

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>