 grid over your screen. You want your eyeline towards the top third, so that there's not an excessive amount of headroom in the shot. You should be able to see your shoulders.

	<p>Connect with your audience! You may be remote, but you're still speaking to a group of people. As tempting as it might be to watch that little video of yourself, eye contact with the camera is important. If you find you're distracted by your own video feed in the corner, you may want to turn it off during the broadcast/recording.</p>
	<p>Be conscious of sound. Turn off any big machines like fans and/or don't sit directly next to loud things like a bubbling fish tank.</p>

DON'Ts

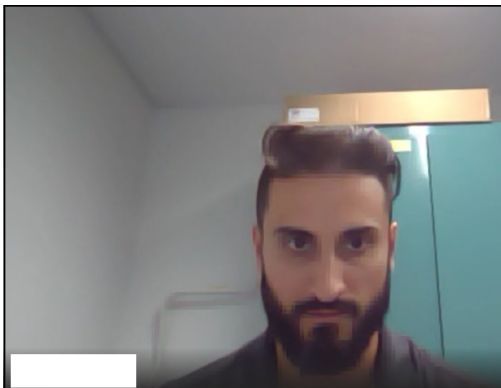
	<p>Don't let the only light source be your laptop. Too spooky and rarely a flattering look. (See DOs above for lighting suggestions.)</p>
	<p>Don't sit in front of a window. This will leave you backlit and put you in shadow. We want to concentrate on you, not the overexposed window. (See DOs above for lighting suggestions.)</p>
	<p>If you can avoid it, don't have a plain white backdrop. When there's nothing else in the background, the speaker is the sole point of visual interest for the audience, and it can look like a cry for help. Plain white backgrounds are unnatural in the "real" world and come across similarly online. Even having a slice of door frame in the background can be helpful.</p>



Don't have anything growing out of your head. 'Nuff said.



Don't have your back to the wall. Keep some space between you and your background. You don't want to look uncomfortably squished. Try to sit at least 2' away from a wall.



Don't be off-center. You're the star! Frame yourself prominently in the center, not the lower right corner. (See framing suggestion in above DOs.)



Related: Don't show off your ceiling. (See above DOs—put your laptop on top of something, so that you're eye level with the camera.) Low-angle shots of your face and the ceiling are rarely flattering.



Too Far

Just Right

Too Close

Don't be a close talker, or a distant one. Head and shoulders is just about right—too close and it looks uncomfortable for the viewer, too far away and you lose the feeling of personal contact.



Don't let us see your desktop in your glasses. If you're using side lights, it should help, but to fine tune things, adjust your monitor brightness/contrast down to the point where you can juuuuuust comfortably see the screen.

BROADCAST/RECORDING

Have a glass of water nearby, in case you need to wet your whistle.

Pets are awesome! ...but lock them out while you're recording. Same goes for any humans who might be wandering around.

Before you begin, restart your computer. It does wonders for clearing your machine's RAM and giving your video every chance to shine.

Turn off all unnecessary apps on your computer, particularly programs like Dropbox and Google Drive that may be syncing in the background (and taking up processing power). Even if they're not actively syncing, it makes a difference to have them off.

Feel free to have notes—we're only human—but make eye contact with the camera when you can.

REFERENCES

- This article is laid out as a series of tips for acing a job interview, but it has good suggestions for anyone appearing on a webcam: <https://biginterview.com/video-interview/>
- Similar solid advice from PC World: <https://www.pcworld.com/article/2048057/i-was-a-webcam-zombie-how-to-look-alive-and-professional-in-web-meetings.html>