

Setting up your Laptop and Webcam for a better virtual meeting

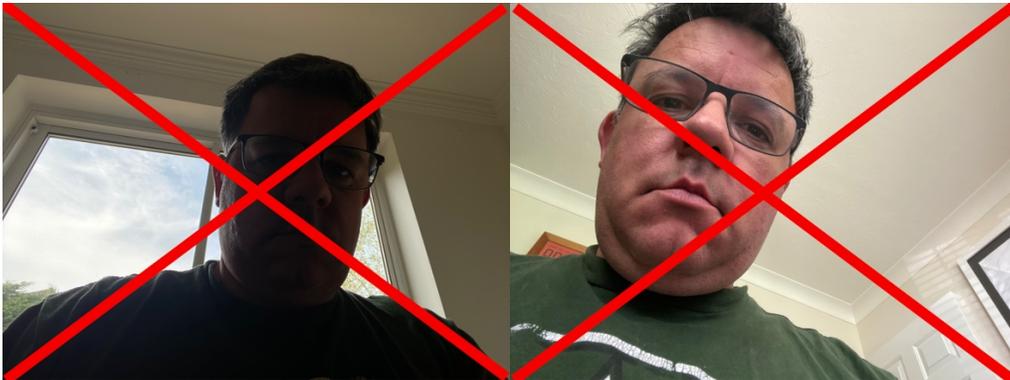
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With the increase in virtual meetings and use of technology like Zoom, Microsoft Teams & Skype, it's important we make optimum use of this setup and represent ourselves to clients and colleagues in the best possible way.

We often see shots up people's noses, which is never flattering! Alternatively, we see silhouettes of the person talking, meaning we can't see their eyes or the expression on their face.

With this in mind I've created a few hints and tips to help you create a better image of yourself when using your webcam.

The idea of this guide is to help avoid this:



The above is two examples of poor webcam positioning. With a little prep it is easy to make your virtual meetings look more professional.

Tip #1

Position your web camera at eye height. This is a very simple thing to do and you could use some books to help you achieve it.



Tip #2

Once you have raised your webcam to eye height where should you do your call? The worst place to position yourself is with your back to a window. Not only will this increase the glare on your screen, but it will also put you into silhouette against a bright background with no light falling on your face. Viewers will not be able to see the expression on your face.



Most webcams will also 'pulse' when you sit with your back to a window as the camera automatically tries to find the correct exposure. This can be very off putting for your audience.

Tip #3

Position yourself facing a window so that the light from the window falls onto your face. This is so much more flattering and will also avoid the webcam from pulsing. With the camera now positioned away from the window the overall image will be more evenly lit and more pleasing to your viewer.



Tip#4

If you are in a room without any natural light, switch the lights on in the room and also consider placing a standard lamp / bedside light with a white lampshade next to your computer to put some light on your face. If you have an anglepoise lamp you could angle that into your face but if that's a bit harsh you could always sellotape a piece of white paper to the front of the lamp, making sure you leave space around the lamp for air to circulate.





FOR SAFETY: REMEMBER TO REMOVE THE PAPER AND SELLOTAPE FROM THE LAMP AFTER YOUR CALL.

Tip #5

Content is king! If your viewer can't hear what you are saying, then there's no point in having the call in the first place. Try to hold your call in a room with a closed door. Turn any music off, switch off the TV. Put the dog in another room. Heck - put the kids in another room too! Wear headphones (wired are best as wireless headphones can cause latency in what you are hearing and seeing). Some headphones also have a microphone on them which will help improve your sound quality. Headphones will also help if you are experiencing feedback during your call.

Tip #6

Position yourself in the centre of the screen, being careful to not cut your head off by letting it go outside of the camera frame.



Tip #7

Smile 😊

I hope these hints & tips are of use and will help you make & receive better video calls, hold better virtual meetings and take part in better remote productions!
Stay Safe, Stay Home!