Computer Tutorial:
Zoom Etiquette and Best Practices

Purpose: To present some best practices and etiquette techniques to use Zoom in the most effective way possible.

With this new era of video conferencing and online meetings, many have found that there are a new set of guidelines to follow – things that we might not have needed to discuss in person, but are worth going over now that so many are working from remote locations.

Here are some suggestions, compiled from Zoom's website, along with other sources, that will help you stay productive and connected when using Zoom.

Use the video option if possible.
Video lets people see you and confirm who you are. This is particularly important if you're the one hosting the meeting or a speaker. Meeting attendees should also use video when possible as it links a name to a face, and makes the meeting feel more personal.

Note: If you would like to help keep your own personal background private when using video, consider utilizing a virtual background. More information can be found in the **Use a Virtual Background in your Zoom Session** tutorial.

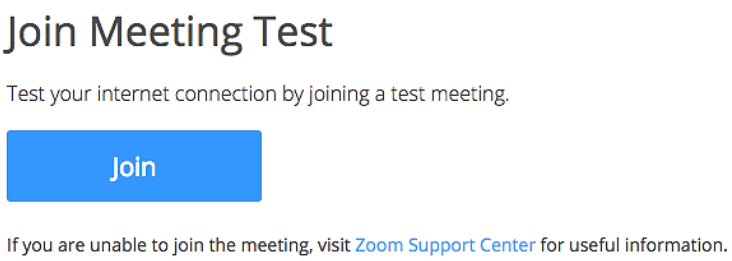
Dress for the job you have, or; Don't wear your pajamas.
Casual dress has become more of the "norm" when working or taking classes remotely. When in a Zoom session, if you're in a position where you can put on something more professional-looking, it's probably a good idea. You might also find it makes you feel a little more normal.

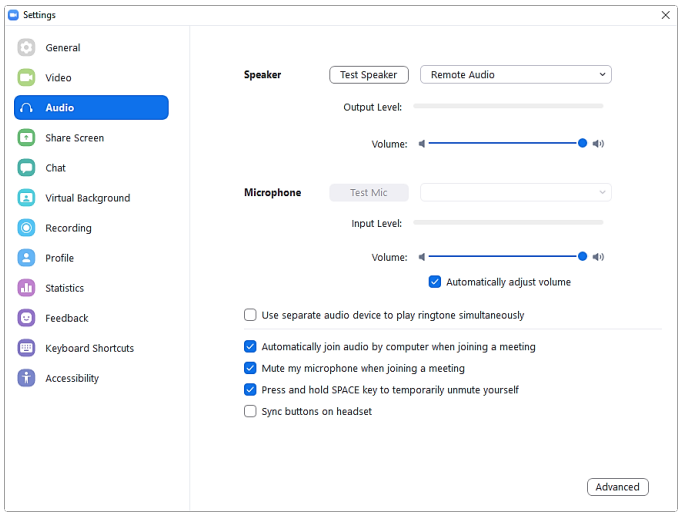
Stage your video area.
Keep in mind that people aren't just seeing you, they're also seeing whatever the camera is pointed at behind you. Again, if you would like to help keep your own personal background private when using video, consider utilizing a virtual background. More information can be found in the **Use a Virtual Background in your Zoom Session** tutorial.

More light is better.
Video quality is dramatically improved with more lighting. And don't you want everyone to see your face, now that you've gone to all of the trouble to put on actual clothes? 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.

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 the others in the session that you're talking to.

Do your own tech support *before* you start.
Make sure you do a test run at some point, and that you're aware of your audio and video settings before you start. Most video conference services allow you to see a test of what your camera is recording before you start broadcasting it to everyone else, so have it arranged the way you want it. Zoom, for instance, has a feature that lets you test your settings before your meetings begin. Go to https://zoom.us/test





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. Also, the Zoom settings usually allow you to decide if you come in to a meeting with audio on or muted. When possible, it's best to start with your mic muted.

Don't eat during the meeting.
It can be a little gross to watch other people eat sometimes, or listen to them chewing, for that matter. Hold off if you can, or if not, maybe turn off the video and audio.

Don't do other private things while on a meeting.
Speaking of gross: have you heard any horror stories about people being caught picking their nose or using the bathroom while on a video conference, thinking they were muted or had their video off? Don't become a statistic. It can be easy to forget that people can hear or see you if you're in a group of 30 coworkers, so don't risk it!

Stay focused.
It's a fact that almost everyone hates meetings. Don't make your Zoom sessions go longer than they need 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.

Only invite people who need to be there.
Is there someone who should be looped into the info being shared, but won't actually have anything to contribute themselves? Would it be possible to loop them in via an email instead? Save them, and yourself, some hassle by not including people who aren't necessary.

The more participants you have, the more likely you are to have connectivity issues – or video/audio trouble from any of the aforementioned problems. Fewer participants mean a smoother conversation and less jumping through hoops. Getting a recording of the meeting can sometimes be just as valuable as attending, too.

The host should be the last one to leave.
If the host closes the meeting, then the meeting ends. 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.

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 who need to be in the session.

Learn what you can do to manage participants.
There are a lot of features, such as screen sharing, locking the meeting to current participants, removing participants or placing them on hold, transferring files and managing chat options. It might be useful to learn what you can do and how to do it before a meeting starts.

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