

Video Recording Tips and Best Practices

How to record a professional video from home.

Background

Record against a low-contrast background for best results. A few neatly arranged items in the background can add depth to the shot (a wall with picture frames, a bookshelf, etc.), but avoid clutter or anything that might be distracting.

Please do not use any virtual backgrounds that have motion, as that can distract from your presentation.

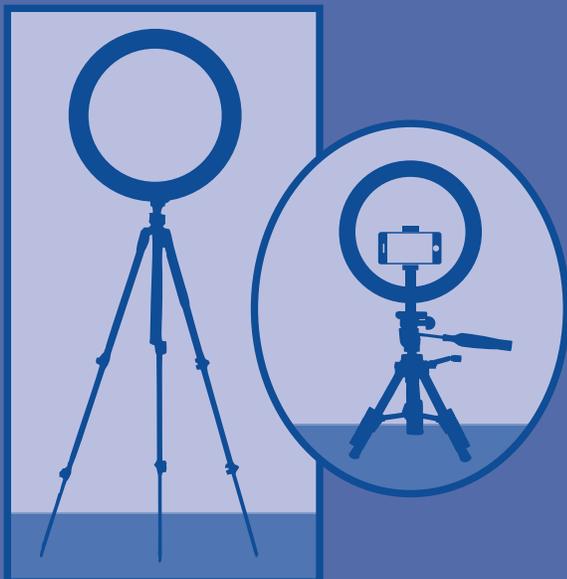


Lighting

Shoot your video where there is plenty of light. Make sure the light is angled in front of you to illuminate most of your face. If shooting inside, to supplement overhead lights, place a bright, soft light, (e.g., a table lamp) beside or behind the webcam.

Natural light has a pleasant quality, but it can be harsh, so be aware of what shadows are being cast. Face the sun when recording outside, but try to avoid squinting.

For most professional quality, invest in ring lights.



Camera

If possible, invest in a camera separate from your computer's onboard camera. Most modern smartphones will work for this—when recording with a smartphone, record in landscape orientation for best viewing experience.

Mount your camera in a position that is at even height with your eyes. For best results, use a tripod.

Position yourself in the middle of the frame, with your head in the upper half of the screen. If possible, shoot from middle distance instead of close-up.

Do not use digital zoom, as this will lead to a video at lower overall resolution. If you want to zoom in or out, physically move the camera.

When speaking, make sure to look directly into the camera as much as possible. The first instinct will be to look at your computer or phone screen—either at your slides or at your own face—so practice addressing the webcam like you would an audience!

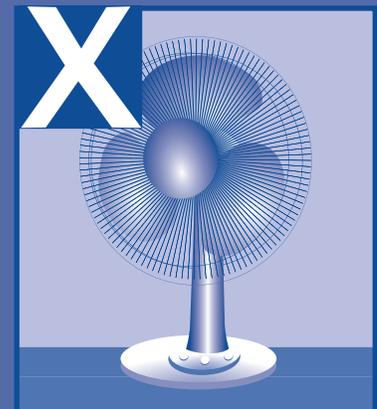


Sound

Record in a quiet room. Close windows and turn off fans and other devices to reduce background noise. Don't forget to silence your cell phone!

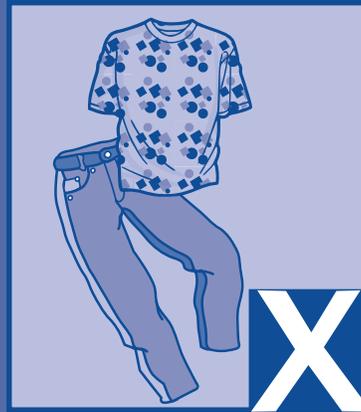
If possible, use a devoted mic, such as a microphone on a lav, headset, or stand, instead of your laptop or webcam mic.

If possible, record in a small room to reduce echo.



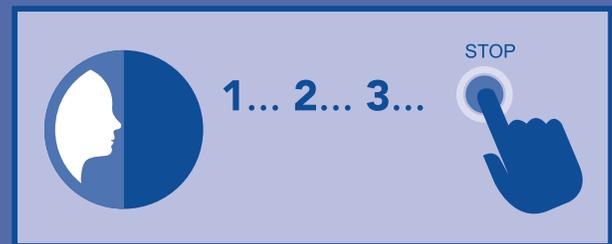
Dress

Dress professionally, as if giving this presentation live at a conference. Avoid clashing colors.



Lead-in and Lead-out Time

Wait a few seconds after hitting record to start talking. Similarly, wait a few seconds after you stop talking to end the recording. This will ensure your recording does not get cut off.



Record Locally

To ensure the best video quality possible, it is recommended that you record on your local machine, rather than having someone else record over the internet.

Advanced Techniques:

Multiple Takes

One benefit of recording your presentation ahead of time is that if you mess up too much, you can start over and retry.

If you shoot multiple takes or otherwise wish to edit your video, most modern systems come with an onboard program you can use to edit. (e.g., Video Editor for Windows 10) Please see that program's instructions and help pages for information on how to use it.

Multiple Angles

Record on a second device at a slight angle or different distance (e.g., wide shot and close-up). This can add energy to your presentation, and also makes cutting between multiple takes smoother as you can flip seamlessly back and forth between the angles.

