SHURE

CONFERENCE CALL
BEST PRACTICES

A key reason why virtual meetings are so tiring is because it's very hard work for your brain to listen to and process poor sound. Concentration wavers if it's difficult to hear what the others are saying. You can only stay focused for a short while before meeting fatigue sets in.

Here are a few things you need to keep in mind to ensure your voice counts and to make the experience better for everyone.

❯ BEFORE THE CALL

FIND A QUIET PLACE

Avoid noisy environments. Settling in a quiet room not only helps you but also everyone else to stay focused.

Remember to also **turn off notifications** on your mobile phone and other devices.

If you get distracted easily, get yourself some good quality noise cancelling headphones or sound isolating earphones to tune out background noises in your room.

USE THE RIGHT GEAR

Don't rely on your built-in laptop microphone. It's omnidirectional, which means it captures all the noise in the room that can overpower your voice.

External USB microphones that sit on your desktop are ideal because they are designed to directly pick up your voice and can also be pulled closer so you don't have to lean in.

Earphones or headphones with an integrated microphone are another good option as they are much closer to your mouth by design.

TEST YOUR SETUP

Check your equipment and **do a test run well before** the meeting starts.

- Update your conferencing software. You don't want an unexpected update during your call.
- Use a wired connection rather than Wi-Fi to avoid dropouts.
- Make sure that external devices like microphone, speakers, and camera are configured correctly and work.
- Check that the battery on your wireless or Bluetooth® device is fully charged.

🎤 DURING THE CALL

MUTE YOURSELF

If you're not talking, mute yourself to limit background noise for everyone else on the call, and to avoid the risk of causing an echo.

Don't be shy to tell others to mute their mics too. It only helps when everyone does it.

When it's your turn to speak again, **don't forget to unmute.**

SPEAK UP

Not everyone on the call has the same technical setup. You want to sound loud and clear to all, so make sure to speak up and, more importantly, **speak into your microphone**.

Note: If you're using wired earphones or headphones, avoid unnecessary movement so you don't get noise from the mic brushing against your shirt. You can also consider changing to a Bluetooth device.

DON'T OVERTALK

Letting other people finish what they have to say isn't only a matter of good manners. Due to slow connections and lags, full duplex communication may not be possible, so **be patient and don't interrupt.**

Also, when you speak for a longer period of time, **remember to pause** for a few seconds to give others a chance to catch up and respond.

POOR MEETING AUDIO
EXPLAINED

What makes conference call audio so bad, and how to fix it?

Let's get the foundations right on why audio sometimes is so poor in a virtual meeting and what to do about it, especially when working from home.

🔊 COMMON AUDIO ISSUES

BACKGROUND NOISE

Noisy pets, people talking in the next room, busy traffic outside your window... these are pretty obvious causes for distracting background noise.

Conferencing software usually offers audio processing that helps to reduce some static noises like HVAC hum but can't fix it all, especially when multiple people speak at the same time.

Therefore, make sure to **remain muted** when you're not talking.

VOICE LEVELS

Naturally, all of us speak in a different manner, some being more soft-spoken while others have booming voices.

Professional audio equipment can sometimes be tuned to boost and enhance your speech, however not everyone has this kind of gear.

So, two things to keep in mind if you're a soft talker: **Speak up and speak into your microphone**, so your voice comes through more clearly.

FAR AWAY SOUND

The reason why you may sound distant, tinny or hollow is because your microphone picks up more background noise than voice. Keep in mind: A microphone can only capture sound, it can't automatically reach out to you or make your voice louder.

To increase your "presence", it's important that you're **close to the mic** to get a stronger, more direct (voice) signal.

- **Lean in** to speak directly into your laptop mic *(maybe not so comfortable and professional?)* or better yet...
- **Get dedicated audio gear** such as an external USB microphone, or ear/headphones with an integrated microphone. They are a lot more directional and can prioritize your voice over ambient sound.

AUDIO CUTS OUT

If you notice that the audio drops out, it's usually a connection or interference issue.

- Check your Wi-Fi, or better, go with a **wired connection** from the beginning.
- If you're using external audio devices, make sure it's all **properly plugged in.**
- When using Bluetooth devices, make sure the battery is **fully charged**. If they come with an audio cable, use that instead to get a wired connection.

ECHO, ECHO, ECHO...

An echo is created by other people on the call when they play your voice via their speaker, into their own microphone and send it back to you.

When you hear yourself speaking on the other end, ask the people on the call to **mute their microphone** or **put on headphones.**

➕ Learn more at **www.shure.com/homeoffice**

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