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**A-HED**

## Next in Videoconferencing—Hiding Your On-Screen Double Chin

Lockdown computer conversations reveal that webcams add about 10 pounds under the jawline; ‘I didn’t realize I was this vain’

By [Patience Haggin](#)

May 21, 2020 10:08 am ET

Liza Lane was about to begin a videoconference lecture to her University of Houston students recently when she noticed something horrible on the screen: the dreaded double chin.

The professor of social work grabbed her laptop and perched it on her baby son’s high chair to get a more flattering camera angle—a technique she had honed dealing with clinical-therapy patients on Zoom.

Ms. Lane’s husband noticed the unusual setup, snapped a photo of her mid-lecture and teased her about it in front of the class. “My class started laughing,” she said. Many of her students, she said, were relieved to learn they weren’t the only ones worried about their double chins on camera.



'Chin cam'

Advertisement

More than two months into coronavirus lockdowns, videoconferencing has taken hold in most workplaces, and that could endure if companies allow employees to work from home forever. For many people, that means figuring out what to do about the 10 pounds that workaday webcams tend to add under the chin.



Some people seek better camera angles by propping up their devices with household objects. Rev. Sarah Scherschligt, a Lutheran pastor in Virginia, preaches online.

PHOTO: ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

New York plastic surgeon Alan Matarasso said that since the Covid-19 quarantine began his office has received more queries about double-chin reductions, including tucks and liposuction. Dr. Matarasso said that anyone staring down into a laptop camera inevitably ends up looking bad.

“Even an 8-year-old, if you bend their head down, they’re going to have extra” fat, said Dr. Matarasso. His services are deemed nonessential, so he can’t perform any anti-double-chin procedures at the moment.

All the videoconferencing has led even people with perfect chins to think they have a double-chin problem, said West Palm Beach, Fla., plastic surgeon Douglas Dedo. Years ago, he developed a one-to-six scale to measure under-the-chin girth. Swan-necked number ones and slightly looser twos don’t have double chins. Now, thanks partly to laptop cams, those people, too, are asking about chin procedures, he said.

Cameras located underneath laptop screens are especially treacherous. Dell Technologies Inc. backed down from that design—dubbed “chin cam,” “nostril cam,” “knuckle cam,” even “navel cam” by detractors—on its XPS ultrabooks last year.

“We don’t want [our customers] to have to do yoga to basically use their camera in a way that is flattering to their appearance,” said Donnie Oliphant, Dell’s senior director of XPS product

marketing.



Cameras located underneath laptop screens, dubbed ‘chin cams,’ are especially unflattering. Lauryn Morley, a teacher in Bethesda, Md., talks to a fellow teacher by computer.

PHOTO: OLIVIER DOULIERY/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

None of this angst has been lost on the makers of stands that prop up electronic devices. Heckler Design, which makes office furniture and accessories, had been planning such products before the pandemic hit. Once employees entered lockdown and switched to morning Zoom meetings, they saw for themselves how great the need was.

“People said, ‘Can I get one of the prototypes?’ ” said Chief Executive Dean Heckler. The company even marketed them as double-chin concealers.

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What do you do to make yourself look better on videoconference calls? Join the conversation below.

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Chin-stroking, a move long associated with deep thought or the appearance of it, is another way to try to solve the problem. Laura White, director of a San Diego nonprofit that helps military families, said video calls have made her self-conscious about her chin. She channels Auguste Rodin’s “The Thinker,” leaning forward and balling a fist under her chin.

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“Every once in a while, I’ll look down in the corner, catch my double chin, and then I’ll just swoosh my hair around, and then maybe turn up the angle a little bit,” she said. “I didn’t realize I was this vain.”

Lexia Frank, a Portland, Ore.-based wedding and portrait photographer, said she practices another tactic: Roll your shoulders back and “pull your face away from your neck.”

Bradley Warschauer has been noticing his Tulane University writing students spotting their own double chins ever since he began teaching via Zoom. “All of a sudden, they straighten up or they change the way they’re sitting or standing. Or they change the angle of their laptop,” he said.

Ms. White has seen it, too, on her professional conference calls. “You can kinda see them go, ‘Oh, geez,’ and they’ll sit up straighter, maybe turn their head a little bit,” she said. “We’re not used to looking at ourselves while we’re talking.”

Some men have found that a quarantine beard can do a good job of hiding a chin problem—up to a point. A beard “works for some people to hide it, but for others it makes it look like you got a squirrel hiding underneath your neck,” said clean-shaven Boston-area radio host Jim Polito.



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PHOTO: LOIC VENANCE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

Michaela Scherrer, a Pasadena, Calif., product and interior designer, didn't like the way the camera highlighted neck wrinkles and produced a slight double-chin effect during video meetings with clients, vendors and friends. She resorted to a low-tech solution: pulling back her skin with tape.

She tested it out when she visited with some friends on Facebook.

“One of my friends was like, ‘Oh, you look so good. What did you do?’ And I was like, ‘My face is taped up!’ ” she recalled. She said her neck looked a good eight or nine years younger. “On these Zoom calls, all the focus is just on your face. All these flaws tend to show up more.”

**Write to Patience Haggin at [patience.haggin@wsj.com](mailto:patience.haggin@wsj.com)**

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