

Lighting

- Do not sit with natural or immediate light directly behind you. This will cast a dark silhouette of you to your viewers, and no one will be able to see your face. There should be no sitting with windows or sliding doors behind you.
- Do not sit directly under ceiling or overhead lighting. This directional lighting places a shadow down your face and delivers a bright spot down the top of your head and forehead. It can also cause a more blurred and overexposed look to your video.
- Avoid placing lights close to either side of you. This will cast shadows across one side of your face while the other side can look too bright.
- Instead, place lighting directly in front of you. Position a light behind your computer where it casts light on the front of your face. Try ring lights that either clip to computers or sit on tripods set behind your computer. Test the placement while in camera mode to see what looks best and play with brightness to see what works for your particular setting.
- If it's dark outside, test the lighting again and adjust.

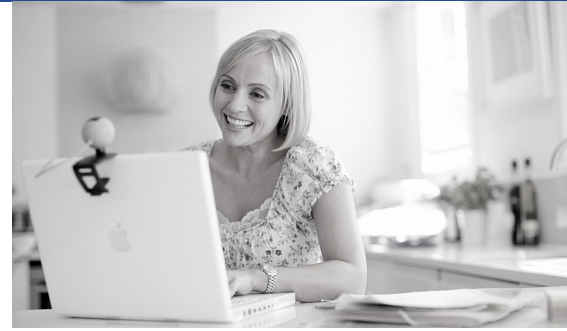


Sound

- If you use the built-in mic from your laptop or desktop, test the sound quality in advance of an event. Be sure there are no distracting background noises, and ensure your voice comes across clearly. Depending on the mic quality and the room you are in, you may also hear a slight echo.
- Don't sit too close to the camera but be close enough that the mic can pick up your voice.
- Try headphones or earbuds. These reduce background noise and are a step above a built-in mic option. Test them with your computer to be sure they work, and sound comes through clearly.
- Consider investing in an external mic. Lavalier mics are small and clip to your clothing, or you can invest in professional mics that podcasters use. Whatever you select, be sure it makes sense for your purposes and budget.
- If you're participating in a webinar with more than one presenter, be sure to mute your microphone when you aren't part of the discussion. Too many live mics can sometimes cause background noises that override whoever is speaking.
- If you're not on mute and need to be live, try not to type as listeners can hear the clicking much louder than you can. Also, avoid shuffling papers around your desk as this too can be picked up by the microphone and amplified to participants listening.

Location

- Make sure the location you choose to sit is roomy enough for whatever equipment you'll be using—your computer, lighting, any additional sound equipment, and any visual aids you plan to use.
- Make sure you're comfortable. If you're fidgeting in an uncomfortable chair or sitting in an odd position, that will be obvious on camera.
- If you have pets, make sure they are out of the room and can't be heard from where you are. Barking dogs or cats crossing the screen are distractions. Given this is content that will have a long shelf life, keep pets, children, and family distractions as far away as possible.
- Whatever location you choose, be sure whatever is within the camera frame is professional and remove any distractions from participants' focus on you and your content. Remove clutter in the background or food and drink in the view. Tidy up so it looks as polished as possible.
- If you have to be in a bedroom, ensure the bed is made and looks nice. If you can, try using virtual backgrounds instead.
- If you're not using a virtual background, consider the wall color and how that will appear on camera. While some colors are beautiful in person, they can work against us on camera. Colors like yellows, browns, and greens can be tricky. Try moving to a place with a more neutral wall.



Virtual Backgrounds

- Ensure the video service offers virtual backgrounds as an option. While products like Zoom do, Google Meet does not. And while Ring Central does, it doesn't allow you to alter the settings if it's not an enterprise account you can control. Test this option in advance and never assume.
- Select a background that is a professional space or is a clean looking home living space with minimal distraction. For instance, while bookcases are lovely, don't select something with all books as this might draw participants' attention to all the spines and titles and not you.
- Test to see how your room lighting impacts the virtual background when you're on camera. Sometimes things don't look as nice as the image first appears. Once the image is selected and in background mode, it may look dark or overexposed.
- Be sure the background image is a high enough pixel quality. If you choose something not optimized for this feature, it will appear fuzzy or blurred on camera.
- Finally, if you have a green screen, please use it. While tools like Zoom do not require it, the quality between with and without is significant. Green screens can eliminate blurring, image bleeding, and other image disparities.

Camera

- Laptops with built-ins are not the highest quality, and desktops are often not much better. Test your camera in advance to see the level of quality.
- If you find the quality subpar and plan to do more webinars, consider purchasing an external camera at the highest end of your budget. If you want your content message to have a longer shelf-life, consider investing in a better camera for superior video quality.
- When it's your turn to speak, be sure to look into the camera. If you look at the screen, then you won't be looking at the audience. You have to look directly into the camera lens for the illusion you're looking at and speaking to them. Try placing a piece of tape, sticker, or post-it near the lens to remind yourself to look into the camera for a more engaging webinar.



Position and Frame

- If you are presenting from a laptop, consider the camera's alignment to your line of sight. If it's just your laptop on a table with you sitting in front of it, you're likely in a position where you are hunched over and looking down at the camera, which means viewers are looking up your nose.
- Either invest in a computer riser to elevate your laptop or set it higher with a stack of books or a sturdy box.
- Note what is in the frame of your camera view. You don't want to be seated too close to the camera where viewers see a giant head, but you also don't want to be so far back that they have a hard time seeing or hearing you if you use the built-in mic. Test the view in advance, see what is in the frame view, and ensure it is pleasing, balanced, and professional.

Appearance and Attire

- Stick to fabrics that are solids and not a busy pattern. Solids always look better on camera and can make your face look better too. Don't wear green, especially if you're using a green screen, but test which colors may look best on camera. If your background is dark, your chair is black, then that black blouse may portray a face on screen with no body.
- Steer clear of white shirts. You can test this out too, but an all-white shirt can often look too bright and distracting on screen. If you don't want to go with a darker color, try a neutral instead of all white.
- If you usually wear lots of jewelry or big earrings, remove them for the webinar. Not only are they distracting on camera, but they can also cause background noises that overpower your voice.
- Don't forget about your hair when you consider your on-camera look. You may have long locks of hair that can often fall in your face or cause you to be brushing it away continually. Both of these can be distracting for your viewers. Just consider clipping hair back so you aren't fussing with it while on camera, or just be sure it's neatly in place. You still want to be yourself, but don't detract from your important message.
- **Bonus tip:** If you use Zoom, there is a wonderful feature in the desktop app video settings called "Touch up my appearance" that works a little magic by doing some light skin smoothing while you're on camera. It's not perfect, but every bit helps present your most polished and professional you to the world.

