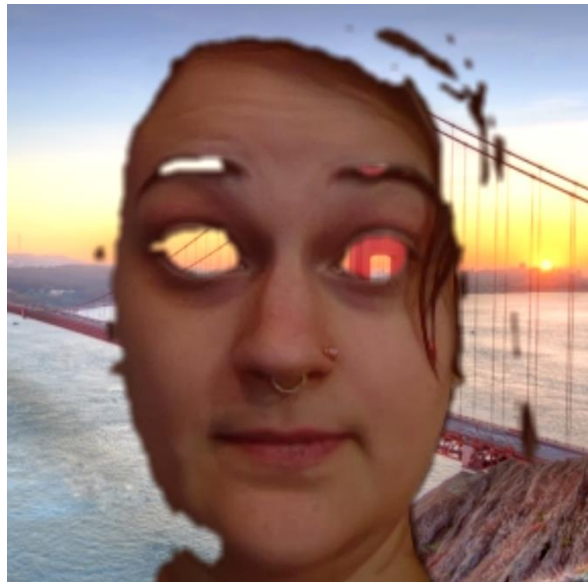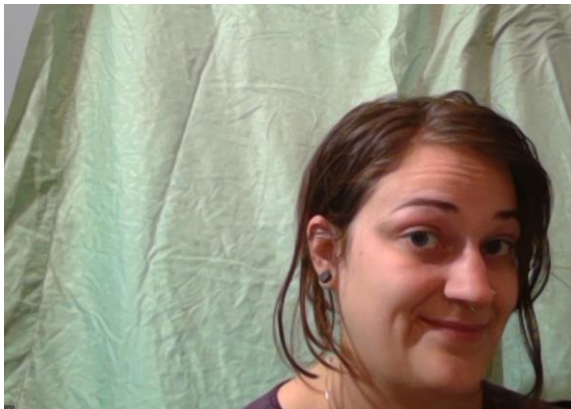# Using Virtual Backgrounds in Zoom

Make your space virtual background-friendly

In most cases, Zoom will only work properly with virtual backgrounds if you have a solid color behind you. If you have a blank wall to sit in front of, this is probably sufficient. If you have a lot of stuff behind you, a solid color sheet or curtain hung or draped can create a "green screen." Zoom suggests that a green color in the background is best- and you should make sure that it's a color distinct from your clothing or other things on you.

Example: this is what Zoom does to me when my background color is a little too close my eye color! Pretty creepy!
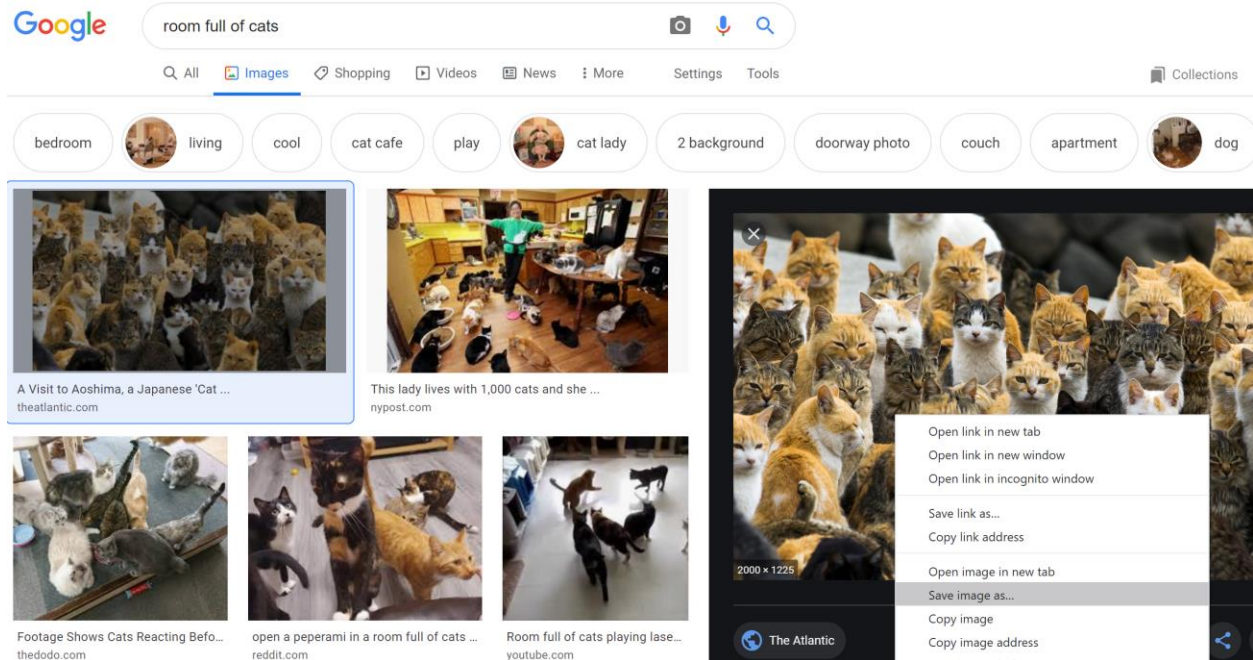

