

Top 10 Tips to Prepare for a Virtual Interview

Virtual Interview General Tips- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aevCwBCYWtY&t=2s>

Lesson #1

1. Test Your Technology

Avoid a potential technical glitch by testing your equipment before the call. If your video conferencing software produces grainy visuals or muffled audio, it might be time to invest in a webcam or microphone. Don't give the hiring manager a reason to question your technical know-how. On the day of, test your equipment and internet connection again.

Pro Question: Is it OK to wear headphones during a Skype interview?

Yes. In fact, you should use one if it allows you to hear the interviewer better or if it has a microphone that's clearer than your computer's built-in mic.

Check out this video for more tips on preparing your technology for your virtual interview!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2VnJOw5Cd0>

Pro Tip: Check out these top 10 traits employers are looking for in employees.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/ceb-identifies-anatomy-of-the-new-high-performer-184251971.html>

Do you have these traits? If so, make sure to include them in your resume, and weave them into your interview!

2. Update Your Login Information

You also don't want to give the hiring manager a reason to question your professionalism. In today's virtual world, your email address or virtual platform username is often your first impression. Meaning, that once-hilarious nickname you still virtually go by isn't as funny to prospective employers. Keep your email address simple. Try different combinations of your first, middle, and last name, or leverage industry keywords if stuck. Avoid symbols and the numbers one and zero, which look like letters depending on the font and can cause confusion during outreach.

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Lesson #2

3. Dress for Success

Projecting professionalism goes beyond your email address and username.

Dress for a virtual interview the same way you would for an in-person **interview**. Professional clothing will show you're serious about the position, but there are personal benefits, as well: Studies show that people feel "most authoritative, trustworthy, and competent when wearing formal business attire." **Check out this video to learn what COLORS you should wear for your interview** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0fM8sCZZes>

If you're unsure **what attire** the situation calls for, ask the human resources professional what is appropriate. Avoid wearing bright or distracting colors, or jewelry that is distracting. A dark blue or black suit is professional for an **interview**, but feel free to **wear other colors** and shades. For example, many shades of blue—royal, navy, sky blue—look great on video, but grey and green can work too. (Reds, yellow, orange, and pink don't look **good** on video.). Also, avoid any overpowering patterns or flashy accessories so as not to divert the employer's attention. You should be the focus of the interview, not your wardrobe."

Pro Tip: *Check out this article to learn more about planning what to wear for your virtual interview!* <https://wistia.com/learn/production/wearing-color-camera>

4. Create a Set/Backdrop

The color of your backdrop can also help determine what you should wear. If possible, sit in front of a blank background, so that you remain the focal point. If your house is void of empty walls, set up in your home office or living room—whichever area looks the most businesslike. Just make sure the space is clean. The messier the background, the harder it is to convince a hiring manager of how detail-oriented and organized you are. Don't forget to check your lighting. Sitting near a window works best. The trick is to keep the light in front of you.

Watch this video for more tips! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQwanxQmFnc>

Pro Tip: *If you will be using a virtual platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom, familiarize yourself with the "Change Background" feature which allows you to blur your background! You can also download virtual backdrops for FREE! Check out this site* <https://www.elitedaily.com/p/8-zoom-office-backgrounds-to-make-your-video-calls-look-professional-22643940>

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Lesson #3

5. Monitor Your Body Language

That firm handshake and enthusiasm you typically greet employers with don't translate via video. During a virtual interview, the main way to convey confidence is through your body language. Sit up straight, smile, and keep the camera at eye level to avoid looking up or down.

Make sure you do not sit in a Swivel Chair- your nerves will show through as you move!

Watch this video for some great tips! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCWVi5pAa30>

It's been shown that employers are more likely to remember what you said if you maintain eye contact, so stay focused, not on the screen image of the employer, but on the **camera itself!** Another trick to maintaining eye contact is writing your talking points on Post-it notes.

For more tips watch this video! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taHSZEhTzPc>

Pro Tip: Place a Post-it note directly above the camera lens with a 😊 to remind you to look at the lens and to SMILE!

6. Rid Yourself of Distractions

Virtual interviews come with their own slew of distractions. Turn off the TV, silence your cell phone, and close the window to muffle any honking horns or blaring sirens. Plan for someone to watch your children and your pets! While you can't plan for every distraction—the more prepared you can be, the better.

For more tips watch this video! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TL3yi3e9nkl>

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Lesson #4

7. Practice Answers to Common Interview Questions

- You want to appear focused and ready to answer any questions without the help of the internet. Research the company ahead of time and jot down notes for easy reference.

- Print out a copy of your resume, so that you don't forget key talking points.

Be prepared to “Walk the interviewer through your resume” watch this video for tips on how to do that! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N34TNo81ml>

Pro Tip: Check out the **Resume Writing 101 lesson** to learn more about the “Balanced Resume” that is currently the most preferred style my HR recruiters!

