

American Heart Association Scientific Sessions 2022

RECORDING YOUR PRESENTATIONS FROM HOME

Tips to help you become a better presenter at home

Check to make sure you have everything before you get started

- Windows or Mac computer
- Built-in or stand-alone web camera and microphone
- Internet connection
- A source of light
- A presentation recording program (we recommend PowerPoint)
- Headphones (optional)
- Your presentation
- Timer (smartphone is fine)

What to Wear

Wear something comfortable but appropriate for your audience. Dress as you would when presenting in person. Professional attire suggested.

- Do not wear all black or all white.
- Do not wear stripes and avoid busy patterns.
- Solids, pastels and colors are best on camera.

Your Background Matters

Picking out just one important thing to be in the frame, such as a painting or photo, should be enough to say who you are without interfering with the delivery of your message.

- Clear your background of clutter like stacked papers.
- While backgrounds can be clear, use this as an opportunity to showcase your character.
- Avoid sitting in a swivel chair if you will move during your presentation.

Lighting

Avoid sitting with a bright light source such as a window or lamp *behind you*.

If using a natural source of light

- Sit facing a window with a bright, soft light window; if you have any shadows, try placing a lamp on the opposite side to balance out.

If using a lamp

- Take a tall lamp with a soft, diffused light and set it next to the computer on the side of your face you feel is best. The lamp should be in line with and slightly behind the computer, so the light falls nicely on your face.
- Ring lights that attach to desks are the best option. The bigger the ring, the softer the light.

Equipment

Camera

Experiment with your camera to see what lighting works best. All cameras are a little different. Record your introduction a few times and watch it to see the quality — and that will also help you practice for your presentation.

- Both built-in and external webcams will work for recording your presentation.
- Test your camera according to manufacturer's instructions.
- The angle of your camera is important; eye level is best or slightly above looking down.

Microphone

Audio quality is crucial: If the audience can't hear you, they won't stay to listen to your presentation. Microphone and audio levels must be controlled in your computer settings, not the recording program.

- Both built-in and external microphones will work for recording your presentation.
- Test your microphone according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Whether you're on Windows or macOS, you'll want to access the audio device settings and set your default microphone.
- Minimize distractions: Close your door, turn off fans and other room noises, if possible, and silence your phone.

Wi-Fi

You can check your connection speed at <https://www.speedtest.net/> This page will show you your upload and download speeds.

- When possible, use a hardwire (ethernet) connection rather a wireless connection.
- Disconnect other devices from your Wi-Fi to maximize bandwidth.
- Close down other computer programs.

Presentation Deck

Review the [Presentation Accessibility document](#) for more details on how to create a slide deck and presentation.

Windows

If you're on a Windows machine, PowerPoint (2016-2020) is the preferred choice for designing and recording your presentation.

Mac

If you're on a Mac, PowerPoint (2016-2020) is preferred. However, your presentation should be recorded in Zoom.

Storytelling Makes a Difference

- Know what the key takeaway is for your presentation. Does your takeaway match what your audience heard?
- Use simple words that capture people's attention.
- Your cadence and intonation add to the story – use them to your advantage.

One Idea Per Slide

- Increase engagement by keeping it simple. One idea per slide.
- It's better to have more slides with fewer bullet points than fewer slides with more bullets.
- If you need to use bullets, we suggest you try to ...
 - Be concise; Make them short.
 - Use graphs or icons.
 - Use no more than three bullets.

Assume People Can't See Your Deck

- Some people will only hear the audio. Talk clearly, explain visuals on your deck.
- Use headphones to improve audio quality.
- If you have a mic, use it.
- Provide a few seconds' warning before playing a video or sound effect. It may play at a different level than your voice and could be an unpleasant surprise.
- Repeat questions in full before answering them. Name the asker if you can since listeners can't read the comments section.

Don't Forget Your Mobile Audience

Don't make your text too small, too light or too dense.

Presenting

Keep It Simple

- Timing is everything.
- Remove distractions.
- Have a conversation. Don't talk at your audience.
- Be mindful of timing — stick to your allotted time.

Maintaining Eye Contact

- Position your webcam at eye level. Stack books or a box under your laptop if needed.
- Pick a point near the camera to focus your eyes on. It helps to put a piece of tape as a visual reference near the lens.
- If you are using notes, outlines or timers, position them around the camera to avoid breaking eye contact with the camera.

Frame Yourself and Smile

- Smile. People love enthusiasm.
- Place a photo close by of something that makes you smile to help you relax while on camera.
- Communicate with your hands and body.
- Leave some “headroom.” Don’t cut off your forehead.
- If you can, try to include your elbows.

Compliance

- Don’t use trade names in your presentation and recording.
- Inform the audience when discussing unapproved indications.

Rehearse the Content

Practice. Practice. Practice.

- Record and review.
- Does your audio track to the visuals on your slides?
- Practice without slides so story resonates.
- Use facial expressions and hand gestures as appropriate.
- Present to a person and ask them what one thing they learned – does it match your key message?
- Have water available; practice taking a drink while on camera.

Rehearse the Flow

Do a Tech Run

- Record yourself to see how you are framed in the screen. Check that smile.
- Confirm that lighting works, so people can see your face and expressions.
- Make sure audio is clear and limit background noise.
- View your presentation from laptop. Tablet. Phone. Do your visuals work for all formats?
- Is your background appropriate for your audience and your message?