

Webcam Control for MacBook Air

macOS 27 Golden Gate and macOS Tahoe 26.2 or later | Checked October 7, 2026

Your MacBook Air has camera controls built in. They sit behind one icon, and that icon only shows while your camera is on. Run these seven steps before your session, in this order.

1 Turn your camera on

Open **Zoom** or **FaceTime** and start your video. The controls stay hidden until an app is using the camera.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE

A green light glowing beside the camera, at the top edge of your screen.

2 Click the Video icon

Look at the menu bar, the strip across the very top of your screen. On the right side, click the camera icon. Apple calls it **Video**.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE

A small panel with a preview of you and a list: **Portrait**, **Studio Light**, **Edge Light**, **Background**, **Reactions**.

3 Brighten your face

Click **Studio Light**. It dims the room behind you and lights your face. Click the arrow beside it, then drag the slider to set how strong.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE

In the preview, your face brighter than the room behind you.

4 Add light in a dim room

Click **Edge Light**. Your screen itself lights your face. Click the arrow beside it to set the size of the light and how warm or cool it looks.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE

A glow at the edges of your screen, and more light on your face in the preview.

5 Decide what is behind you

Portrait blurs your room. Click the arrow beside it to set how much. **Background** replaces your room with a color, an Apple picture, or your own photo.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE

With Portrait, a soft blur behind you. With Background, the picture you picked in place of your room.

6 Turn Reactions off

Click **Reactions** to switch it off. Left on, a hand gesture can fill your picture with balloons or fireworks mid-session.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE

Reactions no longer highlighted. No arrow beside it.

7 Check the preview

Look at the preview in the panel one more time. That picture is what your audience gets. Then click anywhere outside the panel to close it.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE

Your face clear and evenly lit, in front of the background you picked.

A starting point

Every room, camera, and face is different.

These settings give you a clean place to start. The fine tuning is what we work on together.

If you have not updated

To find your version, click the Apple menu at the top left, then **About This Mac**. Older software looks different.

- **macOS Tahoe 26.0 or 26.1, and macOS Sequoia 15:** there is no Edge Light. Skip step 4.
- **macOS Sonoma 14:** there is no Edge Light and no Background. Portrait still works in step 5.
- **Older than macOS Sonoma 14:** your screen will look different. Tell me what you see.
- **MacBook Air with an Intel chip:** Portrait, Studio Light, and Edge Light need an Apple chip, M1 or newer.

APPLE'S OWN INSTRUCTIONS

Every step here follows Apple's Mac User Guide page, **Use the camera on Mac**. Choose your macOS version at the top of that page: support.apple.com/guide/mac-help/mchlpl2980/27/mac/27