

ZOOM LIKE A PRO

Millions of people have been working remotely throughout the pandemic and it's likely that even when we are back to normal, virtual meetings will be an accepted way of doing business. Great communicators need to be agile enough to stand out in any setting.

Here are 5 easy steps to help you Zoom like a pro:

Step 1: Know how to use the platform to your advantage

Establish your own free Zoom account at zoom.com and add a high res picture to your profile. Download the Zoom app and establish your audio and video settings. In the "My Video" section, check off:

- Enable HD
- Mirror my video
- Touch up my appearance

In the audio section, the settings are dictated by the speakers and microphone built into your computer. If you want to up your game, get a separate microphone. I use a Blue Yeti. It's a multidirectional, USB condenser microphone that's plug & play.

Always test your connection and your equipment before your Zoom session starts.

Step #2: Look like a pro

Dress like it matters. Avoid stripes or patterns that mess with the camera.

Step #3: Stage your background like a pro

Zoom in a spot where there is "eye candy" like a book shelf, a fireplace with a mantle that has interesting objects on it, shelving with framed photos or awards. A great background is a reflection on your success story. Think of it as a brand extension.

Get a portable green screen if you don't have a great background.

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Lighting is key: Side and front lighting is best. Avoid back lighting.

Elevate your laptop so that you are not looking down at the screen.

Control noise: Make sure everyone in your house knows that you are unavailable while you are Zooming. Shut the door, close the windows, blinds or curtains to muffle outside sounds. Silence your phone and don't look at your phone during a Zoom session.

Maintain your posture: sit up straight, chin up, shoulders back, look at the camera

No food: it's okay to have a glass or water or a cup of coffee nearby.

Step #4: Bring Your Energy like a pro

You have to work harder to break through, to make a great impression in the virtual world. That's where using your energy comes in. Smile, listen with intention, appear thoughtful and engaged.

Use your voice like a tool: vocal variety will spice up your vocal tone with inflection, passion. [\(check out episode 5 for a tutorial on vocal variety\)](#).

Remember the 3 C's: clear, concise and conversational.

Eliminate filler words like "umm" and "ahh" because filler words undermine your credibility and cause tune out. [\(check out episode #2 for a tutorial on filler words\)](#).

Step #5: Connect like a pro = eye contact!

Whether you are presenting to hundreds of people or just a few colleagues, the best communicators create a connection.

Here's a trick I learned as a radio broadcaster, alone in a room, with 60,000 people listening whom I could not see: Talk to one person. Look right into that camera and have a conversation.

[No matter how you sound, I can make you sound better.](#)