Luckily, I was able to find a green colored sheet in the bottom of my linen closet. I draped it over the curtain rod in my office, and now I have a makeshift "green screen!"
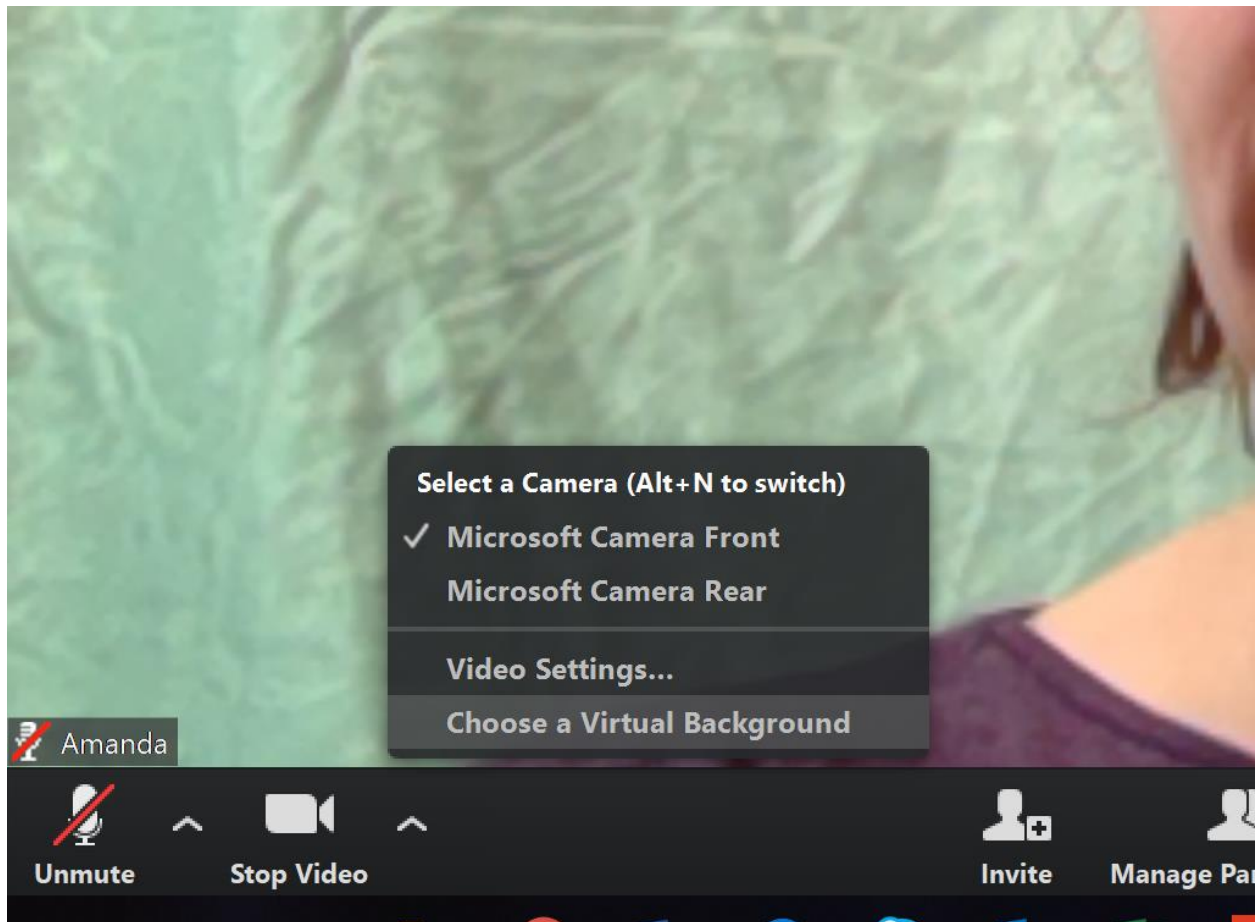
Pick your photo

