How to Ace a Zoom Interview

Bernard T. Lee, MD, MBA, MPH

Chief, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
Vice Chair of Finance, Department of Surgery
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Professor of Surgery
Harvard Medical School
Disclosures

• Editor – Encyclopedia of Flaps
• Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Reconstructive Microsurgery
Interview Skills

• Most of you have good interview skills (college, medical school, etc)
• A residency interview offer means you are a strong candidate...on paper
• Rank list decisions heavily weighted towards the interview
Interview Skills (Live)

• Basic advice:
  • Prepare! Explain why you are interested in plastic surgery
  • Maintain eye contact
  • Exhibit good posture
  • Look professional

All are true for a virtual interview
Zoom Interview

• Platform is clunky
• Difficult to have back and forth conversation
• Tendency for people to talk over each other or awkward pauses
• Potential for zoombombing?
Tips for Success

- **Tip #1: Control your environment**
  - Plan your interview location
  - Be aware of your appearance
  - Be aware of background and lighting
Tip #1: Control Your Environment

- Plan your interview location
- How you present yourself is based on this short interaction
- Do NOT have a messy bed in the background
- Do NOT have food, drinks, clothes, other people, pets
- Keep your cell phone out of view and off
Zoombomb?

Mom can’t stop laughing after accidentally flashing daughter’s Zoom class

By Hannah Sparks

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Facebook
Interview Appearance

- Keep it professional, i.e. business attire
- Dark clothing
- Go for solid colors
- NO patterns – hard for the video to display well
- A little bit of color is ok
Background

• Keep it simple, avoid clutter
• White blank wall is a little creepy, but ok
• Ideally one piece of art
• Sit about 3 feet in front of wall

• In general, avoid virtual backgrounds (can be distracting)
Lighting

- Avoid backlighting (i.e. window behind you)
- Ideally have windows or lights in front of you
- Can set up two lights (avoid shadows)
- Ring light
Lighting
Lighting and Camera Angle

- Make sure your camera is at same level as your eyes or higher
- Consider a laptop stand
- Or ring light with phone holder
Lighting and Camera Angle

Typical Webcam Set-up
Not Optimal
- Candidate looking down
- Webcam too low
- No flattering lighting

[Images showing examples of poor and good webcam setups]
Lighting and Camera Angle
Tip #2: Plan your conversation

- Hit your high points
- Have visual reminders (post it notes)
- Have a good question to ask about the institution
  - Ask about direction of dept, residency
- Do NOT ask about salary, time off
Tip #3: Test your technology

• Download software and practice
• Make sure you have enough wifi bandwidth (use internet speed test)
• Consider back up plan (FaceTime, etc)
Tip #3: Test your technology

• Zoom can record so you watch yourself in a simulation

• Practice looking at the camera while you talk – can be difficult if camera is not close to screen

• Use a camera with the highest quality (phone vs laptop)
Tip #3: Test your technology

- Webcams tend to be wide angle
- Don’t get too close to the camera otherwise face will get distorted (wide)
Tip #3: Test your technology

- Headphones or not?
  - Depends on your source microphone (laptop vs phone)
  - Can use an external microphone
  - Or use ear buds, NOT over ear (look like you work at a call center)
Summary

• Tip #1: Control your environment
• Tip #2: Plan your conversation
• Tip #3: Test your technology

• Relax… remember that your interviewers are also virtual interview amateurs