

# 12 Tips for Video Conferencing While You Work From Home



Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock

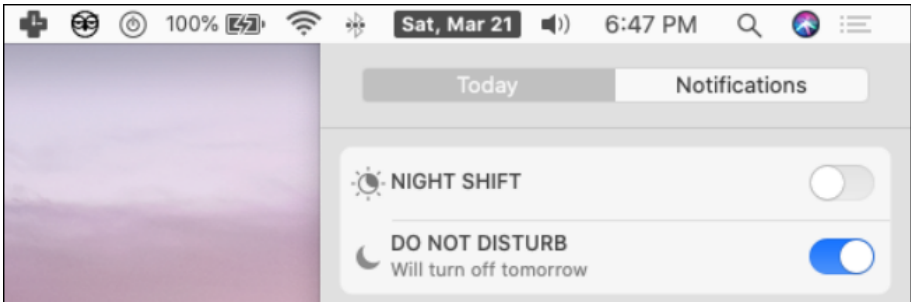
As the global workforce shifts to a work-from-home model, conference room meetings have moved to online video-calling apps. If you're new to video conferencing, we're here to help you out!

## **Close Other Apps for Best Performance**

Before you start your video conference, take some time to save your work and close any apps you won't need. You especially want to close any programs that contain personal data or use too much CPU power.

Too many open apps will slow down your computer while you're on a video call. This is because the call itself requires a lot of resources, especially if you're on a lightweight laptop. If you hear the fans spin during a call or the video conferencing app starts to lag, quit all other open apps.

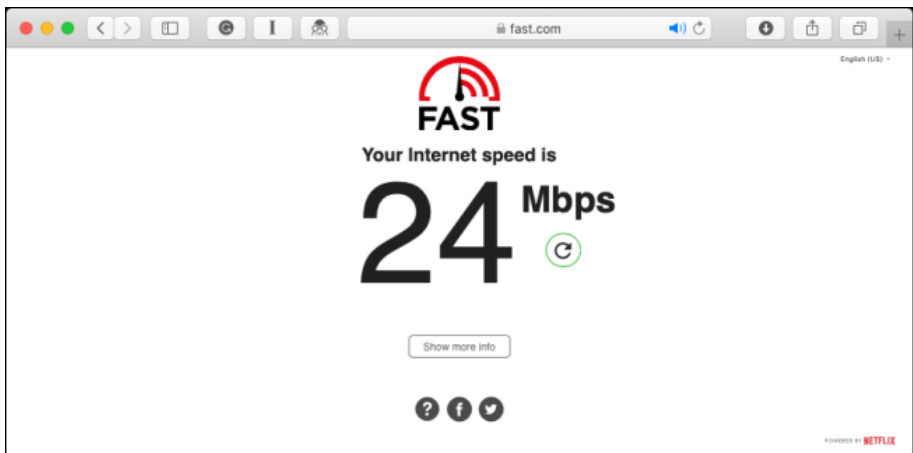
## Take Precautions Before Sharing Your Screen



If you're going to share your screen during a video call, it's a good idea to take [extra precautions](#) so people can't see anything private or potentially embarrassing. First, go to your browser and close all tabs, especially anything you wouldn't want anyone else to see.

Next, enable Do Not Disturb mode [on your Mac](#) or [Windows computer](#). This ensures that others won't accidentally see messages from private conversations when you share your screen.

## Check the Internet Connection



Before your call, use a speed test tool, like [Fast.com](https://www.fast.com/) or [Speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net/), to test your internet speed. If you're not getting enough speed, move closer to your Wi-Fi router or try some other [tips to boost your Wi-Fi signal](#). You can also use one of [these tools](#) to speed up your internet connection.

