



1. Test your connection

Some of the downsides of video chats are the pixelated screens and choppy audio. Close tabs or applications you don't need during the call.

Also, long conference calls can drain a laptop battery pretty quickly. You don't want to step away from the meeting to find your charger. Make sure your laptop is plugged in and powered up.



2. Mute yourself except when speaking

The mute button is your trusted partner during virtual meetings, so remember to turn it on and off at appropriate moments. Figure out where the mute button is and how it works before the meeting kicks off.



6. Log in a few minutes early

Don't wait until the meeting starts to find out your connection is bad or your software doesn't work properly - test it before the meeting starts. Being a few minutes late feels much longer during a virtual meeting compared to an in-person meeting. Be courteous to others by being in place early and ready to start on time.



3. Raise your hand

This may sound like we're back in elementary school, but it's amazing how well the conversation flows if all participants raise their hand to indicate they want to chime in - it really helps to avoid that moment when a few people start talking at the same time. Depending on the software you're using, you could "raise your hand" with the push of a button.



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5. Lights, camera, action

Video may seem awkward at first, but as with any new process, you adapt and then wonder how you ever got anything done without it! An upside to video conferencing is that it allows you to interpret the facial expressions and social cues of those in the meeting. You also get to see your own expressions. Make sure your camera is turned on, look for a background that is not distracting and put away any personal items that you want to keep private.

Also, light is your friend when it comes to looking good and getting the most out of a video call.



4. Stay present

It's pretty obvious when you start checking your email even though we can't see your screen. Remember, others can see and hear you during a virtual meeting, so try to avoid doing anything you wouldn't normally do in person. While sneaking a peek at that latest email is tempting, do your best to refrain. Be just as present in virtual meetings as if you were physically there.