Video Conferencing? Remote Content Recording?  

Best Practices for improved quality

The most effective way to evaluate how you will look in front of the camera is to turn on your camera, stand or sit where you think would look good, while dressed in the clothing you are intending to wear and in the lighting you intend to use. (also, at the same time of day for natural ambient sunlight if in the room).

All cameras respond differently to light and the images are of a varied quality. Always use the best quality camera available. Remember your eyes are better than the camera and just because you can see does not mean the camera can. Cameras need much more light to produce a quality image. Lighting is important to success. By making conscious choices you can get the best results with whatever you have available to work with.

Location and Setting

- Choose a good space. Rooms that are too busy distract from the individual within it. Your setting/background can be interesting but should not compete visually with you for attention.
- Brightly painted walls are not as effective visually as more subtle colored backgrounds.
- Avoid white painted rooms, if possible.
- Avoid clothing that is too busy or blends into the background.
- Black or White clothing should be avoided, as should overly bright or dark clothes.
- Subtle patterns and a color that is not exceptionally bright work best.
- Make sure your environment can be free from pets and other visitors for more professional presentations.
- Eyeglasses can offer a problem with glare and a problem with lighting. Remove if possible and comfortable to do so. Raising your lighting will help reduce eyeglass glare.
- Avoid noises that are not you. Speak loudly and clearly. If you have a remote microphone available to have closer to your person, do it. Adjust your microphone sensitivity on your software for your conference or recording and test it.

Basic Lighting

- Bright lights or windows behind you throw off the cameras’ light measurements and can create a silhouette effect.
- Keep windows as sources of light but not in the camera picture.
- Bright windows “off camera” can also throw off the image if they are located behind you. Try to keep these in front of you and cover with a sheer or other diffusing material to soften the light.
- Cover windows to decrease the light if they must be to the rear or choose a time of day when natural light is less of a factor.
- If your light source is an artificial light (vs. the sun) please choose warm colored bulbs when possible. Incandescent or warm white and daylight colored bulbs are best. Florescent is often too blue/white as is often the case with LED’s. Look at your light sources and setup options. Desk Lamps, clip lights, and natural sources all can be used.
**Advanced Lighting**

The most common setup for lights is called 3-point lighting. This configuration consists of a key light, fill light, and backlight.

1. The **key light** should be the brightest of the three and provides the bulk of light to your subject. It should be in front of the subject and offset to one side (4 o'clock on the diagram). Also elevated above the face slightly is helpful.

2. The **fill light** eliminates shadows caused by the key light. Your fill should be less intense than your key so while it still eliminates shadows, but doesn’t create a flat looking shot due to the fill and key lights matching too closely. (8 o'clock on the diagram)

3. The **backlight** separates your subject from the background, creating depth and also preventing a flat looking shot. Your backlight can be hard light (no diffusion), as it won’t create shadows visible to the camera on the subject’s face. The backlight should be more dim than the key and fill light and be located behind and to the side of the subject. (1:30 position on the diagram)

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**Light Set-up**

- The Subject is center facing a laptop located at the 6 O’clock position

  - You need adequate light across the face but having it straight in front flattens and if too bright will “wash out” your face. Warm general lighting from the front side as fill and a brighter source on the other side as the key light.
  - This is a method to visually enhance highlights and lowlights.
  - Look for contrast on your face vs. a flat even field of light. You do not want a flat even field of light as it makes it harder to discern movement and expression.

- Avoid dark faces compared to the environment around you. Your face should be brighter than the room you are in.
- Do not have the light directly in front of you behind your camera. This seems logical but it tends to wash out your expressions and features.

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**Welcome to your Rehearsal. Here are some ways to ensure it goes well**

- Look, Adjust, and See. What makes you look good?
- Making conscious choices based on the above guidelines, you will be able to improve your images in providing the best presentation. You are the product.
- Planning and being willing to adjust your location, lighting, and wardrobe choices in advance of any “live” situation is essential to quality results.

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