LAURA HOW
COUNSELLING & GUIDANCE

RECORDING WITH LAURA HOW

RECORDING SETUP GUIDE

This guide covers the basics of getting a clean, consistent look and sound when we record together. It takes about five minutes to set up and makes a big difference to the finished product.



FOR CLEAR AUDIO, CONSISTENT FRAMING AND FLATTERING LIGHT

THREE THINGS, KEPT SEPARATE

The goal is to separate three things. Each one has its own control.

01	02	03
FRAMING	**SOUND QUALITY**	**IMAGE QUALITY**
is controlled by **camera distance**	is controlled by **mic distance**	is controlled by **light direction**

THE GOLDEN RULE DO NOT TRY TO FIX ONE BY BREAKING ANOTHER.

1. MIC PLACEMENT

RULE THE MIC STAYS CLOSE TO YOUR MOUTH, ALWAYS.

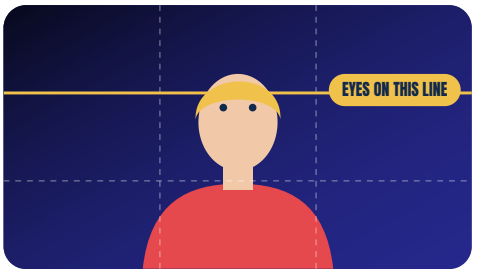
- Put the mic on the desk or a small stand.
- Distance from mouth: **15–25 cm (6–10 inches)**.
- Angle it towards your mouth, not straight up or away.
- Seeing a mic is fine. Bad audio is not.
- Do not move your chair back to fix the camera framing. The mic must stay close.

STEP TWO

CAMERA PLACEMENT

RULE MOVE THE CAMERA, NOT YOUR BODY.

- Place the laptop or external webcam at the far end of the table, centred.
- Camera height: at eye level or slightly above.
- Distance: far enough back to frame you from low torso to just above your head.
- Your chair stays where it is.
- If the shot is too tight or too wide, move the camera, not yourself.



Eyes on the top third of the frame. Not in the middle, not at the very top.

QUICK CHECK Your eyes should sit roughly in the top third of the frame, not in the middle and not at the very top.

3. LIGHT SOURCE

You have two good options:

OPTION A: WINDOW LIGHT

IF YOU HAVE NO LAMP

- Sit facing the window, not with the window behind you.
- The window should be in front of you, near the camera position.
- Close curtains slightly if the light is harsh.

OPTION B: LED LAMP OR PANEL

MOST CONSISTENT

- Put the light near the camera, slightly to one side.
- Angle it towards your face, not at the wall and not straight down.
- The light should come from in front of you, not from the side or behind.

AVOID

- Strong light behind you (you will look dark and flat).
- Overhead room lights as the only light source (they create shadows under the eyes and nose).
- A lamp far off to the side creating harsh shadows.

QUICK CHECK Your face should be brighter than the background, with soft shadows and no dark eye sockets.

STEP FOUR

YOUR BACKGROUND

Your background doesn't need to be fancy, but it does need to look intentional.

WHAT WORKS WELL

- A bookshelf, even partially filled.
- A few simple items on a shelf or sideboard: a plant, a framed picture, a lamp.
- A plain wall with one or two things on it, such as a print or a clock.
- A tidy, neutral space that looks like a real room.

WHAT TO AVOID

- A completely bare wall. It reads as cold and echoey on camera.
- Clutter, laundry, or anything you wouldn't want a client to see.
- Bright windows or light sources directly behind you.
- Doors that someone might walk through during a recording.

Quick fix if your background is bare: move a small bookcase, shelf, or even a chair with a throw behind you. Anything that adds a bit of depth and texture. It doesn't have to be expensive, it just needs to not look empty.

QUICK CHECK Turn on your camera and look at what's behind you. Does it look like a room someone works in? If so, you're fine.

5. THE TABLE LAYOUT

1 YOU
Sit at one narrow end of the table.

2 MIC
Sits close to you on the table.

3 CAMERA
Laptop or webcam at the other narrow end, centred.

4 LIGHT
Lamp or window near the camera, aimed at your face.



The layout from above: you, mic, camera, light.

THIS GIVES YOU

- **Good framing:** camera far enough away
- **Good audio:** mic still close
- **Good lighting:** light coming from the front

STEP SIX

TWO RULES TO REMEMBER

1 NEVER MOVE AWAY FROM THE MIC TO FIX THE SHOT. MOVE THE CAMERA INSTEAD.

2 LIGHT COMES FROM THE FRONT. MIC STAYS CLOSE. CAMERA SETS THE FRAMING.

7. GEAR UPGRADES (OPTIONAL)

You do not need new gear to follow this setup. Good placement of your current camera, mic and light (or window) will already make a big difference.

However, if you plan to do a lot of online sessions, recording or podcasts, these upgrades can noticeably improve how professional and consistent you look on camera:

WEBCAM

MINIMUM 1080P RECOMMENDED

- Sharper image
- Better skin tones
- More stable picture than older 720p webcams

SEE AN EXAMPLE →

LIGHT

SIMPLE LED PANEL OR KEY LIGHT

- More even, flattering light on your face
- Less shadow under your eyes
- A more consistent look between sessions

SEE AN EXAMPLE →

Important: please don't feel any pressure to buy these. This is only here as a reference if and when it makes sense for you. Use a window and your current camera first. Good positioning and setup matter more than buying new gear. Only consider upgrades if you expect to do a lot of online work and want a more polished, consistent look.