

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR A VIDEO INTERVIEW



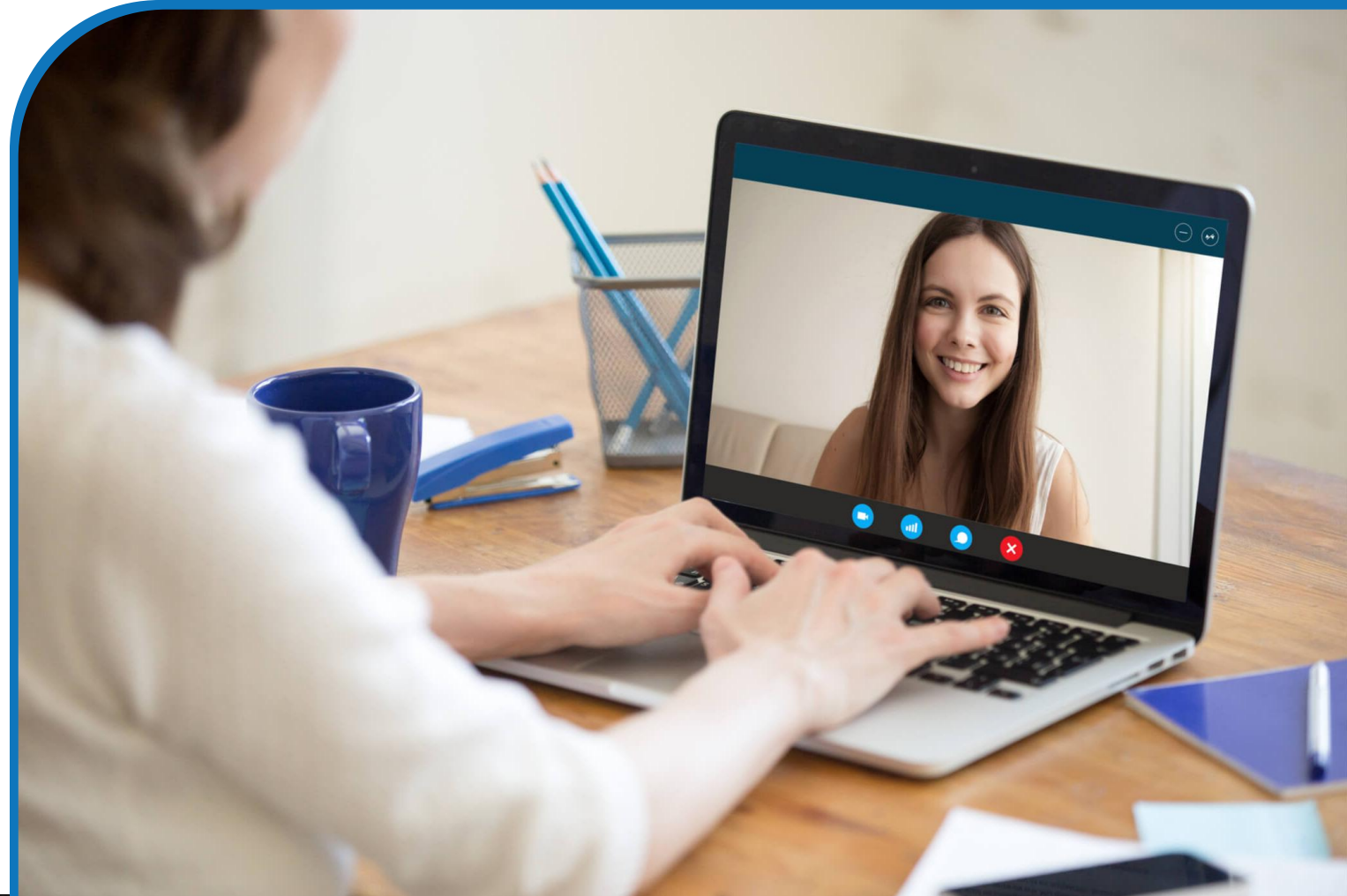
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# How to Prepare for a Video Interview



You can conduct a video interview on a laptop with a webcam, a traditional computer with a webcam, or by using an appropriate app on your iPad.



Even though the interview is being conducted by webcam, this is a “real” live interview, and you need to be as prepared as though you were sitting across the desk from the interviewer. In fact, you may have to prepare more! After all, you do not have to clean your room before conducting an in-person job interview, but you do need to clear an appropriate and professional space for your video interview. If you’ve been working remotely, as so many people now are, you may already have an appropriate space prepared. If you’ve been doing Zoom meetings, you may even already have an appropriately bare wall. However, before doing a video interview it is extra important to double-check.

