

HOW TO PROPERLY SET UP FOR A VIDEO CONFERENCE

1. Do some Set Up ahead of time

You don't need to get crazy, but just keep in mind that your surroundings can greatly impact how the people on the other end of the screen perceive you.

Make sure your surroundings are clean and uncluttered

Any glasses that may be laying around, crumbs on the table or unattended laundry that's being collected in the background, should be taken care of.

There should be enough light

If it's possible, make sure you're illuminated from the front so your viewers can see you clearly. While natural light is often the best, it can also be too much if it's a sunny summer day. In those cases, try to find some shade (if outside) with the sun in front of you. If inside, drape off the window where the sun light is coming in. **Again, make sure the light is in front of you and not right on top or behind.**

Make sure decorations or props are appropriate for the occasion

Your centerfold calendar may look cool, but some of your viewers may find it offensive, the same thing applies to decorations. Make sure everything that's in the video frame is safe. If in doubt, just do the video against a neutral wall.

Choose the right space

Again, your living room or kitchen might be the right setup, but if its windows lead to a street with heavy traffic then it will probably be too noisy for a video conference.

Things to remember:

Tidy up your space

Make sure there's enough light

Curate the elements that are in the frame

Beware of background noise

2. Get acquainted with the Google Hangouts online software and service.

Having everything set up and installed and being familiarized with it is key in order not to find yourself in a compromising situation. If you're not a tech savvy person, ask the questions(s) and seek some assistance.

3. Make sure nobody can interrupt you.

Let the people you live with know you're doing a video conference. Make sure the kids and dog know not to interrupt you. Finding a closed off area or room is always best.

4. Do a test run

Before the actual video conference, call a friend or a coworker to test your hardware. It would be frustrating to go through all of this process only to find out during the video conference that your microphone is not working properly or your connection is awful.

Things to check for:

Image sharpness

Internet connectivity (is there any lag?)

Sound quality – Make sure your microphone is working properly and it doesn't sound distant.

5. Silence is golden

Unless it is absolutely necessary, silence your phone, TV, radios, stereo, etc.

6. Setting up

Make sure the camera is at eye level.

Weird camera angles are not only unflattering but also distracting to the other person. Keep the camera at eye level for a clear frame. If you're using a laptop, stack up books underneath until the hardware reaches your eye, which brings us to the next tip.

Look at the camera instead of to the screen when you're talking

This one might sound like a no-brainer, but we're used to looking at people's faces when we talk which is why we tend to stare at the screen rather than the camera when we're on a video conference. It might take some getting used to, but if we look at the camera instead of the screen then the others will get the feeling that we're looking into their eyes and then the message will get delivered in a better way.

Try and mute the microphone when you're not talking

Again, background noise can be quite distracting and even if you're in an isolated room.

Dress appropriately

OVERVIEW

- Set up the elements that will in the frame
- Careful with how the light illuminates you
- Avoid noisy backgrounds
- Clean and organize before the video conference
- Know how to use Google Hangouts
- Learn at least how to turn and off the camera and the microphone
- Avoid interruptions
- Let everyone know what you're doing
- Test your hardware (Computer, Camera and Microphone)
- Call and connect someone else before the video conference and test the system
- Behave accordingly
- Put the camera at an eye level
- Look at the camera instead of the screen
- Mute the microphone when you're not talking
- Dress accordingly