

ZOOM/Remote Recording Tips and Best Practices

Tips to record video and audio from your home or office, including setting up visually appealing camera angles, working with available lighting and capturing ideal audio. If you're recording on ZOOM, ensure you have downloaded the latest update.

Camera Positioning

- When setting up your webcam or smart phone camera, position the camera at eye-level, as it's the most natural angle. Avoid high/low angle shots. If you're using a laptop, you may need to stack up a few books.
- Move furniture or whatever you feel is necessary to position yourself comfortably and to make sure that you can be seen in a professional manner.
- Compose your shot, aka the framing. How 'tight' or 'wide' of a shot do you want? Consider if you have too much/too little headroom.
- If using a cell phone camera, orient the shot **HORIZONTALLY**, not vertically.

Proper Lighting

- If you don't have a light kit, that's not a problem. If you're inside you can move around lights you already have or you can set-up facing a window so that it helps light your face - even if it's cloudy outside.
- Do not have any type of backlight, if possible. A window or light source behind you will create a silhouette and can make it difficult to see your face.
- Turning the lights on in the room helps to light any dark corners but avoid harsh overhead lighting or drowning the room in light, if possible.

Choosing a Location

- Whether you choose to record indoors or out, consider the location and what's behind you on camera.
 - Double check to ensure that distracting or unwanted items are out of the camera's view.
 - Avoid an empty background or an overly busy background.
 - Be sure whatever you're wearing doesn't blend into the background or contain fine patterns which could cause moiré.
- Virtual Background
 - Virtual backgrounds work best if you properly light yourself following the instructions above. It works even better with a light kit and a green screen if you have it, but it's not necessary.

Microphones

- You can use your computer's built-in microphone, an external microphone, or a headset. Remember, microphones are sensitive and can pick up the sounds of typing, traffic, papers shuffling, or jewelry clanking on a desk. Also, make sure your phone and emails are set to silent or off.
- Only one microphone and speaker system should be active at a time. Using two systems may create a feedback loop and stray noise.
- A dedicated USB microphone is highly preferable over a webcam/built-in microphone, but a quiet environment can allow for acceptable webcam audio.

Recording

- Before you start recording on ZOOM, check your AUDIO, VIDEO and RECORDING settings
 - Under your VIDEO settings
 - Click for HD
 - Click to ADJUST FOR LOW LIGHT and set to AUTO
 - Click to TOUCH UP MY APPEARANCE and adjust, if you wish
 - Under your AUDIO settings
 - Test your microphone input levels or click to AUTOMATICALLY ADJUST MICROPHONE VOLUME

- Choose your level of BACKGROUND NOISE SUPPRESSION
- Under your RECORDING settings
 - Choose where you want to save your recording to
 - Click to OPTIMIZE FOR 3rd PARTY VIDEO EDITOR
- If possible, hardwire with an ethernet cable to your router for best quality video and audio, this will limit or eliminate most all video and audio problems. Wi-Fi is great but a direct connection is better.
- Do a short test recording first, so you can assess your audio, lighting and shot composition before beginning.

Delivery

- **VERY IMPORTANT: try your best to maintain eye contact on your camera lens!** It may feel uncomfortable to begin with, but for everyone watching it will help draw them in and give the feeling that you're addressing them directly. Move your Zoom app window to the upper part of your screen, directly under your camera. You can even put a sticker near the camera to remind you to look at it!
- Remember to speak directly to the students on the other end of the screen. **In short, talk to the audience, but say it to the camera lens.**
- Rehearse and relax - and remember you have as many takes as you need.
- Remember that everyone is viewing remotely so bring the enthusiasm!