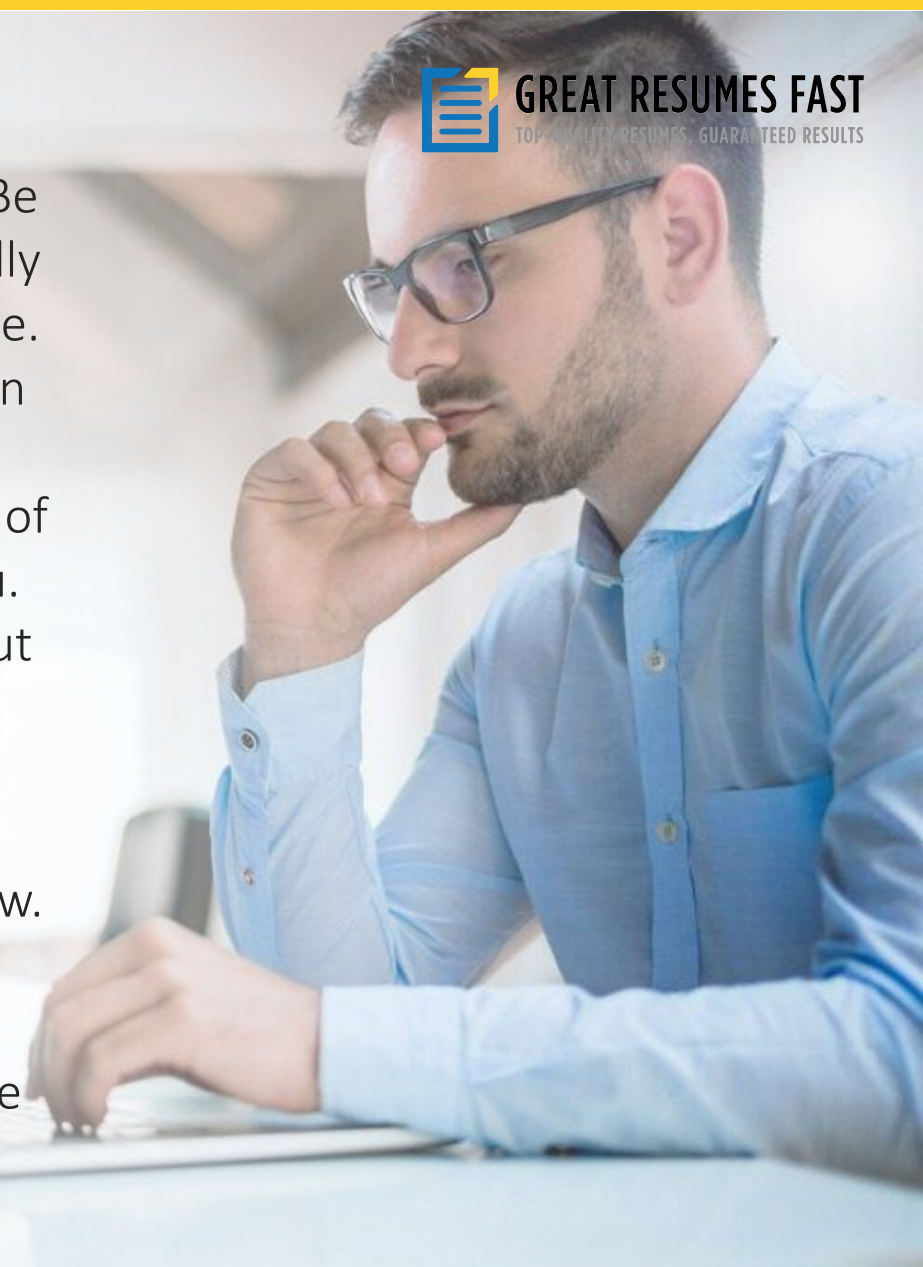




Be mindful of where you set up for your video interview. Be sure the area is free of visual distractions (clutter). Carefully consider what is in the background of your interview space. Make the background interesting, but not distracting. Plain white walls are fine, but boring. Can you frame a desk or bookshelves behind you instead? Just don't have a bunch of inappropriate posters or a pile of dirty laundry behind you. We are all undergoing an uncertain and scattered time, but in an interview it is still crucial to be putting forward the best first impression you can.



Check out your technology well in advance of the interview. Make sure you have strong internet connectivity and that your webcam and microphone are working. You may also have to download the software if it is the first time you are using the application.

