



Iyengar Yoga (UK)

Teaching Iyengar Yoga Classes Online Using Zoom

A Guide for Teachers

Version 1, 27 March 2020

These notes have been put together following a Zoom meeting hosted by Uday and Sonali Bhosale on Monday 23 March 2020. Thank you to both for organising this meeting for the benefit of other teachers at this time. We plan to update this document as and when we receive more questions and contributions.

Insurance

Before teaching online classes please ensure you have checked your insurance cover. This information, including a sample disclaimer, has been emailed and is available on the Documents page of the website.

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PART 1: Setting up and using Zoom

Introduction to Zoom

Many teachers have been using the Zoom website to teach classes. It allows you to see your students on screen; you can invite people to your class using a link and control who joins your class. You don't need to have a website of your own before using Zoom. All you need to do is sign up for an account which is quick and easy. People joining your class don't need a Zoom subscription, all they need is for you to send them a link.

Setting up Zoom on your laptop or computer

On a laptop or desktop computer, use the Google Chrome browser to sign up for and log into Zoom (some people have reported problems with Safari or Firefox).

Download Google Chrome here: <https://www.google.co.uk/chrome/>

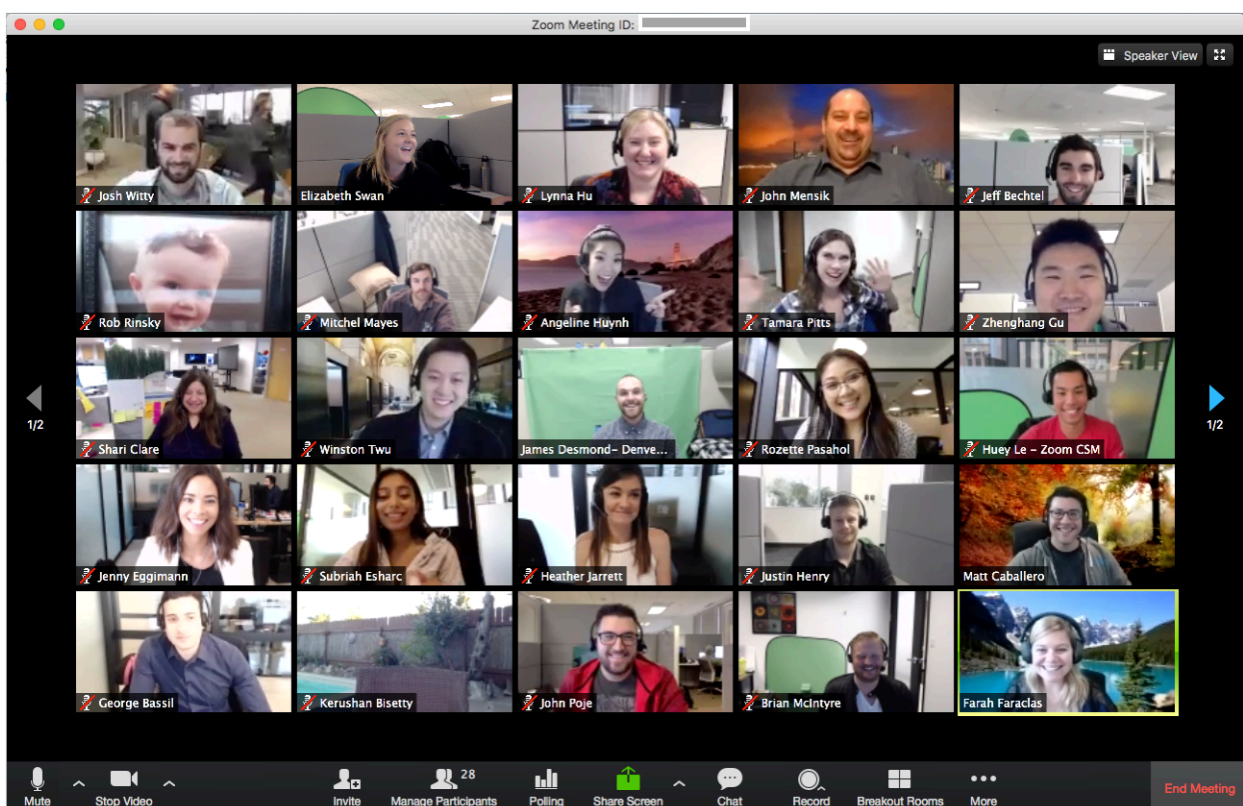
Sign up for Zoom here: <https://zoom.us/> (to create an account click 'sign up')

