



# VIDEO TELECONFERENCING DO'S AND DON'TS

# 11 WAYS TO BE A CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL DURING ZOOM AND MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETINGS

When you're on a video teleconference, there are certain things you want to avoid doing if you want to look professional, even when working from home.

**BY TEENA MADDOX/TECHREPUBLIC**

Most of the world might be working from home, but that doesn't mean it's okay to go wild when you're on a teleconference. There are certain behaviors that are acceptable to do while on a [Zoom](#) or [Microsoft Teams](#) teleconference, and some things that you just need to avoid.

TechRepublic talked to several etiquette experts and business pros to get their advice on what to do, and what not to do on camera. Roundtable participants included Karene Putney, author and etiquette

consultant; Holly Duckworth, life coach at Leadership Solutions International; Deborah Sweeney, CEO of MyCorporation.com; Emily Souydalay, SEO analyst for PixelCutLabs; Erico Franco, inbound marketing manager for Agencia de Marketing Digital; and Lior Ohayon, CEO of Hush Blankets.

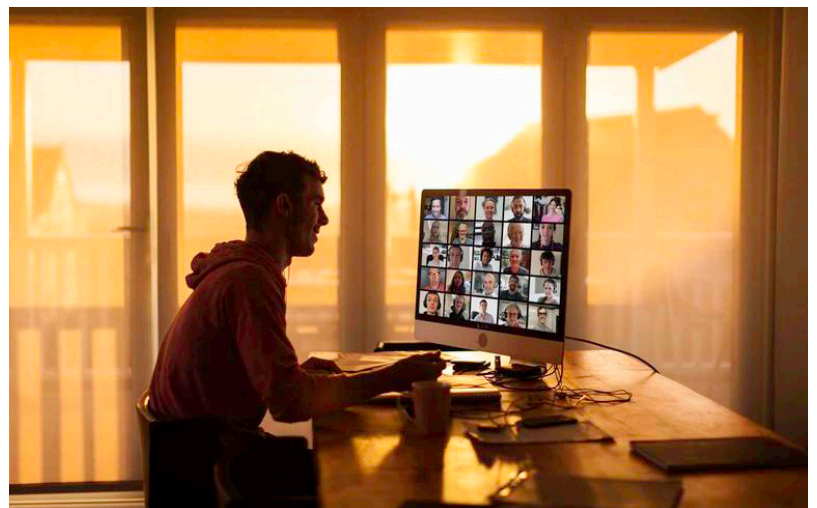


IMAGE: ALISTAIR BERG / GETTY IMAGES

## KEEP YOUR VIDEO ON

It's polite to allow everyone to see you on screen. If you don't want others to see your messy room, or your spouse lingering in the back of the room as they grab a snack from the kitchen, then opt for a [virtual background](#).

## MUTE YOUR SPEAKER IF YOU'RE TYPING

When you're typing notes, it can sound incredibly loud to anyone else in the meeting and will cause the

camera to zoom in on you, not the person who is talking, if you're louder than them. Mute your speaker if you're clicking away on the keyboard.

## DON'T EAT OR DRINK

When you're on camera, don't eat or drink. Sure, if it's early morning, people might really want to have a cup of coffee handy. But if you've noticed, that looks kind of overwhelming on camera. All you see is the mug. Especially as they drain that last drop. It goes double for food. No one needs to see you eating your breakfast or lunch on camera. Or listening to it. Remember how if you have your mic on, the camera focuses on you? Yeah.

## BE THERE FIVE MINUTES EARLY IF YOU'RE THE HOST

Give yourself time to log in and account for any technical difficulties if you're the meeting host. Five minutes is plenty of time for this.

## BE FULLY PRESENT

Close other browser windows and use the screen that the meeting is on. Don't look down at your phone or your watch during the meeting. Treat it as you would an in-person meeting.

## TELL PARTICIPANTS AHEAD OF TIME IF IT'S VIDEO OR AUDIO

Don't surprise people and ask for a video meeting when the meeting begins. Let them know ahead of time what expectations will be regarding video versus audio only.

