

# Top Nine Tips for Zoom or Skype Interviews



## 1. DON'T MAKE EXCUSES.

If you're asked to do an interview over Skype or Zoom, saying you'd rather interview over the phone, or that you have poor internet connection, or even worse, that you don't have Skype is a fail. You've just demonstrated that you're "just not that keen" on this particular role. If you want this job – **find a way to make it work, even if it's not convenient**. Say "yes" and deal with the technology and logistics after that.

## 2. SPEAKING OF USERNAMES, MAKE SURE YOURS IS PROFESSIONAL.

Remember, first impressions count. Email addresses that are long and complicated and in no way reflect your actual name or that in any way describe what you may or may not have been getting up to in the bad old days should be left for your friends and personal contacts. Head on into google or Hotmail and make up a great professional email address for the duration of your job search. And, hey, don't forget that this is the email you will also use on your CV and Cover letter.

## 3. DRESS THE PART.

Just because you're not on-site does not mean you should wear your favourite hoodie. You don't need to be dressed to the nines if the sector/organisation is not super corporate, but you should **wear whatever you would wear to an in-person interview** (and not just the top half in case you have to stand up). Take a shower, shave, do your hair and dress as if going in for an in-person interview. This will help you feel like you're at an in-person interview and build your confidence.

## 4. THINK ABOUT YOUR LOCATION.

**What's behind you matters.** Set up a clean, neutral background with good lighting. Avoid basements and sitting in front of a window, unless you want to look like someone whose identity is being protected.

## 5. USE A HEADSET.

People might differ on this one, but if you have a headphone set with a talk piece (like most iPod or iPhone headphones), use it – especially if you're in a public space. Your computer picks up a lot of background noise. By using a headset, **they'll be able to hear you more clearly** and with less distracting background noises.

## 6. MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT.

As awkward as it might feel, **look at your webcam, at least from time to time – not the screen**. It will make you seem all the more present and personable. It will also ensure your eyes don't drift to the video of yourself in the bottom corner (we all can be guilty of that one). **Pro-tip:** place your laptop on a stack of books to get the camera at eye-level. Trust me, it's a more flattering angle. And if you need to refer to brief notes/bullet points, considering sticking those on the wall behind your screen so it doesn't look like you are looking down all the time to read from a script.

## 7. HANDLE ANY TECH GLITCHES WITH GRACE.

Things can go wrong. Your interviewer understands that. Before you start, ask who will call whom back if the technology does fail. If something does happen, remain calm and friendly while you troubleshoot. Don't be afraid to ask to hang up the call and try again if your Skype is freezing up. If anything, it'll demonstrate you can handle a stressful situation without going on a cursing rampage and/or crying.

**Make a test call to a friend** some time before your interview to make sure your audio and camera are working properly. Ask them how you sound, if they can see you clearly, and how the lighting is, etc.

## 8. ELIMINATE INTERRUPTIONS.

Make sure everyone else at home knows you are in an interview and you are in a quiet and private space. Nothing is more distracting to both you and the interviewers than members of your household walking around behind you grabbing a coffee or snacks, pets are jumping up on you, children doing what children do best when you don't want them to do it. - Bless their little hearts!

Turn off any notifications on your computer. Silence your phone. Closing your emails, Facebook etc.

The bottom line is this: **treat this Skype interview as you would any in-person interview**. Be amiable. Give cues that you're actively listening. Ask well thought out questions. Send a well thought out thank you note when the interview is done. And most importantly, bring it.

## 9. PRACTICE.

The saying goes for interviews that **practice makes perfect**, and this also rings true for video interviews. Practicing on video enables you to check things like lighting, camera perspective, your background and how many times you say um! For those of you with a LinkedIn profile, you can head to the Interview Prep page in the Jobs section where you will find 26 common interview questions to practice. Here you can record and view your responses which are only visible to you; however you can also request a first connection to review and provide feedback on your response. Alternatively you could also ask your Career Coach for a Zoom or Skype interview practice session. Get practicing!