

## Zoom Tips for Zoom Meeting Attendees

### First Time Zoom Users

You've been invited to a Zoom meeting and may wonder how to get started. Here's how:

1. Well in advance of the meeting date, download the Zoom application *to your computer*, to prevent delays when you go to the meeting.
2. Write down the meeting identification number and password provided in the invitation before you click on the invitation link. You may not need them, but it's good backup.
3. Be aware that Zoom meetings are typically held with video on, so you will be visible to all the attendees. Make sure your space and self are prepared to be seen. Also be sure to position your screen so that your picture is as direct as possible, without odd tilt.
4. Click on the invitation link. To prevent hacking, meeting organizers generally require you to wait in the "waiting room" until the Zoom host lets you in to the meeting.
5. Suggestion: Use a desktop computer for the best functionality, followed by an iPad or notebook/laptop. Using your phone may be harder for you and other attendees due to the size of the screen and wobbliness, unless it is propped up steadily. Holding it in your hand for the meeting creates wobbliness which makes the video of you hard to watch.
6. Be aware that if your internet coverage is spotty, this will affect the quality of your Zoom connection. Frozen images can result, or inability to connect. If you have problems, you can still 'dial in' by telephone to participate in the meeting by audio. Your Zoom invitation should include telephone numbers. Use the number most local to you.

Useful terms to know: The host is the person who has set up the invitation and who manages the technical aspects of the meeting. The facilitator is the person who manages the meeting flow and participation of attendees. Sometimes they are the same person, but sometimes they are not and have agreed to split responsibilities. Sometimes they have agreed to co-host, and both have the capability to adjust technical features when necessary during the meeting.

### General Tips for All Users

As a Zoom attendee you have control over five functions: sound, video, view, chat, and departure. How you use these functions affects you and all other attendees. Below are practical steps as well as courtesy tips.

#### **Sound: Mute/Unmute**

This function mutes your voice and all background sound or opens up access for you to be heard in the meeting. The associated icon is a tiny microphone that turns red with a bar across it when you are muted. You will find this in a couple of places: 1) the top right corner of your own little video frame, or 2) in the bottom left corner on a gray bar of the expanded Zoom screen. This may be found in a different location on an iPad or other device.

Try clicking the mute icon on and off to get familiar with how it works so you can easily participate. The host of the meeting can also mute participants when needed. Also, in Zoom Audio Settings, you can select a feature called 'Press and hold SPACE key to temporarily unmute yourself.' This can be easier than clicking the Mute feature on or off with a mouse or trackpad.

If you are meeting with just a few people you may all choose to stay unmuted for an informal conversation. However, in a larger group, background noise can negatively affect the quality of sound for everyone in the meeting. Such noise includes keyboard tapping, shuffling papers, rocking in squeaky chairs, sighing, coughing, dogs barking, machine feedback from your computer, construction work, traffic etc. The sensitive microphone picks up almost everything!

Note that a gold frame surrounds the individual with the most prevalent sound, preferably whoever is speaking. If the gold frame bounces around in the group, this means participants are not muted and background sound is pulling the microphone off the primary speaker. Or, several people are trying to talk at the same time.

The facilitator usually indicates the protocol at the start of the meeting for how to take a turn speaking. Some use open “popcorn” style, where people just take turns, muting off when they’re done. Other facilitators prefer you wave your hand when you want to speak. The facilitator will then call your name when it’s your turn. Sometimes the facilitator decides to call on speakers according to their preferred order of speakers. Whatever the protocol, following the facilitator’s lead keeps the process smooth for everyone.

\*\*\*Sound courtesy tip: It is helpful to mute your microphone *all the time*, unless you are speaking (except by agreement in small groups).

### **Video: Be Seen or Not Seen?**

Generally, people choose Zoom meetings rather than conference calls for the pleasure of seeing other people. This allows for the added dimension of body language as well as the fun of seeing where people are. However, you have choices in the matter, as follows...

The video function (like sound) can be turned on and off by you. The icon is a tiny movie camera. When the video is off, a bar crosses through the movie camera. There is also a “dropdown” arrow next to the little camera offering you options. This camera icon is located in the gray bar at the bottom left corner of the whole screen on a desktop computer. It may be located elsewhere on other devices.

