



BEST
PRACTICE
GUIDE

For **Online Meetings** and ways
to manage '**Zoom Fatigue**'



A whole year after the world switched to video conferencing as its default means of communication, not everyone has worked out the best way to present themselves and how to use these platforms.

Given that online means of communication are not going away and many of our networking opportunities in the alliance are reliant upon them, we think it is a good idea for all members to carefully review Best Practices to get the best results from interactions with clients and other associates.

What follows is a list of Best Practices we recommend for attendees to implement before, during and after attending our virtual meetings, to ensure the events run as smoothly and productively as possible.

1) Preparation

Dress Code:

Dress as smartly as possible.

Plan ahead:

Decide how you will be connecting to the meeting, via computer or phone.

Get ready to participate:

If the host sent out any content ahead of time, review it. If you are presenting any content, have it prepared and ready to go.

Give Zoom a try:

Use a Zoom Test Meeting to practice connecting audio and video, sharing content, and using the Participant and Chat panels.

2) Setting Up

Get comfortable:

Find a place with good internet or wireless service and minimal background noise.

- Whether you are at home or in a public place, we recommend using a set of headphones with a built-in microphone.
- If you are joining from a conference room with built-in audiovisual equipment, use the room's equipment.

Eliminate distractions:

Make it less likely that anything will interrupt your meeting.

- Let others know you will be in a meeting and shouldn't be disturbed.
- Close any unnecessary programs on the device you will be using to join the meeting.
- Turn off or silence other devices.

Get everything ready:

Save yourself time later.

- If the host sent out any content ahead of time, have it open and ready to view.
- If you will be sharing any content, have it open and ready to share.

Position your camera properly:

Face the camera squarely in a stable position and at eye-level when possible.

- Doing so helps create a more, direct sense of engagement with other participants.
- Minimise lighting from behind you. Backlighting creates a silhouette, and it will make it harder for other participants to see your face.
- In Zoom's SETTINGS>VIDEO; you can select options i.e: 'Adjust for low light'; 'Always display participant name on their videos'; 'Touch up my appearance' (this softens the skin and reduces eye bags/blemishes).

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3) Participation

Test the Audio:

Ensure your microphone level is correct.

Be on time:

If possible, join the meeting 5 minutes early using your desired method.

Introduce yourself:

If appropriate, let the other participants know you have connected. Also, let the host know if you plan on leaving early.

Give the presenter the floor:

When introductions are done, mute your audio to minimise the amount of noise in the meeting.

- When your microphone is not muted, avoid activities that could create additional noise, such as shuffling papers or using your mobile phone.

Speak up:

When it's your turn, unmute your audio and speak clearly. There can be a slight delay in audio/video.

- Keep in mind that we might be recording the meeting!

Be polite:

If you need to interrupt, do it respectfully.

Option 1:

Type your question/comment in the Chat panel.

Option 2:

Raise your hand in the Participant panel and wait for the host to call on you.

Share wisely:

Avoid common sharing mistakes.

- Don't share until it's your turn.
- If possible, only share one specific application at a time. Avoid sharing your whole screen unless you are comfortable with people seeing everything you have open.
- Double-check that everyone can see what you are sharing.

Exit at the right time:

If it's appropriate to do, let people know you are leaving. If not, try and leave as discretely as possible.

- Make sure you have disconnected from the meeting before you start doing anything else.

4) Follow Up

Tie up loose ends:

Reach out to the host and/or other participants regarding any outstanding issues raised during the meeting.

Do your part:

Is there a task that you need to do now that the meeting has finished? If so, ensure you complete it in a timely fashion.





'Zoom fatigue' describes the tiredness, worry, or burnout associated with overusing virtual communication platforms. Like other experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic, 'Zoom fatigue' is widely prevalent, intense, and completely new.

Our members' mental well-being is important to us and we hope you find the following information helpful.

1) Excessive amounts of close-up eye contact is highly intense

Both the amount of eye contact we engage in on video chats and the size of faces on screens is unnatural.

In a normal meeting, people will variously be looking at the speaker, taking notes or looking elsewhere. But on Zoom calls, everyone is looking at everyone, all the time. A listener is treated non-verbally like a speaker, so even if you don't speak once in a meeting, you are still looking at faces staring at you. The amount of eye contact is dramatically increased.

Another source of stress is that, depending on your monitor size and whether you're using an external monitor, faces on video-conferencing calls can appear too large for comfort.

Solution:

Take Zoom out of the full-screen option, reduce the Zoom window's size relative to the monitor to minimise face size, and where possible, use an external keyboard to allow an increase in the personal space bubble between oneself and the grid.

2) Seeing yourself during video chats constantly in real-time is fatiguing

Most video platforms show a square picture of what you look like on camera during a chat, which is unnatural.

In the real world, if somebody was following you around with a mirror constantly – so that while you were talking to people, making decisions, giving feedback, getting feedback – you were seeing yourself in a mirror, that would just be strange.

Studies show that when you see a reflection of yourself, you are more critical of yourself. Many of us are now seeing ourselves on video chats for many hours every day. It's taxing on us. It's stressful. And there's lots of research showing that there are negative emotional consequences to seeing yourself in a mirror for long periods.

Solution:

Use the "Hide the self-view" button, which you can access by right-clicking on your own photo.

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3) Video chats dramatically reduce our usual mobility

In-person and audio phone conversations allow humans to walk around and move. But with video-conferencing, most cameras have a set field of view, meaning a person has to stay in the same spot. Movement is limited in ways that are not entirely natural.

There's a growing research now that says when people are moving, they're performing better cognitively.

Solution:

Think more about the room you are video-conferencing in, where the camera is positioned, and whether things like an external keyboard can help create distance or flexibility. When appropriate, turn off your video periodically during meetings, to give yourself a brief non-verbal rest.

4) The cognitive load is much higher in video chats

In regular face-to-face interaction, non-verbal communication is quite natural, and each of us naturally makes and interprets gestures and non-verbal cues subconsciously. But, in video chats, we have to work harder to send and receive signals.

Video-conferencing transforms natural human interactions into something that involves a lot of thought. We have to consider many different elements simultaneously, such as making sure we frame our head within the centre of the video, exaggerating our behaviours to demonstrate we agree or disagree with other participants, and correctly interpreting gestures. All of these elements combined can lead to cognitive overload and become tiring.

Solution:

During long stretches of meetings, give yourself an "audio-only" break. You can do this by turning off your camera and taking a break from having to be non-verbally active. You can also take this opportunity to turn your body away from the screen and gain respite after focusing in the same direction for long periods.

Source: <https://news.stanford.edu/2021/02/23/four-causes-zoom-fatigue-solutions/>

