

7.5 Tips for Looking Good on a Video Call

In the last couple of weeks, how many video calls have you been on with dark, shadowy figures who are just as likely to be a cadre of James Bond villains as they are your coworkers and customers?

You don't need expensive, studio-quality equipment to look good on a video. In fact, you don't even need technical knowledge.

Here are seven and a half tips and hacks to make sure you're looking your best on video calls:

We may not have all the answers, but we're here to help you with staying productive and making the most of your quality time at home.

1. Keep the Light in Front of You

Unless you're threatening 007 with a giant space laser, you'll want to make sure your face is well lit. The easiest way to accomplish this is to make sure you're always facing the light. If you're near a window, make sure it's behind your camera, not your head.

2. Use Your Monitor for Extra Fill Light

Sometimes you need a little more light to make your face pop on camera. You don't need to invest in free standing LED lights. You just your monitor and a blank Word Doc.

Open a new Word Doc and make it full screen. This will make most of your screen a brilliant white and bring out nice highlights on your face. (Note: depending on your skin tone, you might not want pure white fill light. Just play around with the page color until you find one that complements your complexion.)

3. Position Your Camera at Eye Level

Use a few books and raise your laptop so your camera is level with your eyes. This will eliminate weird angles and unfortunate views up your nostrils. It'll also make it easier for the other people in the meeting to connect with you, and it have much better posture if you aren't hunched over the camera.



TIP 3.5: Use a Post-It Note to Make Eye Contact

When we're talking to people, our natural reaction is to look at their faces. However, if you do that on a video call, you'll actually appear to be looking away from the people you're talking to. You can fix this with a single Post-It Note.

Draw a smiley face on the Post-It and then stick it right behind your camera. When you talk, talk to the smiley and it will look like you're making eye contact with the other people on the call!

4. Keep Your Distance

Start working at your usual time and keep your appointments and meetings throughout the day. This helps keep you in a productive headspace, and lets colleagues and customers know they can depend on you to be there when you normally would.

5. Leave Just Enough Room On Top

Speaking of framing, make sure to leave just enough space between the top of the video frame and the top of your head. You don't want too much space there, but you don't want to cut yourself off either. Staying an arm's length away will help with this, and then simply adjust the angle of your camera to tweak.

6. Backgrounds Matter

A messy background can distract your viewers from what you're saying. At the same time, a completely blank background can make it look like you're taking a mugshot, not leading a team conference. Take a few minutes to declutter your background but leave a little bit of visual interest to add a little depth to your shot.

7. Control the Sound

Even if you're alone in your home office, the built-in microphone on your camera or computer isn't designed to deliver crystal clear sound. Instead, use your earbuds or an external microphone for better audio quality. This will also reduce any ambient background noise like dogs, family members, or the upstairs neighbors who recently decided to buy their tween a drum set.

These small tweaks will drastically increase the professional appearance of your video calls. If you're looking for more ways to enhance your calls, we recommend searching YouTube for webcam tips and tutorials. You'll find a wealth of information, reviews, tips and tricks. It's the perfect time to do some out-of-the-box thinking.