

HOW TO VIDEOCONFERENCE LIKE A PRO

(Even if you downloaded Zoom 10 minutes ago)

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AUDIO

- Make sure people are able to hear you when you talk.
 - If you have a good, strong internet connection (if you can stream Netflix, you're good), then connecting to your computer's audio is your best bet.
 - If your home internet connection is dial-up slow, you probably should connect to your video call via the dial-in option.
- If you're hearing an echooo echooo echooo, it means someone isn't muted and they should be. Tell everyone except the speaker to mute their lines.
- If your doorbell rings or your dog is barking ferociously at the postman, mute your line!
- If you need to leave the room for a moment, mute your line! (We can almost guarantee that the moment you leave a call and leave your line unmuted will be the moment that your child decides to test out his song for the Justin Bieber remix contest.)
- Are you sensing a theme here? Mute your line! Mute your line! Mute your line!
- But, if you are talking, definitely unmute your line! (It's pretty embarrassing to give a whole detailed explanation and realize no one heard a word you said.) Speak directly and clearly into the microphone. Speak loudly. Enunciate. Repeat if necessary.
- Oh, and when you're done talking, you guessed it... mute your line!

VIDEO

- Turn your video on whenever possible. It shows your colleagues that you are there and engaged in the conversation.
- Place your computer on a flat surface. Stay there. Do not walk around. Do not pick your computer up. Do not do a quick load of laundry. Do not pass go. And whatever you do, do not, we repeat, DO NOT go to the bathroom.
- If you need to get up, turn your video on and mute your audio before you do so. Do not leave your colleagues staring at an empty room, or worse at you while you putter around in the background.
- Make sure you are dressed appropriately to be on video. Dress as you would if you were really in the once. (Yes, we're looking at all of you who are so proud to be rocking those ratty sweats right now. You'll thank us when you forget to turn your video on and you quickly stand up.)
- Mysteries are fun on nighttime television, but they most definitely aren't on work calls. So do your co-workers a favor and make sure you're working in a well-lit room.

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CHAT FEATURE

- If you have a question that you want to ask the speaker, add it to the chat section. It's a great way to ask without interrupting the speaker.
- If you have a private question for one or two members, use the private chat feature.
- If you don't want the teacher to know what's on the note, don't pass the note. Sending private backchannel chats to other conferencing members is really rude, yes, but also most videoconferencing tools allow the account owner to download a full transcript of the chat—including private chats—after each call.

RECORDING & SCREEN SHOTS

- If you are going to record the call so that you can reference it, that's fine. Just let everyone on the line know that you are recording.
- Don't upload recordings of videoconference calls onto public sites (like YouTube or Facebook) unless you and everyone else on the call wants them to be publically shared.
- Feel free to take screenshots of slides and other screen shares, but never take a screenshot of a person's face. And never EVER EVER take a screenshot of someone whose face froze in an awful expression and share it with the world. That's just not cool.

BONUS PRO TIPS

Now that you're a true videoconference pro, here are a few pro tips that only the best videoconferencers know:

- Research the special features of the tool you're using.
 - Zoom has a "touch up my appearance" feature that will filter your video to put your face in the best possible lighting and erase blemishes. It's basically spray tan for your video call.
 - You can also add other filters on most tools. Just think, on one call you can be Kermit the Frog and on the next you can have a toilet paper halo.
 - Many tools will integrate with your computer's audio feature to make sure your sound quality is as good as it can be.
- If you work off of multiple screens, make sure your zoom is open on the screen that has the camera. Otherwise people will see the side of your face.
- Don't eat on calls, or if you do, make sure you're eating something that makes everyone super jealous. Like a taco. If you have a taco, definitely eat it on the call.

Finally: You've got this. It's hard, yes, but not as hard as potty training. Or making tacos.