

Use Virtual Backgrounds on Zoom Meetings

Cove Apple Club — May 27, 2020

You can spiff up your Zoom virtual meetings by enabling a “virtual background.” It substitutes a photo or video of your choosing into the view your meeting participants have of you, so they will see your virtual background behind you instead of your living room or basement!

Virtual background photos are available for Zoom users on nearly any platform or vintage of computer. To use a video as a virtual background, you’ll need a fairly recent Mac or iPhone.

Here’s how to set up virtual backgrounds on your Mac:

1. Open the Zoom app on your Mac
2. From the **zoom.us** menu in the toolbar, choose Preferences, or type Cmd-, (hold down the Command key while typing the comma character)
3. In the Settings sidebar, click on Virtual Background
4. Use the dialog to select a virtual background from those shown in the Zoom app.
5. To choose a photo or video of your own, click the small “+” icon just to the right of the “Choose Virtual Background” label in the dialog, then select “Add Image” or “Add Video”

Tips to make your Zoom meeting video look their best:

- Position your webcam at eye level. If you’re using a Mac laptop, elevate the laptop off the table or desk so that the webcam is not “looking up” at your face.
- Make sure your face is well-lit. Position your setup near a window with daylight if possible to allow natural light to light the room and your face. At night or on cloudy days, use a table or floor lamp positioned *behind* your computer or laptop to throw light onto your face.
- Have some medium-level lighting behind you to light up your background. You don’t want to look like you’re in a cave!
- If you’re using an iPhone or iPad, do not hold the device during the meeting. Place it on a table or desk and prop it up to hold it steady and frame the shot properly. Keeping your device stable provides a much smoother and higher-quality video.

Where to find cool, free virtual background images and videos:

- **BBC’s “Empty Sets”** — dozens of virtual background images from famous BBC shows: https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/empty_sets_collection/zfvy382
- **[ZoomerBackgrounds.com](#)** — artwork, photos, pop culture
- **[pixabay.com](#)** — Thousands of royalty-free photos
- **[unsplash.com](#)** — Thousands of royalty-free photos
- More help on using virtual sets in Zoom Help: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background>

Shopping with iPhone and A Face Covering

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Because we are considerate, responsible citizens and neighbors to those we meet when shopping, we wear face coverings during this pandemic crisis. They keep us safe, they keep others safe, and they signal to those we encounter that we care about their safety and health.

But, if you use your iPhone and the Notes app to refer to your shopping list while you shop, you know it's a hassle to have to unlock your iPhone while wearing a face covering. The iPhone locks automatically while you shop, and it's not fun to have to enter your passcode 20 times during your shopping visit to access your list in the Notes app.

Here's how to set up your iPhone for shopping while wearing a face covering:

1. Enter your shopping list into the Notes app on your Mac or iPhone as usual
2. Before you get out of the car at the grocery store, do this:
 - a. Open the Settings app on your iPhone
 - b. In Settings, tap Accessibility, then scroll all the way down and tap Guided Access
 - c. In Guided Access, tap the On/Off slider to turn Guided Access on
 - d. Quit Settings
 - e. Open Notes
 - f. Open your shopping list note
 - g. On iPhone X or newer, triple-click the right side button on your iPhone. On iPhone 8 or older, triple-click the Home button. Triple-click means clicking and releasing the lock button three times quickly.
 - h. Enter a passcode as directed. This will be the passcode you will use to turn Guided Access off when you're done shopping.
 - i. Now put on your face covering and start shopping!
3. With Guided Access on, your iPhone will lock after a screen timeout as usual. But once it is locked, you can unlock it instantly and resume use of the Notes app (or any other single app you choose, such as Evernote) without Face ID or an unlock passcode slowing you down!
4. Once you're done shopping and you've removed your face covering, triple-click the side button or home button again, then enter the passcode you entered to turn on Guided Access. Your iPhone is back to its normal configuration.

To read more about Guided Access, [**click here**](#).