

## 4 tips for job-seeking resident physicians to nail Zoom interviews

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For physician residents and fellows looking for employment, video interviews are a new normal given the continued for physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Conveying your interest in the opportunity and attention to your interviewers is more difficult in a virtual setting—yet vital, according to Michael Belkin, a divisional vice president at the physician recruiting firm Merritt Hawkins.

“Whether it’s fair or not, everybody assumes that your first impression is going to be your best self,” he said. “Be prepared. Be present. Have a notepad and pen and some questions to ask. Show that you’ve done your homework the same way you would face to face.”

Belkin offered a few more tips for residents and fellows preparing for virtual interviews.

### Dress the part

Donning more formal attire is unlikely to be held against you, Belkin said.

“You can always take a jacket off or tie off,” he said. “So, my advice is dress for success. Be professional. If you find your audience is more relaxed than you are, you can always say ‘I appear to be overdressed for the setting’ and ask if you can take your jacket off. It’s impossible to go back and say, ‘I noticed that I’m underdressed let me go grab my jacket and tie.’”

### Focus on your surroundings

At this point, video calls are fairly standard. While you may not worry about lighting or your background during a Zoom happy hour, you should pay attention to those elements during a virtual

interview.

“It’s important your space is set up correctly,” Belkin said. “Be mindful of what’s on camera behind you. Be mindful of lighting. If I have a light source behind my laptop that shines on me.

Eye contact also is important.

“You want to look at the camera as much as you can and not the screen. When you look at the screen you are actually looking down to the people you are interacting with.”

## Prepare for numerous interactions

Video interviews have offered employers a number of advantages. Among them: With fewer scheduling conflicts—due to interviewers not having to be physically present—more people can participate in the process.

“The challenge in a video interview setting is that each person you speak with is a first impression,” Belkin said. “It’s hard and unfair. It can get tiring as well. You have to try to keep your energy up.”

## Check your tech

It’s not a bad idea to do a test run on the video interview platform in advance.

“We encourage our clients to do test runs with candidates,” Belkin said. “It would be very disruptive to not be able to log in to an interview. Do as much as you can to check on your equipment beforehand. You may want to call the interviewer to confirm [your technology works]. It would really show the client a level of maturity and seriousness about the process if you are proactive about that.”

The AMA has curated a selection of resources to assist residents, medical students and faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic to help manage the shifting timelines, cancellations and adjustments to testing, rotations and other events at this time.