1. **Get the Lighting Right:** Make sure you have good *front* light—meaning the light shines brightly on your face. If your back is to a window, close the shades. Pay attention to your lighting (and don’t forget this can change throughout the day). Too much light from behind leaves you featureless, so be sure to have good even lighting from the front.

2. **Choose the Right Background:** Try to use a background that enhances your professional image and is aligned with your message. Avoid a cluttered background or anything that can be distracting. Your background can either add to your professional presence or detract from it. What you think of as an innocuous background can be extremely distracting to your audience.

3. **Minimize Distractions... And Unnecessary Tabs:** Turn off your notifications. All of them. MacOS has a Do Not Disturb mode that is useful. Pets can be a big distraction, and you may want to isolate yourself from them. Only share the minimum necessary applications; close any tabs that you don’t need for the presentation.

4. **Know the Technology:** Nothing kills a presentation faster than a presenter who fumbles with the technology. This is a performance, so make sure you know how to make it work. You will be given as many dry runs as you feel are necessary to feel comfortable with the platform features. You will have assistance with polling questions and fielding audience questions.

**Points to take into consideration:**

- Check your bandwidth if you have any reason to suspect it’s low. Do not share bandwidth with others in your household on presentation day.
- Your computer should be hardwired rather than working from Wi-Fi. Please hardwire into your router or modem.
- Check your sound. Use headsets with embedded microphones. If you don’t have this equipment, let us know.
- Make sure you practice with the same technical set up (computer and internet connection) that you will use when you deliver the presentation.
- Don’t forget to plug your computer in!
- Make sure you are close to a phone if you need to “dial in” to the live presentation for some reason.
5. **Play to the Camera:** When you are the one speaking, **look directly into your computer’s camera**, not on the screen or at the other participants. This takes some practice, but it makes the viewer feel as if you are looking right at them. Some presenters turn off their self-view so that they aren’t distracted by their own image. **Put the camera at eye level.** Try not to have your camera too far above or below you. If it’s too low, then you run the risk of creating a double chin. A camera too high makes it difficult to maintain eye contact, as you may find your gaze dropping as you speak. If you are part of a panel or a team of presenters, make sure you are aware of when your camera is on. If you are not speaking but your camera is on, make sure you look like you are paying attention! Powerful presenters understand the importance of making eye contact with their audience, so this means you must simulate the same effect virtually.

6. **Get Close (But Not Too Close).** You want the camera to frame your face, neck, and shoulders. People are drawn to faces, so you don’t want to lose that connection by being too far away, but you also don’t want your face to take over the whole screen like a dismembered head because, well, that looks weird. Practice your positioning and distance.

7. **Stand Up:** If possible, use a standing desk or position your laptop so you can stand at eye level with your computer. Standing up provides a higher energy level and forces us to put our body in a more presentation-like mode. If you have to sit, lean forward as you would if you were presenting at a real meeting or as if you were a TV news anchor. Avoid slouching away from the camera, as that sends a signal that you are disconnected from the audience.

8. **Be Animated:** Just like in a live presentation, you want to present with a little energy and animation. Too slow or too monotone in your voice makes it easy for folks to disengage and tune out. Keeping people engaged virtually requires you to actually be engaging.

9. **Pace Yourself:** Without real-time visual audience feedback cues, getting the pacing right can be difficult. Even though you want to infuse some animation and energy into your presentation don’t pump up the speed too much. If you tend to be a fast talker in real life, practice slowing down just a bit. If you’re a slow talker, you may want to speed up just a bit. **We ask that all presenters stay on time!**

10. **Do A Sound Check:** If your sound is garbled, people will tune out. While people may forgive less than perfect video, if they can’t clearly hear you, they will leave. Make sure your sound emits clearly. Sometimes headphones or external microphones work better than the computer audio, sometimes not. Every platform is different, so make sure your sound quality is excellent every time.
11. **Plug into Your Modem:** If possible, plug your computer directly into your modem using an Ethernet cable. This will give you the strongest signal and most stable internet connection. The last thing you want to happen during your presentation is to have a weak or unstable internet signal.

12. **Incorporate Redundant Systems.** If you are using slides, make them visually appealing. Use high-quality graphics and limit the amount of text on each slide. It’s your job as presenter to deliver the content. The slides are meant to enhance your spoken words, not replace them. Always assume that you need to make your text bigger. Text should be at least 24 pt. Check your text color and font size to make sure it is easily readable. And, if you have an opportunity to add a little personality, all the better!

13. **Evaluate and Enhance:** If possible, record the session and take the time to play it back and look for areas that worked well and areas that you might want to improve upon. Great presenters, whether virtual or in person, understand the value of continually honing their craft. Be sure to acknowledge your strengths as well as your areas of improvement.

14. **Be Yourself and Have Fun:** Again, just like in face-to-face presentations, audiences connect to authenticity, so be yourself! Let your personality show through. Have fun. If you look like you’re enjoying the presentation so will others. Research shows that happy people retain information better than bored or disinterested people, so model the energy that you want to create. The audience takes its cue from you.

Remember, whether you are presenting in-person or virtually, all presentations are performances. And all performances are in service to your audience. Their time is valuable, so honor that time by delivering the best presentation you can. No matter what kind of presentation you are giving, you must find ways to create authentic audience connection and value.