## WORK OUT TECH ISSUES AHEAD OF TIME

If you need headphones for the meeting, have them handy before the meeting starts. If your laptop battery is nearly dead, then have it plugged in and ready to go. Take care of any technical concerns before the meeting starts.

## BE FULLY DRESSED

Don't sit down for a meeting in just a nice shirt but sloppy bottoms. Sometimes you might be asked to stand up, or you might need to walk around in front of the camera for an unexpected reason. We've already heard of a manager asking her employees to get up and stretch during a meeting.

## MAKE SURE YOUR BACKGROUND IS PROFESSIONAL

Turn on your camera during a non-meeting time. Look at your background. Assess it. Does it look professional? If you're the boss, does it look like you live in an expensive house that will make your employees feel

underpaid? If so, go find a plain wall to sit in front of. Maybe with a bookcase or a single piece of art. If your desk is in the kitchen, is there a bunch of clutter on the counters behind you? Unless you want to use a virtual background, make sure that the background behind you sends the right message. There are [plenty of guides to help you learn how to use virtual Zoom backgrounds](#).

## DON'T USE AN INAPPROPRIATE VIRTUAL BACKGROUND

Speaking of virtual backgrounds, use one that is appropriate for your line of work. If you're in a creative field, you can have a bit more leeway and go for [The Simpsons' couch or hanging out in the Batcave](#) or even opt for something from [Star Wars](#). But if you're in a more serious field, then stick with either a solid color background, or a virtual background of an Ivy League library or an [eye-catching landscape](#).

## TELL EVERYONE ELSE IN YOUR HOME THAT YOU'LL BE IN A TELECONFERENCE

If you don't have a dedicated room for a meeting, then let everyone in your household know in advance that you'll be in a meeting so that you can have quiet in the background. This is proper etiquette for your household and for your meeting participants.

# HOW YOUR ACTIONS ON ZOOM COULD GET YOU FIRED

From chewing someone out to sharing inappropriate and private content, executives say, you'd better watch out. The same etiquette and corporate rules apply in the virtual world.

## BY ESTHER SHEIN/TECHREPUBLIC CONTRIBUTOR

Not long ago, while on a company Zoom call, participants heard one of their colleagues berate her live-in boyfriend—which was not only “super egregious,” but happened several times, said Sean Nguyen, director of Internet Advisor.

“Someone would be speaking, and she would suddenly start fighting with this guy loudly, during the meeting,” Nguyen said. “It was just so uncomfortable. The first time she did it, I thought maybe she just forgot her audio [was] on or something came up right then, but she did it multiple times, and it was just incredibly disrespectful and unprofessional.”

That was the final straw, he said. “We had to let her go. I hope she at least got rid of the boyfriend, too.”

As Zoom and other video calls become the norm in a workforce now largely remote, there's a line between things people do that are inappropriate, and things that can get you

fired. Many people have heard about the now infamous California commissioner who [resigned after throwing his cat during a Zoom meeting](#), and the reporter who broadcasted himself on Good Morning America via a [Zoom call wearing no pants](#).

Of course, there are some things that can't be controlled. For example, in late April, while the chief people officer of a large candy brand was on a Zoom work call, her dog came in the room and threw up. The CPO was mortified. However, that pales in comparison to other things that are happening on Zoom calls that can get people fired.



IMAGE: ANDREYPOPOV, GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The CPO, who requested anonymity, said during a recent virtual town hall, her boss was very upset that some people didn't show up dressed as though they were going to a meeting. "They were wearing baseball hats and looking like they had just rolled out of bed," she recalled. While these may not be offenses worthy of firing, it prompted the CPO's boss to have her write a work-from-home policy.

"It's good common sense if you're going to get on a call with the executive team you would get dressed," she said. Other things the policy will mention: No eating and making sure there is nothing inappropriate behind you on a Zoom call, she said.

Additionally, even though the lines get blurred sometimes between work and home, she stressed, "you still have to maintain that level of professional behavior."

For example, on a separate call the CPO did with her team recently, someone's face "froze in a funny position, and we were commenting on that, and she said, 'I can still hear you.' So it's just all these nuances of how to behave that you don't think of."

