

How to sound & look good on a webcam

Here are three tips for joining a video conversation from your computer:

1. Understand your bandwidth

Most broadband internet connections have the capacity for a video call. However, there are many things that can cause the quality of a call to decrease. To ensure that your connection remains good, please check the following:

- Use a wire instead of WiFi. This provides a more stable connection to your device. Locate your modem or router and plug directly in, then disable WiFi on your device to ensure that you are properly connected.
- Limit other devices. Every device on your internet connection shares that connection. Turning off other internet capable devices like phones, tablets, TVs and other computers will help keep bandwidth available for your device. If you are in a setting where you are unable to control access, ask others kindly to limit usage during the time of your call.
- Find “Bandwidth Vampires” on your machine. Applications like Dropbox, Google Drive Sync and other background processes that access the internet eat into your bandwidth. Before the call, close these programs and check your taskbar area to be sure that they are no longer running. Try to limit all applications to only what is essential during the call.

2. Sounding good

Here are some tips to help you sound your best:

- Find a quiet place. Removing yourself from the bustle of activity with others in the home or workplace will help you sound your best.
- Check for “white noise.” Our brains have the ability to tune out noises. Be sure there is limited white noise in your environment. Turn off fans, other computers, etc.
- Use earphones. This will aid in preventing feedback when another participant speaks.
- Upgrade your microphone. Many laptops have decent built-in microphones. However, the quality can be increased by either using a dedicated USB microphone or even the microphone in a pair of headphones — using these gets the microphone closer to your mouth.

3. Looking good on camera

Here are some tips to ensure that you are looking your best:

- Find a well-lit space and face the light source. Be sure that lamps and windows are in front of you, not behind you. This will help the webcam to properly expose your face and keep you from appearing as a silhouette.
- Raise your webcam to eye level. This will better frame your face and keep the audience from looking up your nose. This may require setting your laptop on a box or stack of books.

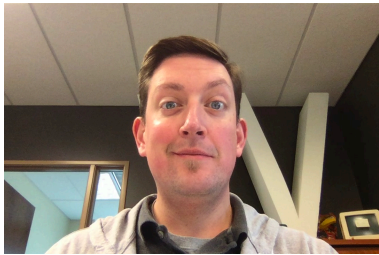
- Sit an arm's length away from your webcam. This helps keep your head in frame! The camera should see you from your shoulders to the top of your head. Leave a little extra space between the top of your head and the top of the frame.
- Look directly into the webcam. Rather than looking at the image of yourself on screen, practice making "eye contact" with the webcam. This will help it appear as if you were speaking directly to the audience or other participants on the broadcast.



Main light source behind



Main light source in front



Camera pointed up



Camera at eye level



Camera too close



An arm's length away



Looking at self on screen



Looking into camera