

Want to Sound Good on Video?

What equipment do you need for good sound for telehealth? Read below for equipment recommendations and setup recommendations.

We're music therapists, so it's essential that we consider sound quality when providing telehealth or remote music services. The internal microphone may be sufficient for a while, but you may also consider purchasing a microphone or using an interface with a microphone you already have.

Purchasing options for external microphones:

1. If you already have a quality microphone, look for a USB audio interface that offers XLR connection. This is an intermediate box between the computer and mic that can transform the microphone input into something the computer can recognize. It will have one or more standard microphone inputs and knobs to control gain of input and volume of output. A great starter product would be the **Behringer U-Phoria UM2 USB Audio Interface** (\$48 w/ free ship from sweetwater.com)
2. If you don't already have a microphone, invest in a podcasting microphone. This will be a microphone that has a USB cord coming off of it, and the gain/volume controls will be in your computer's audio settings. This is the simpler option but provides less control. A decent and already widely used starting mic is the **Snowball USB mic from Blue Microphones**. [Here's a post explaining how to use a Snowball mic with an iPad.](#)
3. An inexpensive option is to purchase a lavalier mic. These plug into the headphone input on your computer or tablet. They pick up your voice well, but not other instruments. You also can't listen through headphones while using one of these, since the headphone input is occupied.

How to set up your microphone and test audio:

With either option, you will want to figure out how to control your microphone gain and check with monitors to ensure that you're at the right volume before starting your next meeting. Plugging your earbuds into the computer/interface is a good way to monitor volume.

With a podcasting microphone:

1. On your computer/interface, set your usb mic to the preferred input and keep the computer speakers as the output.
2. Use an earbud to hear the client or otherwise keep your computer speakers very low so they can't hear themselves on their end (feedback - no bueno).

With an interface:

1. It will often set itself as the primary audio device, but if not, switch it to be the preferred audio input AND output through system settings.
2. You'll have to use the interface's headphone output jack or connect it to a speaker to act as a monitor.

For either microphone:

1. You'll want your mic turned up just under the point where it "peaks" at your loudest notes, which is when the noise sounds kind of fuzzy and overloaded.
2. If someone can't hear you on the receiving end, try having them turn up the volume on their speakers, only turning up your own gain (carefully) as a last resort, as it can easily sacrifice the sound quality for volume.

Test with a colleague first!

1. Check sound quality
2. Play with the time lag
3. Try various music experiences - improvisation, singing together, movement to music - notice your experience of the music and ask them to notice as well

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