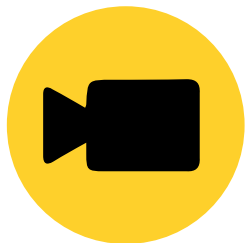




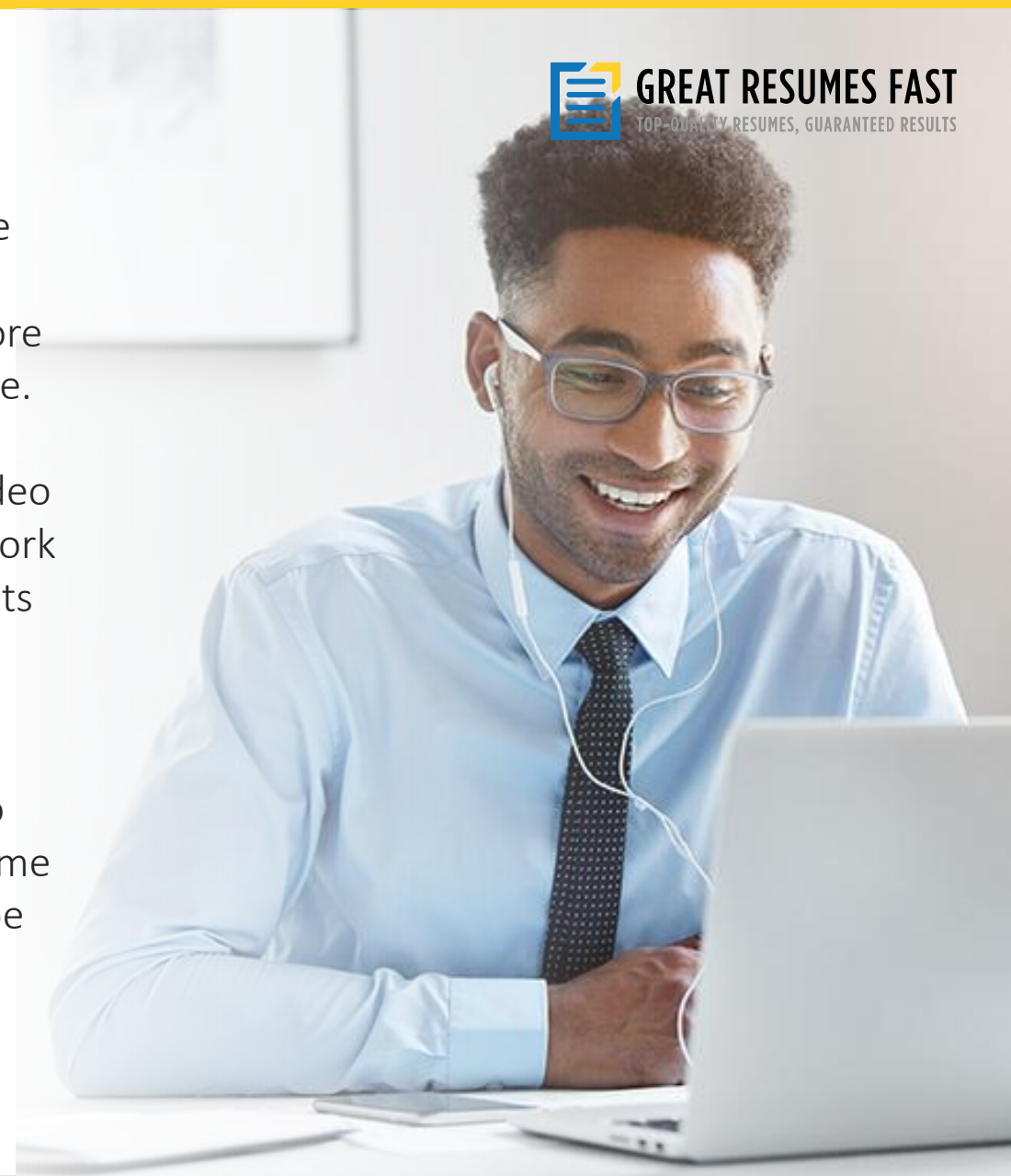
One of the best things you can do to prepare for a live video interview is practice. Practice doing a couple of Skype interviews with friends or family members before your job interview. Check the lighting and your volume.



As with a phone interview, recording your practice video interview can help you identify areas you'll need to work on or fix. Have your test partner take a few screenshots if you cannot record the call. You want to make sure your webcam is providing a decent picture.



Clarify with the interviewer who will initiate the video call, what platform will be used, and what the username or number is that the call will be coming from. Also, be sure to allow for any time zone differences.



