



RECORDING ON DESKTOP OR LAPTOP VIA ZOOM, QUICKTIME PLAYER, OR OTHER AT-HOME RECORDING

FIND A QUIET SPACE

Avoid background sounds such as fans, HVAC, or other activities. These can be distracting to the viewer on the other end.

For Voiceover Recording: If you have a walk-in closet, setting up a small table and a chair can make for a makeshift 'recording booth' because clothes hanging absorb a lot of noise.

Be aware of your bandwidth. Wireless connections can be spotty, so consider plugging into a wired connection and or disconnecting other wireless devices.

Avoid empty rooms with hard floors. Spaces that are the least echoey usually have rugs, bookshelves, wall tapestries even! If this space is not available, consider transforming a space.

LIGHTING

Position yourself so you can be seen. Light yourself from the front, avoid backlight (unless you can match the amount of light in front of you), and avoid overhead lighting as this can cast unflattering shadows.

Place your light behind and above your laptop. Position the light from above and off slightly to one side of your face(roughly a 30-degree angle). You can use a desk lamp, work light, or purchase a light. Look for a soft light or diffuse your own light with a white shower curtain.

Sidelight/front from a large widow is also nice. If it's a very sunny day, consider hanging a white sheet or shower curtain up to diffuse the light. You may need to add a fill light to the other side. Use a white card, or sheet to bounce the light back towards your face/window.

If possible, pick only one type of light source; natural light or desk practical lighting, do not mix window light (cool) and incandescent desk lamplight (warm). When using window light, remember the weather can change. If you are doing a longer recording you may want to think about purchasing lights.

AUDIO

Test the audio on your computer to make sure the sound is sufficient without 'going into the red'. If possible, record a separate audio file to a mini recorder, microphone, or app on your phone. We recommend [RODE Reporter](#) (iPhone), [WaverEditor for Android](#) or [Lexis Audio Editor](#) (Android).

Do a test of the audio before beginning, record 30 seconds of you talking and play it back (or send an audio clip through this link hawke.wetransfer.com to us.

Many phone headphones include a mic you can plug into your laptop for better audio than the laptop's built-in mic. Where possible, run the cable behind your back and out of frame.

FRAMING

Position your desktop or laptop camera, so you are centred in the frame.

Use books to prop up your laptop, so the screen and camera are positioned perpendicular to the ground. The camera should be at or slightly above eye level, so when you look at the screen, you are making 'eye contact' with your audience.

Leave room around you, trying not to fill the frame with your head. [Download and upload this photo](#) as a virtual background to help guide you.

EYE LINE

Allow the interviewer to direct you on the best eye line before your recording. Maintain eye contact with the interviewer or the person on the other end during your recording

Video calls often lead to people's eyes darting between focusing on their face, another person's face, prepared notes, and other things on their computer or environment. Try putting a sticker on your screen to draw your attention to the right spot.

Also, try to avoid reading notes. If you do have to read a script, have the word document on your computer, only fill only the top half of your screen. Then, scroll through the text with a mouse. Or try a downloading teleprompter app. They are available for your computer and smartphone. Here is one on our website you can use www.prompter.hawke.tv

CLOTHING

Avoid patterns on your clothes, especially fine details like herringbones. Also, avoid wearing any flash or noisy jewelry.

Choose neutral colours. Avoid reds and greens, or colours that reflect and modify skin tone dramatically.

BACKGROUND

Less is more (unless you want to create a set). Look for a background that doesn't reveal too much about your personal life (beware of book spines, views out windows that could show your locale, artwork in the background that may create copyright problems for videos to be shared with the public).

Consider using a flat colour or white background. In general, the less 'busy' the background, the better the recording quality will be of your face and eyes in particular due to limitations of webvideo.

A light on the floor pointed up at the blank wall can add a nice glow/vignette effect behind you.

For green screen, make sure the lighting is even and leave some separation between you and the screen. If you will be on camera a lot, consider creating a dedicated area for you to record in.

POSTURE

If seated, be aware of slumping, slouching, or swiveling in your chair. These are natural tendencies but can be distracting for the viewer.

When possible, use a stiff-backed chair, or a small pillow behind your lower back to help with posture. Standing is the best but make sure your camera is at your eye-line

SOME LAST TIPS

Turn off all notifications on your phone or computer to avoid unwanted sounds. Have a glass of water, warm water or tea with honey and lemon. In between your answers, hydrate.

Have fun and do your best to follow the notes above.

GOT ANY TIPS FOR US?

Email us a video@hawke.tv

EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a lot of A/V equipment out there with different price points and complexities. Below are some items we recommend that aren't too hard to use and aren't too expensive (let us know if you want to go pro). The links below are from amazon, but a local photo/video/electronics store might have some advice and better tech support.

AUDIO EQUIPMENT ([Click here to see the products](#))

Smartphone Microphone

The Rode Smartlav+ Lavalier Microphone for Smartphones is a quality option. You may need an adapter depending on the phone you have. There is also a kit option if you want two mics for an interview.

USB Microphone

In the link above are two options for USB lavalier mics and two options for desktop mics. Lavalier are handy because they clip on to your shirt, tie, or jacket and you don't have to worry about where it's pointed. Desktop mics are great because you won't have a cable in the way. This is a personal preference, but either will be better than your built-in microphone.

LIGHTING EQUIPMENT ([Click here to see the products](#))

If you can manage it, you want a large light source. This is best accomplished with diffused light. The sun is big but far away making it a small light source (which creates harsh shadows). On a cloudy day the light is spread around making it softer (we all look better in soft light). You can use lamps/work lights or window light diffused through a thin sheet or shower curtain. You can buy lights to control the light when your location limits you. When buying LED lights pick the largest one you can, with the best CRI rating. You will also need a stand to put it on. I recommend the flex arm clamped to your desk or weighted on the desk with a backlight stand. You can also buy light stands or c-stands if you have more space.

EMAIL BEFORE YOU BUY

If you are unsure of the purchase you are about to make, send us an email us a video@hawke.tv we are happy to give it a review. Or, if you have had a great experience (or a bad experience) with a product, let us know!