



## Eye contact

### Description

[TheOnion.com](#) published a mockumentary about a “braindead” teenager who only communicates by rolling her eyes. She’ll never recover from the persistent vegetative state. So life termination is the only humane option.

Making eye contact is a crucial social skill. There’s even advice online on how to do it. (See [wikiHow](#).) It’s linked biologically to our survival as a species, particularly motor control via the cerebellum. On the neuroscience behind making eye contact [Christopher Bergland writes](#): “One of the consequences of living in a sedentary Facebook society is that we don’t flex the cerebellum enough and often miss out on eye-to-eye connections. The lack of movement in a three dimensional space and human interactions causes the cerebellum to atrophy and impairs its function.” Fortunately, sport and exercise go some way in maintaining a healthy cerebellum.

So the inability to look people in the eye is something else to blame on the Internet. But contrary to this failure to make eye contact, the use of face-to-camera presentation emphasises more than ever the importance of eye contact. I’m thinking of video conferencing and YouTube videos of talking heads. It’s an important aspect of [audience engagement](#).

### How to make your own eye contact machine

It’s no longer just the preserve of professional journalists, presenters, newsreaders and actors. Now everyone is having a go at speaking to camera. How do you do that when you’re also trying to read a script? A teleprompter is the answer, but these are expensive.

There’s lots of advice online about how to make one for nothing, as long as you have a smartphone, some cardboard, a tripod, a CD cover and some adhesive tape. I made this one, and experimented a bit with the cardboard. I used the free [i-Prompt app](#). It works, though getting the speed of the scrolling is tricky. Here are some pictures.





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## Some cultural theory about looking

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## Category

1. Media

## Tags

1. audience engagement
2. body
3. brain
4. eye
5. senses

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