### **Pick a Bright Spot and a Neutral Background**



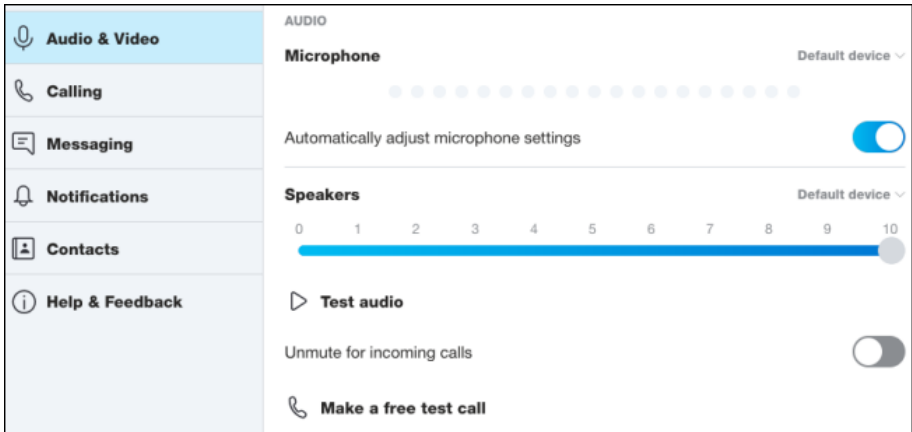
djile/Shutterstock

It's best to make a video call in a location with ample natural light. This way, your face will be clear. However, if your room doesn't have plenty of sunlight, try to sit under some soft florescent lighting (nothing too harsh).

It's best to choose a spot with a neutral background, too—nothing too busy. If you just sit in front of a wall, that should be fine.

If you can't find a suitable background, you can try to blur your background on Skype. If you're using Zoom, you can even switch to a [virtual background](#).

### **Test the Video and Audio**



Before you start a video call, make sure both your video and audio devices are connected and working properly. Most video conferencing tools have a test call service. Look under the options or settings menu in your video conferencing app.

For example, in Skype, you can go to the “Audio and Video” section in “Preferences” to make a test call.

### **Position the Camera at Eye Level**

It’s important that you [position the camera](#) at the optimum level. Try to put it right at eye level so you’re not looking up or down. You don’t really want your colleagues looking up your nostrils during an important meeting.

Also, when you’re talking, don’t look at yourself or the chat window—look straight into the camera. This way, others won’t feel like you’re distracted.

### **Get a Better Mic or Camera**



Amazon

For occasional calls, the built-in microphone and camera on your laptop should do just fine. But if your laptop is a couple of years old, you might notice the video isn't even as clear as your smartphone's camera.

If you're going to be a part of online meetings every day, you might want to consider buying a [better camera](#) and/or headset.

Next, try to use headphones or earbuds when you're on a video call. Because of the close proximity to your mouth, it will sound better than using your laptop's built-in microphone. To avoid latency, go with wired headphones.

### **Organize Beforehand**

If you're running a meeting, try to have all your talking points and documents ready beforehand. If your colleagues need to see a document, send it before the call and make sure everyone has access to all the necessary data prior to the video meeting.

This way, you won't have to spend the first few minutes of the call waiting for everyone to get up to speed.

## Dress Appropriately



Andrey\_Popov/Shutterstock

Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you can attend meetings in your pajamas. Of course, there's also no need to overdo it with a full-on, three-piece suit. Find a middle ground and dress in [business casual](#) or [formal](#), or whatever the dress code is at your workplace.

Yes, pants are optional, but why risk it? If you forget to turn off your camera before you stand up at some point, it could be disastrous.

### **Mute Yourself When You're Not Speaking**

When you're in a video meeting with a lot of participants while you're at home, it's best to keep yourself muted most of the time. Only unmute yourself when you need to speak.

This eliminates any background noise on your end. Also, if anyone walks in the room and starts talking while you're on a call (a very real possibility since you're

at home), you won't have to rush to find the mute button.

### **Focus Like You're Attending in Person**

While it's tempting to use video conferencing time to look at your inbox or read articles, you probably shouldn't do that. Try to pay attention when someone's speaking and keep your eyes on the camera.

Basically, treat it the same as you would a real-life meeting. Would you be scrolling through cat memes on Reddit if you were in a conference room right now? If not, then don't do it on a video call either.

If you're typing or looking at something, your colleagues will be able to tell you're not paying attention.

### **Try to Keep Pets and Children Away, But Don't Stress**

If you have kids or pets, it's best to ask someone to take care of them while you're on a video call. If there's no one else around to watch them, try to engage them in an activity they enjoy, like watching cartoons.

Even if you take these steps, your kids still might barge into the room, but don't stress too much about it. Given the current situation, everyone should be pretty understanding.

If this happens, just politely ask your colleagues if you can step away for a moment, and they'll surely understand.

If you're new to whole working-from-home thing, take a look at [some tips and tricks](#) to improve the experience.



#### **KHAMOSH PATHAK**

Khamosh Pathak is a freelance technology writer who specializes in tutorials. His work has also been published on iPhoneHacks, Zapier's blog, MakeUseOf, and Guiding Tech. Khamosh has seven years of experience writing how-tos, features and technology guides on the internet. [READ FULL](#)

[BIO >](#)