## OTHER BIG NO-NOS

Betty Rodriguez, senior workplace analyst at Fit Small Business, said that even though many workplaces have gone digital in the wake of [COVID-19](#), the same standards and protocols still apply. "Sharing derogatory images, disclosing confidential information, or using discriminatory language toward a colleague will still have the same repercussions as they would in a physical office setting," she said. "Zoom is no exception."

Sharing non-disclosure information, especially if it is considered private to the company, is a big one, agreed attorney Jacob J. Sapochnick, founder of the Law Offices of Jacob J. Sapochnick.

"There's a chance your software can be hacked, and since Zoom has the ability to record your meeting, then that can be a problem itself" as well, Sapochnick said. "Companies have set up clauses when it comes to sharing information using online software as they are aware of such problems."

Scot J. Chrisman, founder and CEO at digital marketing firm, The Media House, echoed that, noting "everything we do online can be breached or accessed publicly and could also endanger your job."

Another action on Zoom that can get you fired: "Privately" chatting with an individual or a group during Zoom meetings," he said. "There is a feature in Zoom where in-meeting chats are downloaded automatically and can be viewed by all of the participants. Thinking of sending a private message to your officemate criticizing your boss during a boring business meeting is fun right? Think again."

Though your colleagues will not be able to see it in real-time, they can still see it in the minutes' folder, which is available for everyone after the conference, Chrisman said. "Save yourself from trouble and don't chat privately on Zoom."

Screen sharing inappropriate content is another fire-able offense, Chrisman said.

"Screen-sharing is very useful in showing the participants your report or presentation during business meetings," he said. "You should always assume that everyone will see everything on your monitor, so it is better to organize your files."

But be careful what type of content you save, he added. "If by instance that during a conference call an indecent or inappropriate tab or a link was shown on your browser, this might be very malicious," he said. "This is very unprofessional and can get you fired."

# 13 THINGS TO AVOID DOING ON ZOOM

Experts weigh in: Should you use Zoom filters, how to best light yourself, and how not to get hacked, among many other tips.

## BY N.F. MENDOZA/TECHREPUBLIC

It's easy to get caught up in a Zoom meeting and forget to do simple things like end the session if you're the host, or turn off the camera if you leave the room for a moment. There are certain things to avoid doing if you want to use Zoom and keep your professional reputation intact.

Given the shelter-at-home edicts, working from home will be the norm for at least another month. And, "Zoom has become the platform for pretty much every meeting," said William Mandara Jr., CEO of Mancini, a tech-first design firm. "Technology in general has been and will be the reason we all make it through this."

The digital transformation agency Blue Fountain Media first used Zoom for

clients and those who work from home, but now, with the entire staff working remotely, "We use it for all team meetings, and I'm on Zoom meetings no less than six hours-per-day," said Brian Byer, vice president and general manager of the agency.

Zoom is essential for tech's best-known companies. "Zoom is a core part of GitLab's tool stack," said Darren Murph, head of remote at GitLab.

"We use it daily to communicate with our all-remote team of more than 1,200 people across 65+ countries," Murph said. "We use it for one-on-ones, stand-ups, team meetings, as well as informal communication. We build relationships via coffee chats, and even encourage parents with kids who



IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO



are home from school to schedule 'Juicebox Chats' for children around the world to connect with one another. We routinely host company wide AMAs, with hundreds of people involved simultaneously. We use Zoom to bond with colleagues, recently hosting 130+ people in our marketing team for a Global Talent Show, replete with judges and prizes.”

TechRepublic asked experts to provide advice on what not to do during company Zoom meetings. Here are their best tips:

## 1. DON'T CHECK YOURSELF OUT

“Especially when you're talking,” warned Dave Aizer, a media coach and TV host. “When you're speaking, your eyes should be on the camera to enhance the impact of your presentation. If you look at yourself, especially when speaking, it diminishes your power and—if you don't like what you see—may even make you feel self-conscious. You can minimize the image of you [on your own device], if that helps.”

