

Remote Video Tips

During times of social distancing, you will likely want or need to connect with people using video on your phone, tablet or computer. Whether it's for interviews with the media, telehealth visits with patients, or just catching up with friends or family, follow these guidelines for a more relaxed, enjoyable experience and better results.

CONNECTING

Regardless of the platform — FaceTime, Skype, Teams or Zoom — start with the best possible internet connection.

- If you are using a computer, a hard line ethernet connection is best.
- A strong Wi-Fi signal is good. Wi-Fi may even be better than your mobile phone carrier's signal.
- If using Wi-Fi, try to reduce the number of other devices using that same signal. With fewer connections to that Wi-Fi source, your computer or device will have a better connection.
- Turn off other applications that could interrupt the interview — email, messaging, calendar, etc.

LOOKING AND SOUNDING GOOD

Webcams and built-in laptop cameras default to the horizontal landscape mode. TV stations want you to frame your image in the horizontal landscape mode to match the TV signal. If using your phone, hold it sideways. Prop the phone using a selfie-stick, phone clamp or stack of books so your hands are free to gesture.

- Position the camera at a height even with or slightly above eye level. Don't look down toward the camera. With better lighting and fewer neck wrinkles, a slight upward look is more flattering.
- Find or create a pleasant background that's neither too plain nor too busy. Ideally, your environment helps show context. (Demonstrate recipes in a kitchen, exercise in a workout area, etc.)
- Don't position yourself in front of a white wall or a window; because of your camera's auto-iris, it may be difficult to see any detail in your face.
- Ensure there's enough light on your face with a prominent light source set in front of your face behind the camera. Achieve softer lighting by bouncing light off a wall. Experiment with lighting before you "go live" until you are happy with how both you and the background appear.
- Make sure you can hear the other person and they can hear you. If your laptop has a camera, it will also have a built-in microphone and speakers. To use a desktop computer, it must include a webcam, speakers and microphone. Most add-on webcams come with built-in microphones.
- Though not as professional looking, using ear pods or earphones with a built-in microphone may be a good choice for maintaining decent audio when you cannot control background noise.

Bonus Tip: Locate the camera lens and look directly into it when you speak. If you gaze at the image of the people on your screen, you will look distracted or disconnected. Draw an arrow on a sticky note and place it next to the lens to remind you where to look in order to maintain the appearance of good eye contact.

TV NEWS INTERVIEWS

For TV interviews, the station will likely ask for your phone number so they can call to FaceTime with you from their news department laptop. If they use Skype or Zoom, you will need to provide your Skype address or email so they can send you a link for the video meeting. (Note: You do not need a Zoom account in order to use Zoom, you can open a link sent by the host in your browser.)

A producer or Sharp team member will let you know the time for your interview and contact you if the time changes. The station may also provide contact numbers for tech support in case you need help connecting.

You will likely get a call 5 to 10 minutes before your interview start time to test the connection. At this time, the station's audio tech will do a soundcheck to make sure everyone can hear each other before the interview begins.

Bonus Tip: Write a few key messages you intend to include in your interview on sticky notes and place them around the top edge of the monitor so you can easily refer to them without having to look down or far away at any notes.