

Practicing Safe Computing #65: “Looking your best while on Zoom”

By Hal Bookbinder (Number 65 in a series)



We have all observed others on Zoom sessions who look awful, their face is so dark you can hardly make them out, the camera is pointed at their chin or forehead, or way too much of their fingers are shown as they adjust the camera. Here are some tips to look your best while on Zoom.



Good lighting

- Your face should be well lit from the front. Try to arrange things so that the windows are in front of you rather than behind you. If you cannot do this, consider a blackout curtain.
- Set up lighting so that it brightens your face and does not cast shadows across it. Shadows on your face are unflattering and may make it difficult for others to see you.

Camera angle and distance

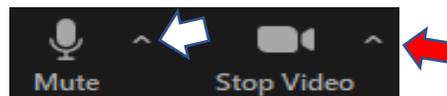
- Set up the camera so that it is slightly above your face. Angles from below are rarely flattering. If using a laptop or smartphone consider setting it on top of a few books.
- Select a distance from the camera so that your image is well sized. Avoid being so far away that you are lost in the furniture and background.

Avoid distractions

- Ask members of your household to avoid doing things behind you. As you are looking at the screen, you may not realize what is happening behind your back.
- Consider setting up a virtual background to minimize distractions. Not sure how? Refer to <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503>
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking. We all know how annoying dogs barking, phones ringing, whispered side conversations and background noise can be.

Settings and technical considerations

- Adjust the video settings (↔) to improve your image. For ideas, see <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115002595343> This is also where you can add or change a virtual background.
- Test the audio (🔊) to ensure that you can hear and be heard.
- Set a profile picture to display when you turn off your video. Not sure how? Refer to <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201363203> (Remember to sign into Zoom before clicking on the meeting invite so that your profile picture will be displayed when your video is turned off.)
- Ensure adequate bandwidth to avoid an unstable connection. Ask others in the house to put off streaming videos or otherwise eating up bandwidth while you are on Zoom.



And, never forget that you are on camera!

- Check yourself out in the mirror before the Zoom session.
- Display your own image while in the Zoom session and occasionally glance at it.
- Feeling drowsy? Turn off your video and mute your microphone.

This is the sixty fifth in a series of articles by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal is also a Past President of JGSLA and IAJGS. He is the 2010 recipient of the IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award and his online skills are well documented. All the Safe Computing articles by Hal Bookbinder are available on the JGSCV website www.jgscv.org under Noteworthy.