## 2. DON'T APOLOGIZE

Colleagues now get glimpses into each others' homes and personal lives. “Do not apologize,” said Steve Pemberton, chief HR officer at Workhuman. “If your child interrupts your video conference, don't shoo them out, embrace the moment, and welcome them into the frame, introduce them to your colleagues. Not only will this make your family members feel special, it also helps to increase employee engagement, as it keeps humanity in the workplace.”

## 3. DON'T OVEREXPOSE YOUR LIFE

While it's inevitable the aforementioned “glimpses” are bound to happen, or to reference a sound from a pet or child, don't hijack the meeting by flipping your camera around to allow everyone to see a messy room or worse.

## 4. DON'T BE WIGGLY, YOU'RE NOT IN SECOND GRADE

“Zoom is mostly great, however we've found the video can sometimes struggle when there is a lot of movement,” said Sam Williamson, owner of CBDiablo. “This can cause freezing issues. Restrict movement as much as possible during video calls. For some this means resisting the urge to 'talk with your hands.’”

## 5. DON'T AVOID THE CAMERA.

“To avoid embarrassing situations, tell everyone at home you're going live and will be on video,” said

Debra Locker, president, Locker PR. “We are all crammed into our homes right now. If you are in a room with a door, close it. Consider a note on the door. Find a quiet area. Engage your children and/or partner in assisting with entertaining pets, babies, etc.”

## 6. DON'T FORGET YOUR MANNERS, NO MATTER HOW FERAL YOU'VE BECOME SHELTERING AT HOME

On Zoom, “Use the ‘raise hand’ or similar function, rather than interjecting or interpreting facial cues,” said Ben Christensen, co-founder of Handshake, a business social-media platform for college students. Have somewhere to ask questions before the meeting, a chat function, or dedicated Q&A at the end of the meeting. This ensures everyone feels included and heard, and allows for a more productive meeting.

GitLabs’ Murph added, “It feels rude in video calls to interrupt people. This is because the latency causes you to talk over the speaker for longer than during an in-person meeting. We should not be discouraged by this, the questions and context provided by interruptions are valuable. This is a situation where we have to do something counterintuitive to make all-remote meetings work. At GitLab, everyone is encouraged to interrupt the speaker in a video call to ask a question or offer context. We want everyone to contribute instead of a monologue. Just like in-person meetings, be cognizant of when, who, and how you interrupt. We don’t want ‘[maninterrupting](#).’”

## 7. DON'T ABUSE FILTERS

“Don’t play with filters,” emphasized workplace consultant Ashira Prossack. “By now we’ve all seen the memes of people with their video turned into a potato or a kitten. While that’s good for a laugh and friends, it’s not good for credibility. Leave the filters to Snapchat and Instagram.”

While Collins said, “Don’t use quirky backgrounds” for business calls, some bosses welcome a fun background. Fishbowl co-founder and COO Loren Appin said: “Switch up the virtual [Zoom backgrounds](#). This has become a bit of a competition across our team, and helps kick off the meeting on a positive note.”

## 8. DON'T FORGET SECURITY

Never publicly share online meeting IDs or meeting URLs, stressed Aaron Zander, head of IT at HackerOne. Despite the increasingly productive tools, “they come with a caveat.” Zander explained that sharing “allows people to drop in and listen to sensitive conversations, record your voice or video, and infiltrate a virtual workplace. With the Zoom boom taking over social media, be careful how much you share in your screenshot. It’s important to understand the link sharing options for file sharing;

this includes video links and services like Zoom. The last thing you want is an intruder—external or internal—to drop in on sensitive meetings.”

## 9. DON'T FORGET TO HIT “MUTE” WHEN YOU'RE NOT TALKING

The fully remote Flexjobs is reliant on Zoom, and Kathy Gardner, senior director of PR and media, said: “Some of our best practices include muting yourself when you're not talking, and using a headset for the best audio quality.” Gardner also recommended using the “raise hand” feature or, for the host to come up with an equivalent to indicate “when to speak, such as a chat comment that you want to chime in. It lessens people talking over each other.”

