

ATHLETES: STAYING SAFE ONLINE DURING COVID-19



The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many of our lives to a screeching halt, particularly in the sports community. It is important to acknowledge that that life is more difficult and there are many of us, athletes included, who continue to work.

As many of you already know, online communication poses unique safety risks. Youth and people with disabilities already experience high rates of abuse¹, and increased time online may heighten these risks.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport recommends athletes keep these guidelines in mind:

- **If you are doing a private lesson, use your webcam in a common area or a room with the door open. Bedrooms or bathrooms are discouraged.** Be aware of what and who is visible in the shot. Cameras should also be covered when not in use.
- **Keep the door open during virtual hangouts or team meetings.** If you are in your bedroom, sit in a chair or on the floor instead of your bed. If you want privacy, use headphones instead of closing the door.
- **Understand the privacy settings of the apps and websites you are using.** The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has a library of [internet safety resources](#).
- **Hanging out with your teammates virtually is a great way to stay connected, beat boredom, and feel better.** Make sure any informal team gatherings include all teammates.
- **Say something to your coach, parents, or another trusted adult if you notice someone being cyberbullied, harassed, or sexually exploited.** This includes an adult asking for or sharing nude photos with a minor, someone sharing sexually explicit photos of another person, and spreading rumors about another person online.

¹Approximately 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys are likely victims of sexual abuse (source: David Finkelhor, Director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center. University of New Hampshire). A child is bullied every 7 minutes, and 90% of LGBTQ students experienced harassment at school and online (source: StompOutBullying.org). People with disabilities experience rape and sexual assault at more than twice the rate of those without a disability (source: 2009 Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report on Crime Against People with Disabilities).



RESOURCES

- [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children - Protecting Your Kids Online](#)
- [RAINN – Social Media Safety \(includes information about security settings for popular apps\)](#)
- [National Network to End Domestic Violence: Technology Safety -Online Privacy and Safety Tips](#)
- [Cyberbullying Research Center - Livestreaming: Top Ten Tips for Teens](#)
- [Connect Safely - Tips for Safe Social Networking for Teens](#)
- [Think You Know - A Short Guide to Live Streaming](#)
- [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#)