

VIRTUAL HOST MEETING TIPS

1. Select the video conferencing or teleconferencing site that will work best for you and your group. Following are several options. Simply click on the underlined links to go to the site.
 - a. Recommended sites:
 - **Zoom:** is a good option and it is easy to use. [They offer a free option](#) where you can **host up to 100 participants on a video call** and they have an [app you can download for your ipad and your phone](#). The only drawback is that for the **free option you can only host a video meeting for 40 minutes**. If you are okay with the time limit then this is a really good option.
 - **Cisco Webex Meetings:** this is also a good, free solution. You would have to sign up for an account, but [they have a free plan](#) that lets you **host video meetings for up to 100 participants**.
 - **Skype:** has been around for a long time and it works, but it is not the easiest to use. You would need to have a Skype account and they also have [apps for your ipad and iphone](#). If you would like to give it a try, [here is a how to article for doing a voice or video call](#). **Skype has a limit of 25 participants** for a group video call.
 - **Google Hangouts:** is a good option for **a group that has no more than 10 members for a video meeting**. You would need a gmail account to start a Hangout but it is pretty easy to use and you can launch it from a Chrome browser. [Here is a how to article](#) to get you started if you wanted to try it out.
 - **FreeConferenceCall.Com:** this is a great site, if you have groups members that do not have the technology required to use the other sites or you want to keep it simple and connect by phone. You can set-up a free account for up to 1,000 people. Click on the link <https://www.freeconferencecall.com/> to learn more about this option.
 - b. Here are a couple of other options to consider:
 - **Apple's Facetime:** you can do a group video call on Apple's native Facetime app and you can add up to 31 participants in the call. **The key here is that everyone would need to have some kind of Apple device** (an iphone, ipad, or macbook, etc.) to be a part of the video call. Here is a [how to article to get you started](#) if you wanted to consider this option.
 - **Google Duo:** this is Google's own version of Facetime and **it works pretty well for groups that have no more than 8 members per video call**. Participants would need the Google Duo app (they have Android and Apple versions). [Here is a how to article](#) if you are interested in trying it.

2. Choose to sit in an area where you have more light in front of you than you do behind you. This will keep you from being “in the shadow” when your members view you on their screen.
3. Do a test meeting with a least one other person to be sure you are comfortable with the different options within the meeting setup you are using. You will want to experiment with using headphones with a microphone versus speaker settings on your device, and phone versus computer to determine the best sound quality. As the group host, if possible use a device such as a computer where you will be able to see your group members clearly.
4. To prevent audio feedback, ask group members to wear headphones or earbuds.
5. Have group members to politely mute themselves when they are not talking. This will help in eliminating background noise. Members can simply unmute when they are ready to contribute.
6. Encourage your group members to find a place in their home that is relatively quiet and distraction-free for your group meeting. Either turn off or mute cell phones that are not being used for the meeting. On a computer, close windows and programs that are not used during the meeting.
7. If group members have younger children, consider meeting later in the evening after the children have gone to bed. This way parents can give their attention to their children at bedtime then join the meeting afterwards.