## 10. DON'T BE TOO FAR FROM YOUR ROUTER.

A “culprit to extended buffering times and spotty connections, is your Wi-Fi. To boost performance in every room, routers need to be centralized—avoid cabinets or closets,” said a rep from Best Buy's Geek Squad. “The more materials the signal must travel through, the weaker and slower the connection. For certain homes, a Wi-Fi repeater, or mesh network may be needed.”

## 11. DON'T FORGET GOOD LIGHTING

“Zoom is great, but if you're sitting in the wrong spot, no one can see you. Try and pick a spot where the lighting is on your face or above you.” Just “make sure your room is well-lit,” said Calloway Cook, president of Illuminate Labs. “I've been on many calls where some of the members were in a room so dark you couldn't make out their face. This looks unprofessional and gives the impression you're not good at planning.”

## 12. DON'T USE THE BRIGHTEST SETTING ON YOUR LAPTOP OR MONITOR

“If you're wearing glasses, the bright monitor can reflect in the glasses and be distracting,” said Victoria Elder, owner of Victori Solutions.

## 13. SAY “GOODBYE”

Don't forget to say “goodbye!” Gardner reminded: “Be sure to say ‘goodbye’ when you leave a video call. That may seem unimportant, as people will likely see your image leave the screen when you hang up, but good etiquette is never a bad idea.”

# 13 ETIQUETTE TIPS FOR VIDEO CONFERENCE CALLS

Due to the coronavirus, virtual meetings are now standard for employees working from home. Follow these video conferencing tips on staying connected and professional.

**BY N.F. MENDOZA/TECHREPUBLIC**

Video or audio, Zoom, Skype, or Google Meet--being a part of [virtual meetings](#) has become the norm, as companies have sent employees to work from home for the foreseeable future, or at least until there's confidence [COVID-19](#) is under control.

Especially for those more familiar with in-person meetings, [remote conference calls](#) can be a challenge: There are often participants who struggle with the technology or their at-home bandwidth. Once "in" the meeting, people also often talk over each other, which is even more critical not to do, given issues of buffering, delays, and speaker clarity.

"Love them or hate them, meetings are a part of almost every job, whether you're working remotely or working in an office," said Kathy Gardner, senior director of PR & media, FlexJobs.



IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

"In a [remote workplace](#), finding daily opportunities to still see your coworkers, helps us stay connected, especially those that you may not work with on a daily basis," said Armen Vartanian, vice president, global workplace services, Okta. "That aspect of the office environment is lost when everyone is remote." Vartanian said he conducts a daily 15-minute meeting to simply stay engaged.

Anyone who has sat through the tedium of daily meetings that involve roll calls, and awkward lulls can appreciate what Robert Love, CTO for Q-CTRL, a facilitator in development of quantum computers, said,

“Don’t have meetings for meetings’ sake, have a facilitator, have an agenda and stick to it.”

## TOP TIPS FOR CONFERENCE CALL ETIQUETTE

FlexJobs’ focus is on the flexible work environment, and the company recently released a list of the top 13 tips for remote conference etiquette. Other business experts also weigh in, too.

### 1. Always have an agenda

There’s nothing more irritating (and frustrating and not productive) than a meeting in which everyone languidly checks in, and then the person who scheduled the meeting has no plan. Don’t schedule a meeting if you don’t have an agenda. “Agendas don’t have to be long, involved, or even particularly detailed,” FlexJob suggested. “A brief outline of what topics the meeting will cover is usually good enough.”

By providing staff with an agenda, attendees know what to expect, can guesstimate how long it will run, and, if there is an element of participation, will give them an opportunity to prepare talking points. “If you know you have people coming from other meetings, then maybe start the meeting five minutes after the start time,” said James McQuiggan, security awareness advocate, KnowBe4, who added, regarding agendas, “Include it in the meeting notice. Also, have it on a slide that is shared and readily available.”

“As a leader on a call, it can be challenging to [bring a remote team](#) to focus and communicate effectively, so it’s important for the leader to assign ownership across the team and help facilitate the conversation amongst the group,” Okta’s Vartanian said. “Creating hand-offs in the conversation can make sure everyone on the call feels engaged and understands key takeaways, and helps you avoid those awkward transitions or lulls.”

