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How to Look Good on Video

We collaborate better and feel safer with our virtual team members when we can see them. But for a lot of people, flipping on their web cam is unnerving. To help you connect with confidence, here are ten tips for looking good on video calls.

1. **Focus on Others**
   Smile, and enjoy the company of your colleagues. It's the best way to stop worrying about how you look. Get your call setup and then turn off the window that shows you to yourself – it's unnatural – and distracting - to watch ourselves talking to others.

2. **Camera placement**
   Your video camera should be at about the height of your forehead. Lower your chair, or put your PC or monitor up on boxes or books. You want your camera a little more than arms-length from your face. So, slide your chair or your camera back a bit. Don't look down on the camera – it's an unflattering angle for most of us.

3. **Lighting**
   Put good lighting in front of you. Use a floor or desk lamp, of if there's a window in the room, face toward it. Overhead lighting or lighting below your face will give you scary shadows. A window behind or beside you will mess up your shadows and trick your camera into the wrong settings. If needed, angle your camera and monitor so you face the window as much as possible.

4. **Sound**
   Use an amplified headset. Make it easy for people to hear you without shouting by using an amplified headset if possible. Put your mic close to your mouth, not on your desk. Use headphones or earbuds instead of speakers so there's no feedback or echo on the line – or at least use a quality speakerphone with echo cancelation. In a pinch, the headset and mic you use on your mobile phone can be a decent choice. Obviously, manage background noise.

5. **Location**
   Put something simple and pleasant behind you – a colored wall, plant, simple art. White walls don't look good and mess with your camera's response to the lighting. Keep your background simple. Something too busy means you may appear to have flowers or odd shapes coming out of your head. Don't sit in front of a windo.

6. **Clothes**
   Light, solid colors work best. As a rule, dress (at least waist-up) like you would for a face to face meeting. Avoid busy prints. They'll create mayhem on the screen every time you move. Black clothes will cause your camera to adjust to take in more light, and you could look bleached out. If your lighting is limited, go for white.

7. **Eye Contact**
   Your eyes should be about 2/3 of the way up the screen. Try to center yourself in front of the camera. Move the window showing other participants to just below your video camera, so you can look at them while you talk. If you wear glasses and can do without them for video calls, it will reduce the risk of glare. People want to see your eyes.

8. **Sit Still**
   Try not to move around a lot. It's distracting to others. If you twist in your chair, swap out for a non-swivel variety during video calls. Natural gesturing is great, but if you talk with your hands, keep it small.

9. **The Jawline Video**
   Is it true that the rate of plastic surgery to correct flabby chins rose at the same rate as video usage? Who knows – but here's the blockbuster video on showing a great jaw line by professional photographer Peter Hurley. In short, move your forehead forward and just slightly down. For video calls, push your hips all the way back in your chair and raise the arms on your chair to support you without leaning forward on the desk.
   http://youtu.be/Qe3oJnFtA_k

10. **Be Yourself**
    Let your personality shine through. Relax, stop trying to look good, and just engage with your colleagues and customers. Who you are is more important than how you look. If it's not, ask yourself if you really love your job.

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