Prior to entering Zoom, decide what photo you want to use for your virtual background. Zoom has a few options preloaded, or you can get creative! If you have a photo that you're already in love with, go with that! I didn't, so I googled "room full of cats". When I found just the right one, I right-clicked and selected 'save image as.' Remember where you saved the photo on your computer – we'll need to remember that for later.
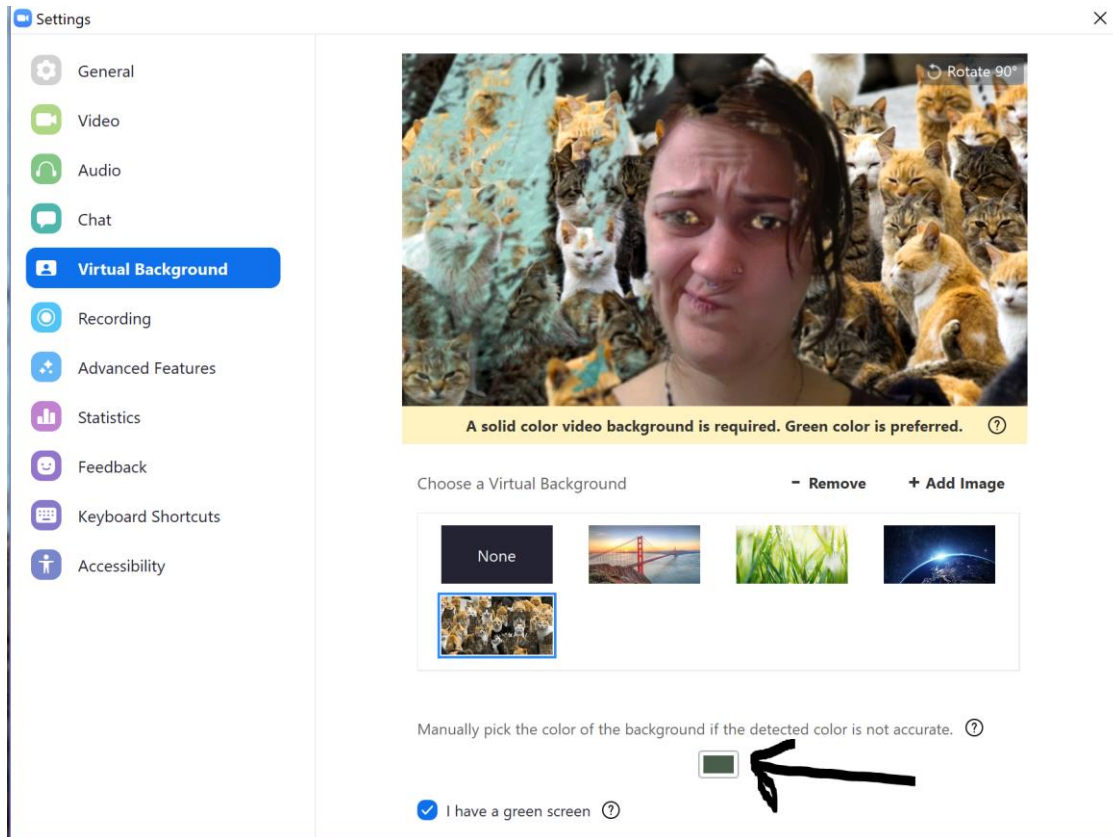

Load your photo into Zoom

You'll want to make sure that you're logged into Zoom both to set up your virtual background, and when you are entering a meeting where you want to use your funky fresh new virtual background.

Using the Zoom desktop app, start a meeting with just yourself. Move your cursor to the bottom of the screen to bring up your meeting controls. Click the ^ next to the Stop Video button to find "Choose a Virtual Background"

In the window that pops up, you can use a pre-loaded background or select the perfect photo you chose in the last step. To add your own photo, click "add image" and select your photo.

If your video feed looks great, you're done! In my case, it looked a little crazy. If you run into the same challenge, read on: To help Zoom understand what background to replace, we need it to know what to look for. Click the colored square and select the color in your background that is most representative of the overall solid background color.

You can also try unchecking the "I have a green screen" box. Depending on your computer, this may or may not work for you.

Now I'm ready to impress all my colleagues with my great new Zoom background. Are you?

Troubleshooting tips & tricks

- Make sure your lighting is good. Dim or inconsistent lighting can cause issues.
- If you choose to hang a sheet or curtain, try to make it as smooth as possible. Folds can cause variations in color that can confuse Zoom.
- Try to choose a background color that is different from any colors on your hair, face, clothing, etc.
- The background will glitch out occasionally – that's ok! It's just for fun ☺
- Depending on your setup, it may just not want to work. That's ok too. My laptop doesn't really like to use the virtual background feature. That's why my real cats are always around to help add some levity to my Zoom meetings!