### 2. Report your absence

“Skip the small talk about weather,” said Dominik Zane, CEO, Around video-chat software. “Being on time also minimizes the need for everyone else to make small talk while waiting for late joiners.”

If you are not going to be at the meeting, or if you’re going to be late, tell the person leading the meeting (or a trusted team member) as soon as you know. Call, email, or text. Conference calls are often held up waiting for specific attendees. Sometimes conference calls are held up because everyone is waiting “a few more minutes.”

Being seen on video is an important element of conference call etiquette, “It’s important for participants to keep their video on as much as possible, particularly in the current context,” said Andrey Khusid, CEO of Miro, a whiteboarding platform. “Video adds a human touch to meetings, which can combat isolation and strengthen team relationships. And it can help the meeting facilitator identify whose attention is wandering, so they can bring them back into the conversation.”

### 3. Prioritize updates

Some staff are larger than others, and conference call meeting size has a bit more relevance than in-person meetings. If you're in an office with a tight quartet of people, you're likely to know each other, and what you need to do. Someone will likely keep things "on track," and it's likely to be efficient. However, when you have, for example, more than eight people, it's critical to "prioritize what you will and won't talk about," FlexJobs said.

Set time constraints and stick to them. This allows each person to talk about what is relevant and can cap the overall length of the meeting.

An important thing to remember, the report noted, is make sure that what's going to be discussed is relevant to at least three people in the meeting. Otherwise, send an email on the topic or conduct a smaller meeting. "Being mindful of time is key to conference call etiquette."

### 4. Test equipment

Don't wait until a couple minutes before a meeting to sign on.

#### **Make sure you have on cell phones:**

- A strong signal
- No interference

#### **Make sure you have on a computer:**

- Use a wired connection rather than Wi-Fi
- Make sure the computer camera works (or is uncovered)
- Make sure the speakers work
- Make sure the microphone works

Even if it says you're connected to the platform, make sure you actually are.

Test your video and audio before the meeting starts (hence the tip to sign on early enough to do this).

Allow even more time in case there is something to download beforehand or in case you have an unexpected update.

"Call quality is a theme, and when you're dealing with a 100% remote situation, where all participants are on the call, this is exacerbated," Q-CTRL's Love said. "My number one tip would be to invest in a headset. People have no problem dealing with substandard video, but substandard audio is a deal breaker and can render a call useless."

## 5. No sneaking out

This is not a third-grade recorder performance, or for some, church. Don't sneak out. In a virtual meeting, there's enough flexibility for you to attend part of it and then jump off. However, it's important you tell your supervisor or the person leading the meeting.

In some platforms, you can just sign off, and no one will know; in others, your face or name disappears from the shared screen. And if your company uses the former, don't cut out just because you can. If you have a conflicting appointment, tell everyone at the start of the meeting or send an email (that you know has been read) ahead of time.

If you have something else scheduled, you're more likely to be called on to share updates and add feedback early on. You don't want to be called on or asked a question and then appear to have suddenly vanished. Transparency, people.

## 6. Be prepared

It's bad conference etiquette to be called on and be unprepared. It's also a missed opportunity. Just because it's on a platform/phone doesn't mean your meeting prep is any different. Have notes on your phone next to you, and bookmark anything you need for reference. Clear your desktop of unnecessary files.

If it's a check-in or update meeting, discuss your current project and any recent accomplishment (it should go without saying, but don't brag or pat yourself on the back too much). Be clear and concise, and if you're uncomfortable with speaking to a group, practice beforehand. Let attendees know that if they have questions, you'll answer them.

"Be on time!" Q-CTRL's Love said. "Better to be 10 minutes early, than a minute late."

## 7. Choose a quiet location

It's easy to forget that there is a mic picking up not only your voice, but if you decide to eat/chew something, that sound will come through. If you make a cuppa tea, the sound of your cabinet opening and the ding of the microwave will be amplified. Wait until the meeting is over. "Ambient noises can come through on your computer microphone, if it's not silenced," KnowB4's McQuiggan said.