# Video Interview Do's and Don'ts

Review the guidelines for phone interviews, but also keep these “do’s” and “don’ts” in mind.

## DO



**Dress nicely** —more than one job seeker has scheduled a video interview, thinking it would be voice only—and then accidentally found himself or herself on a video call.



**Dress from head to toe.** You may think you do not need to wear dress pants with the shirt and tie since the interviewer is only going to see the top half of your outfit. But you should always expect the unexpected. You never know when you might need to stand during an interview. Pajama pants or shorts with a dress shirt, tie, and jacket just do not work.



**Keep your clothing color choice in mind.** Check how the colors of your clothing appear on camera. Just like TV news anchors avoid some colors and most small patterns, choose colors that will show up well on video. Jewel tones or pastel colors work best. Do not wear white or black.





**Practice your video interview wearing the exact outfit you are planning to wear.** This trial run will also allow you to test the volume of your system, see how the software works, and make sure your lighting is appropriate.



**Lighting is important for video interviews.** If the light source is behind you, you may appear as a dark silhouette on the screen. Position a lamp or other light source in front of you. If you've been doing a lot of video meetings from home, you may have already figured this out.



**Ensure that your profile photo on the video calling software is professional.** This is your first impression from a physical standpoint in a video conference.





**Consider the positioning of your computer and camera.** Prop up the computer so that you are not looking down at it, and practice where to sit so you are framed correctly by the webcam. Make sure your torso is visible—including your hands—especially if you “talk” with your hands.



**Look at the webcam when you speak, not at the interviewer’s face on your screen.** This way, when you look into the camera, it will appear to the interviewer that you are looking directly at them.

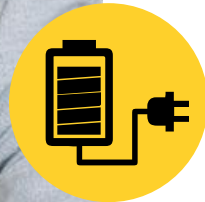


**One “pro” tip is to use a USB-connected headset for an interview instead of using the computer’s speakers.** Headsets are inexpensive and can provide a much clearer interview experience.





**If possible, use a wired Internet connection (plug directly into the Ethernet port) rather than a wireless connection.**



**If you are using a laptop for the video interview session, plug it in so that you have plenty of battery life for the call.** You do not want to have to dig for a cord to keep the computer from shutting down.



**Turn off notifications on your computer and close your other software programs.** You do not want to be distracted by beeps every time you receive an email.



**Speaking of distractions**, it is easy to tell on a video interview that you are not paying attention, so keep your focus on the interviewer. Clear your peripheral vision of other possible distractions—TVs, other screens, etc.



**Dial up the enthusiasm!** Someone who speaks with normal energy in a one-on-one conversation can come across as flat and monotone on a video interview. So it is important to be a little more enthusiastic than normal in a Skype interview.



**Smiling is an important strategy for video interviews.** Most of the time, when we are listening to someone else, we have a blank expression on our face. But on a video interview, a blank expression comes across as a frown. Keep a slight smile on your face: not a huge grin, just show a few teeth and raise your cheeks slightly. Practice this in a mirror ahead of time.



**Lean in. You have probably heard that “the camera adds 10 pounds.”** The reason for this is that many people lean backwards in their chair, when they should be leaning forward. If you sit back and relax in your chair your head will be further away from the webcam than your stomach. Unfortunately, the camera latches on to whatever is closest ... and that’s your gut!



**For women,** pay careful attention to your hair and makeup in video interviews. Again, a practice session can help you assess this.



**Be mindful of your nervous habits.** Just like in a face-to-face interview, the interviewer will notice when you twirl your hair or chew your lip.



**You can take notes during a video interview,** but do not take too many, or you will come off as looking distracted. Take notes with a pen and paper, not on your computer. You should not be switching windows at all during a video interview.



**If you have an online portfolio,** keep the link handy. You may want to share it with your interviewer, and you don't want to have to fumble around through different browser windows or files to get to it.

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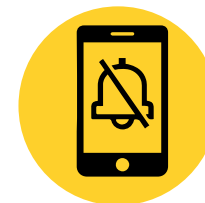
**Choose a cutesy or unprofessional username—no nicknames—and minimize numbers and keyboard characters.** Online, your first impression is your username and photo, so make sure both are professional. Your best bet is your first name and last name as your username, with minimal numerals added if needed.



**Be too quick to answer a question.** With video, there is sometimes a delay or interference, so make sure you pause before answering a question to avoid talking over the interviewer.



**Forget to verify the timing of your interview—taking into account any time zone differences.**



**Forget to silence your cell phone when you are on a video interview.**





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