

Zap interview audio woes!



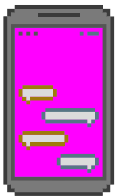
- Environment:** Is your interviewee in a good space – A/C off, windows closed, dogs fed, fridge unplugged, no one vacuuming, dampened/furnished room?
- Good mic:** Test their headset mics or earbuds vs holding the phone, because the sound quality from those can change from day to day.
- Phone/mic placement:** If they're using a phone, have them hold it like a phone. If the audio is still popping, tell them to rotate the phone so the mouthpiece is below the chin/jawline. Avoid the "pizza slice" position, because people generally end up holding the phone too close to their mouth. Professional microphones can be used close up, to get the fullness of the person's voice and avoid room reverberations. Aim at the corner of their mouth to avoid plives.



- How are they listening?** Use over-ear headphones whenever possible, like for Zoom and Skype. Never use speakerphone!
- Phoner syncs:** Use two phones – one to record and the other to connect. This is easiest to do with just the phones, no headset or earbuds. But don't let the interviewee just throw the recording phone down on the desk. Have them hold one phone on each ear for that "Princess Leia" vibe. As producers say, "If you feel like you look really silly, you're probably doing it right."



- Turn video off:** When using Zoom, Skype, etc.
- Background noises:** Listen for rustling clothing, finger tapping, desk bumps, chairs squeaking and noisy jewelry. Make sure the source maintains proper distance from the mic, and keeps it in position, as much as possible while staying comfortable. If they use earbuds, no sharing with a neighbor; have them keep both earbuds in both ears to avoid dangling the mic side.



- Biological noises:** Make sure your interviewee is fed (no tummy rumbles!) and has some water on hand, and maybe a box of apple juice for mouth clicks.
- Make a test call/recording:** For Zoom calls, make sure you record a separate audio file for each participant.
- Test Wi-Fi and cell:** Try different combinations if you're having trouble, as well as Wi-Fi Assist or Adaptive Wi-Fi, depending on whether they're on an iPhone or Android.



- Notifications:** Remind them to turn off alerts and ringing on all their devices (or don't be afraid to re-take an answer). Engage "Do Not Disturb." Have them lock their phone to avoid disconnecting.

- Room tone:** After the interview, pause and have a moment of silence as you continue recording. Do a crossword, or just relax.