And like most things, location, location, location: If you live on a busy street, if your meeting coincides with trash pickup, if you live next to a preschool (or it sounds like it), choose a different room to take the meeting.

"One of the biggest distractions on conference calls come from unmuted attendees," FlexJobs' Gardner said. If your remote office is the local coffee house, consider that it might be too noisy, especially if you'll be competing with the ambient noise when delivering your update. Finally, if there is a mute-mic alternative, choose it, and only unmute when it's your turn to talk.

And who are we kidding? We definitely care about how we look, sheltering at home, to our colleagues. "If

possible, sit somewhere with plenty of daylight, Around's Zane said. "We tend to feel more comfortable and look better--especially on an integrated laptop camera--in spaces with lots of natural light."

## 8. Place pets in another room

A giant perk to working at home (if that's your remote office, and if you're sheltering at home) is having your pet around you. However, if your dog has a tendency to get the zoomies, your cats constantly battle for dominance, or your macaw screeches (and you may be used to it, but to others, it's horrifying): Put them in a different room. Your colleagues do not want to hear that, not only over your voice, but over anyone else's. And be sure your pets are secured away/quiet before you call in to the conference call.

## 9. Stay on track

Accustomed to constantly checking into social media? Love getting those Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or TikTok updates? That all needs to be turned off during the meeting. "Multitasking is rude to the other participants in the meeting, who will be able to sense that you aren't fully engaged," Miro's Khusid said.

It may also be tempting to watch a captioned movie or show during the meeting, but proper etiquette deems you be 100% focused on the call. FlexJobs suggested you stand during the meeting while listening and talking, and even to stretch or do lunges to keep alert before you're asked to speak.

## 10. Speak up

You may have a great connection, a crystal clear view of participants, and sound like you're in the same room. However, everyone won't have the same connection. Even if you can hear teammates perfectly well, it might not be so in the other direction. Always speak clearly and loudly (but of course, don't shout), and ask if you can be heard by everyone. This isn't the time to mumble or speak softly. It's a conference call, not an ASMR YouTube video.

## 11. Say your name

Even if you have a Brady Bunch-esque grid of attendees in front of you, it's hard to keep track of who is saying what (hopefully the meeting leader established a way to avoid the seemingly inevitable over talking).

When you start talking, identify yourself, "This is Penelope, and I have a question," or "Hi, it's Jamison, I'd like to add to that point." FlexJobs said, "That way, your contributions to the conversation is noted, and no one is left wondering who the genius with the awesome comments is."

## 12. Use the mute button

Again, inevitably, especially those who are wiggly/can't sit still for long, you don't want any scratching or odd



sounds coming from you. Even if you're in a quiet location, mute yourself when you know you won't be called on. It's a lot easier to hit "unmute" than be known as the staffer who makes weird noises. An important element of conference call etiquette is not to let subtle distractions derail the person speaking or disrupt the conversation. Definitely turn off notification sounds--there's little more irritating than a constant dinging every time someone from your fantasy football league wants to weigh in on their picks or your worldwide family makes sure you are sheltering well.

### 13. Silence isn't always golden

Don't forget to unmute yourself when it's your time to talk, or everyone will see your mouth moving, your arms gesticulating but won't hear you. Someone (or all) will let you know, and everyone will laugh.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH WHILE TELECOMMUTING

Remember, too--if you're on an audio-only call--that people can't see you, so you can't nod in response or agreement. FlexJobs suggested you narrate what you're doing, so there aren't long stretches of silence while you're searching on your desk for a report, etc.

As of now, no one can predict how long the spectre of the coronavirus will require remote work or if it will bring to light the effectiveness of remote work.

Remote work shouldn't isolate, and contact amongst team members is critical. "The daily contact is more important than video," said Barry Po, president, Smart Facilities for mCloud Technologies. "Since our time is spread across many cities globally, we want to make sure everyone feels like they can reach out (virtually) anytime to anyone."

Yet others cite video as essential. "Just seeing the faces of colleagues on a daily basis maintains the lost personal connection that often accompanies remote work, Q-CTRL's Love said.

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