There's no way to know exactly what a hiring manager will ask, but there are questions that you can prepare for, such as:

- **Why Are You Leaving Your Job?** This is not the time to criticize your current employer. Focus instead on where you want to take your career and the positives of the role you're interviewing for—particularly the skills listed in the job description that you want to acquire. **Look at this “Push vs Pull Technique” to answer this question!**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxDI2Pca8gE>
- **What Are Your Salary Requirements?** *(Click on the underlined text to jump to related web sites)* Negotiating your salary requires preparation. Use sites like Glassdoor, PayScale, and Salary.com to find the average wage for the position, and then match that number against your education, experience, and location to determine a salary range you're comfortable with. It's always easier to negotiate down, so if asked for your desired pay, respond with the highest number. If the number isn't feasible, but you really want the job, ask what flexibility there is in terms of benefits, such as healthcare, vacation time, retirement, or professional development opportunities.
For tips on how to answer this questions watch this video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUAcoetDqH4>
- **What Are Your Weaknesses?** Employers want an authentic answer here, not, “I work too hard.” The key is to share a negative, but explain how you turned it into a positive. For example, perhaps you're not strong at delegating tasks, opting instead to tackle the work yourself. Say that, but also describe the processes you've put in place to make you a more effective leader and help you avoid micro-managing projects.
For tips on how to answer this questions watch this video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubE405nVkZq>
- **Why Should We Hire You?** This question is an intimidating one but enables you to summarize your experience and emphasize the unique strengths you bring to the role and the results you've already proven you can deliver.

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For tips on how to answer these questions watch this video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=of5JSi_Im9M

For each of these common interview questions below, click on the accompanying video link and watch professional career coaches give examples of how to best answer the question. Take time to consider your responses to these questions if asked in a future interview.

- **Tell me about yourself?**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmFuWmzeiDs>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hlyAeQbUnU>
- **Why are you interested in this role?**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GF-vapwP8tc>
- **What do you know about our company?**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x61vgl-2Yvs>
- **What do you consider to be your biggest professional achievement?**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fGI96GY3H0>
- **Where do you see yourself in five years?**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tt4TF1wqz9U>
- **Tell me about a challenge at work and how you dealt with it?**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7qvWrbXKG8>
- **What is your expected salary?**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-mNcEctZQY>

Pro Tip: Post-It Note Placement Jot down high-level notes of your responses to these questions so that you feel more prepared if the interviewer does pose any of those questions. Avoid memorizing your responses; you want the conversation to flow naturally, not feel forced or rehearsed.

8. Be Prepared to ASK Questions

You should also be prepared to answer, “Do you have any questions for me?”

- What does a typical day in the life of this role look like?
- What are the company’s goals this quarter?
- How would you describe the ideal candidate for this position?
- Where does this role sit in the organization, and what other groups will I be working with?
- Can you walk me through the next steps of the hiring process

Check out this video for tips on preparing questions for your future employer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbA5rzpSWLM>

Pro Tip: Check out this link for interview questions you may want to ask an employer

<https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/three-great-questions-to-ask-in-an-interview>

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DON'T ASK THESE QUESTIONS! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cb74Bw2jAA>

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Lesson #5

9. Make a Connection

You never know how many interviews a company may conduct for a position. You might be at the end of a long list of people the hiring manager spoke to that day. This is why it's important to make a connection.

Watch this video for tips on how to be remembered in your next interview!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBLmba3PXwc>

Don't be afraid to have a short aside about a common interest. It's not easy to connect with everyone, but it's a crucial part of a virtual interview. You want the interviewer to be able to remember a *personal story you told or a common interest you share*. This is the best way to prevent yourself from blending in with the other applicants

Pro Tip: *How can you integrate your experiences with SkillsUSA, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Community Service, or other related college experiences into your interview to showcase your leadership and teamwork skills?*

10. Immediately Follow Up

Within 24 hours of the interview, send an individual thank you email to everyone you met. Not only will it show you value their time, but it provides you the opportunity to resell yourself and express the unique strengths you bring to the role, or share any talking points you forgot to address.

If there was something specific you bonded over, mention that in the email so you stay top of mind. Or if an interviewer brought up a particular business challenge, use the follow-up as a way to propose potential solutions. Just keep the email concise; you want your note to leave a lasting impression, not immediately end up in the trash.

Pro Tip: *Check out this link for more ideas on how to properly follow up after a virtual interview*
<https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/how-to-follow-up-after-interview/>

PREPARATION IS KEY

Ultimately, the key to acing a virtual interview is proper preparation. From ensuring your technology is working to conducting research before the meeting, sitting down at your computer poised and ready for any and all questions will help set you apart from other applicants.