When the video is on, everyone will be able to see you and the space you are in. If you turn video off, people will only see the name associated with the computer on a black screen. Some people “pin” a photo of themselves to their screen so that a photo appears instead of their name. Having the video off makes you and your space invisible, though you can still be heard when you are unmuted.

Another aspect of video is to consider the angle you present to the rest of the group. Do your best to get the computer screen tilted and positioned for a good view of yourself at the start of the meeting. This prevents distracting adjustments later in the call, as well as prevents giving others an odd-angled view of you. (The up-the-nostril look, the forehead-only look, etc.) Lighting is another consideration so that you can easily be seen.

In the dropdown menu by the video icon, you may find a setting called “virtual screen.” When you open this option, you may be able to select a programmed screen that overlays the view of your personal space. You can also upload or download your own photos for virtual screens. If you prefer privacy this can block people seeing into your home or office, though they can still see you. Virtual backgrounds can also be fun conversation pieces!

When people move around a lot, more than the usual movement in a meeting, the effect can debilitate people susceptible to sea sickness or headaches. Our brains are not adapted to track a lot of windows with people in various stages of movement, and any added movement can push people over the edge from enjoyment into nausea.

A tip for preventing your own visual strain or fatigue is to dim the brightness of your screen display or resort to sunglasses if necessary. Avoid glare where possible.

\*\*\*Video courtesy tip: If you move around in any way, besides normal movements in your chair, please turn off your video. For instance, if you have a laptop and decide to walk outside with it to sit in the sun, please turn your video off so your group is not distracted by your movement. Or, if you are getting up and down for drinks and snacks or stretching behind your chair, please turn off your video to prevent visual fatigue for others.

### **View: Speaker or Gallery**

This function gives you the choice to view only the person speaking (speaker view), or everyone in the group at the same time (gallery view).

On a desktop computer, at the top right corner, you will find the word Speaker or Gallery next to an icon that is either a box-shaped cluster of dots or one dot over bars. Try clicking on it to find out how changing from speaker to gallery affects your view. The location of this function may be different on other devices.

In gallery view, the size of framed individuals will adjust according to how many people are in the meeting; up to 25-49 people can be accommodated on one screen, depending on settings. If more people are in the meeting than you can see on one screen, click the arrow on the side of the screen for access to a second (or third) screen of attendees.

Instead of trying to see everyone at once, you can choose to click on the speaker view. Whoever is speaking will then fill up the screen so you can focus on them. Whenever you want, you can click back and forth between speaker view and gallery view.

Many people like to see everyone all at once to enjoy feeling part of the group and to watch everyone involved. However, this can also lead to brain fatigue or headaches. Switch anytime to speaker view to give your brain a rest.

## **Chat Room**

The “chat room” is on the bottom of the screen in the middle of the gray bar. It is a place where people can write messages to the whole group or to individuals. This can be useful to provide a link, a name, or to let someone know that they need to mute due to extra noise.

When you write a message be careful to choose either “Everyone” or to select the name of the intended person from the dropdown list of all participants. Sending private messages accidentally to the whole group can be at best distracting and at worst embarrassing!

\*\*\*Chat room courtesy tip: Conveying information or questions is the best use of this function. In a large group, sending lots of chit-chat can be visual clutter. Overuse of this function can generate zoom fatigue so use with care.

## **Departure**

In the bottom right corner of a desktop computer screen, you will find “Leave” in red letters. This is what you click on to depart. Then “Leave Meeting” in red will show up. Click on that to confirm your departure.

\*\*\*Departure courtesy tip: Depending on the size of the group, and whether it is a formal meeting or not, you may or may not want to verbally announce your departure. You can use the chat room function to say goodbye, and then simply click “Leave” to depart. If you know in advance that you will need to leave early, you can tell the group at the beginning of the meeting and then just click “Leave” when it’s time to go. This prevents interrupting a sharing or discussion, especially in a larger group.

Zoom meetings can be fun, enjoyable, informative, celebratory, and useful. They can also be tiring, annoying, frustrating, or uncomfortable. When you use your Zoom functions wisely you help make the meeting a more pleasant experience for yourself and the rest of the group.

Enjoy!