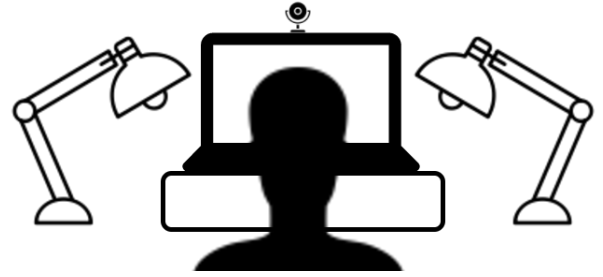


Tips for making webcam videos look good



Dress for the occasion

Wear something that is appropriate for your audience and makes you feel comfortable. An MIT study of 6.9 million video viewing sessions showed that educational video content is more engaging when it combines the personal feel of an instructor speaking directly to the camera along with instructional slides. The good news here is that you only need your top half in the recording, so wearing pants in your next video is completely optional!

Of course, for the part of you that will be on camera should maintain a professional appearance. Choose a solid-colored dress shirt or blazer, and avoid fabrics with small or distracting patterns that may draw attention away from what you are saying.

Place your camera at eye level

Some camera angles can exaggerate your facial features and distort your appearance. Video is always a bigger challenge if you simply don't like the way you look in the final product.

Fortunately, simply placing your webcam properly can go a long way to achieving the look you want. Make sure that the camera lens sits at or above eye level, no higher than your hairline.

Once your webcam is in place, remember not to sit too close to the camera. In a recent Zogby Analytics survey, 15% of respondents were most turned off by someone sitting too close to the camera on a video call (hearing people eat was only slightly less off-putting). Position your webcam far enough away to capture your shoulders and your entire face with some room to spare.

Use soft lighting from the front

All cameras capture better-looking video when there is a good light source. When selecting a place to record, avoid locations with low light or too much backlighting (windows in the background are often a challenge for webcams). Poor lighting may leave your video looking washed out, or worse, may leave you looking like a shadowy figure.

Ideally, you want to light yourself from the front and side with soft, indirect light, and minimize other lighting in the room. If you'll be near a window, make sure the light bulbs you use have a cooler daylight look (warm incandescent light doesn't mix well with daylight). And make sure you're not getting harsh glare from the window. For your primary light, use something with a lampshade to diffuse the light. A small lamp in the background can be ok too to provide a bit of ambient light.

Look behind you

Even though you've made yourself the center of attention in your webcam video, you still need to be cognizant of what's behind you. Your audience will notice everything and it can distract their attention from your presentation. Try to keep the background simple by avoiding anything that looks busy or cluttered, and again, beware of windows that let in natural light or that might reflect your computer screen. Simply choosing a plain wall as your backdrop is often best.

Make eye contact and smile

Eye contact is everything when it comes to public speaking, and it's no different when it comes to video. While it's perfectly fine to peek down at your presentation materials from time to time, you want to remember to look at your webcam lens and smile as you make your presentation. And don't forget to blink!

Of course, it can be very tempting to watch yourself if your recording software shows your video feed in the corner. Doing so, however, will break your eye contact with your camera — we recommend turning this feature off if possible.