

# Zoom Calls: The Do's and Don't's

Welcome to the new normal! After several months of working at home, you're no doubt more than familiar with video conferencing calls using Zoom. Whilst most of us have overcome the technical side, we're now faced with the most challenging aspect of a video call – changing out of that old hoodie and having to do something with your hair.

So, as a quick guide, we've compiled a check list of helpful hints for you to achieve that perfect Zoom call.

## **DO: Dress like you're at work.**

It's tough working from home, and wearing tracksuits all day, every day is one of the few silver linings. But if you're in a position where you can put on something more professional-looking, it's probably a good idea. You might also find it makes you feel a little more normal.

## **DO: Stage your video area.**

Keep in mind that people aren't just seeing you, they're also seeing whatever the camera is pointed at behind you. Maybe arrange it so that your camera isn't facing towards something embarrassing or potentially offensive. Zoom also allows you to blur out your background.

## **DO: Use lighting, more light is better.**

Video quality is dramatically improved with more lighting. If you've gone to all of the trouble to put on actual clothes and stuff? You may as well show yourself off a little. An extra nearby lamp is usually helpful. Just make sure the light is in front of you, not behind you - being backlit makes you harder to see.

## **DON'T: Drift off, try to look into the camera.**

If you're presenting or speaking to a group, looking into the camera will give the appearance of eye contact with whoever you're talking to. It's also definitely better than being forced to stare at your own face and realise you've cut your own hair too short on one side.

## **DO: Make private meetings private.**

If you share details of how to log into the meeting on a public platform, like Facebook, don't be surprised if you get some unwelcome visitors. Only share passwords with people you want to be there. Or rather, with people who need to be there.

### **DO: Stay on mute if you're not talking.**

Background noise can be really distracting. If you aren't sharing anything at the moment, go ahead and hit mute until you do. That way, no one has to listen to the car alarm that goes off next door or your neighbour's barking dog.

### **DON'T: Eat during the meeting.**

No-one wants to watch you eat or listen to you chew, for that matter. Hold off if you can, or if not, chose the option to turn off the video and audio.

### **DON'T: Do other private things while on a meeting.**

It's easy to forget people are actually watching you. People have been caught, absent-mindedly, picking their nose or using the bathroom while on a video call, thinking they were muted or had their video off. It can be easy to forget that people can hear or see you if you're in a group of 30 co-workers, so don't risk it!

### **DO: Stay focused.**

Some meetings can drag on – we've all been in those meeting. Don't make this one go longer than it needs to. Stay on task (which can be very difficult while working at home) and keep unnecessary conversations to a minimum. It can get very hard to be productive when several people are all talking at once and even more so when overlapping audio and shuffling video screens are involved.

### **DO: Only invite people who need to be there.**

The more participants you have, the more likely you are to have connectivity issues - or video/audio trouble. Fewer participants means a more smooth conversation and less jumping through hoops. Most video conference tools allow you to set up some members as audience-only, meaning that only certain people can participate with video and audio. If you're doing a presentation rather than a discussion, that might be the better format than allowing everyone to chime in.

### **DO: If you're the host, be the last one to leave.**

If the host closes the meeting, then obviously, the meeting ends. So to make sure no one gets cut off or loses a last-minute point, it's a good idea to stick around until everyone else closes out of the meeting.