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Best practices for reviewing color 2025

BEST: PROFESSIONAL REFERENCE MONITOR

- Calibrated to Rec709 for SDR, or Rec2100 for HDR
- Darkened room with D65 bias lighting behind monitor
- 18% gray wall behind monitor
- Viewing distance should be approximately 1.5 times the height of the monitor

BETTER: APPLE IPAD PRO

- Reference mode enabled (*Settings/Display & Brightness/Advanced/Reference Mode*). Requires M1 or newer 12.9" iPad Pro, or M2 or newer 11" iPad Pro. This disables automatic brightness, and locks SDR peak brightness to 100 nits, and 1000 nits for HDR signals.
- If Reference Mode is not available, makes sure both "True Tone" and "Night Shift" are disabled, and adjust brightness to a medium/low level that is comfortable for the dark room.
- Close any blinds or curtains, and avoid light sources behind you that could cause reflections on your screen.

GOOD: COMPUTER SCREEN

- Desktop operating systems have more variables with color management that can make them tricky to know if you're getting a proper signal. For example, Quicktime, VLC, Safari, and Chrome could all yield slightly different signals depending on how they interact with MacOS color management and NCLC tags.
- Frame.io currently recommends using Safari for most accurate color on Mac.
- Additional settings to adjust on Mac would be to turn off "True Tone" and "Night Shift", and adjust brightness to a medium low level that is comfortable for the dark room.
- Close any blinds or curtains, and make sure there is no light sources behind you causing reflections on your screen.
- Last! View this frame.io link of SMPTE color bars (*make sure to press play to initiate a proper signal*) to audit the "near black" accuracy of your display. Human vision is most sensitive to darker shades which is why this is a helpful aspect of the calibration to audit. You may be able to adjust your brightness to more closely calibrate this aspect important part of the signal. You could also try setting your display color profile to "Rec.709 2.4" and see if that improves the calibration (*System Settings/Displays/Color Profile*).

Notes
- There are endless caveats on this subject, and this is meant to be used a cheat sheet, not a comprehensive guide.
- If you have any questions about your particular device or setup, don't hesitate to reach out!