Once you've logged in to Zoom you'll have the option to download the Zoom app onto your computer. If you're having trouble downloading the Zoom app, you may need to update your operating system to the latest version. You can contact your computer manufacturer's customer support if you are still having difficulties.

You will also find it in your App store for your mobile device. It looks like this:



This is what the platform looks like when in use:



Costs

When you sign up you have a choice of three different plans. The free option is a good starting point to try it out, but only allows for your meeting to be 40 minutes long. The Pro plan costs £12 per month +VAT, and there's also an annual option.

Learning how to use Zoom

Once you're signed in to Zoom you can access a number of useful video tutorials that explain how to use the platform.

Yogamatters have a useful blog on using Zoom here:

<https://www.yogamatters.com/blog/how-to-set-up-live-yoga-classes-using-zoom/>

It's a good idea to spend some time familiarising yourself with it and perhaps have a test run with a few people before hosting a class.

On the Zoom homepage, there are four options:

New Meeting – here you can create an immediate meeting and send the Personal Meeting ID number to your students by text or WhatsApp or Email

Join – here you can enter the Meeting ID and password for a meeting you have been invited to join

Schedule – here you can create a future meeting, entering date, time and other details. You have the option to have a password, to put everyone on mute on entry, to create a waiting room so that you accept students one by one into the meeting like with a class.

Share Screen – this is not something you would need as it's about sharing documents up on your screen rather than using the camera.

Taking payment from students

You could ask people to pay using your existing payment method, for example Paypal, then send a meeting invite to those people. Or it is also possible to set up payment integration with Zoom.

SETTING UP YOUR EQUIPMENT

Using a computer, phone or other device

It is ideal to use a computer, but it is also possible to use an iPad or mobile phone. With a mobile you won't get a clear view of all the students and it would be really difficult to check and observe them. So it's highly recommended to use a desktop computer, or split the screen on a monitor to maintain the connection between teacher and students.

Additional monitors

If you have a laptop and access to a larger monitor or smart TV, you can connect this via a USB cable (monitors will have differing connections so make sure you have the right cable - Google it if you're not sure). Once your larger screen is connected you have the option to split the participant windows between screens.

Cameras

Using the camera on a Mac has a poor resolution, and for watching a class it's not that good for seeing details. So you may want to invest in a streaming camera and attach this to your computer.

Uday uses a Logitech Streamcam which sits on top of his iMac (<https://www.logitech.com/en-gb/product/streamcam>). The Streamcam can be selected as a camera for the computer, which then gets used by Zoom.

When using a webcam it would be ideal to have someone to help during the class in case you need to show something up close, zoom in etc.

Using a phone as an additional camera

You could use an iPhone or other phone as an additional camera, but this would only work if it connects to your computer (for example, Apple phones need to connect to Apple computers).

Tripods: If you have a webcam that sits on top of your computer you won't need a tripod, however you could use a small one such as Gorillapod or similar (<https://joby.com/uk-en/gorillapod-flexible-camera-tripods/>), which will allow you to put the camera anywhere you want. This works with mobile phones as well.

Microphone

You could invest in a microphone, but if not, make sure you speak loudly so people can hear you.

Internet connection

On the Zoom website, if you are hosting a class sometimes it can be more reliable to have a wired (LAN) connection rather than wifi, which can be variable. When you purchased your router you may have been provided with an ethernet cable, which plugs into the back of your router and also into your computer (you can purchase one of these cables online if not). Zoom is sometimes overused, so sometimes pictures are glitchy.

A note about wifi extenders - if you have a building where you're teaching from the top floor and the router is on the ground floor, then you can buy a wifi extender. As long as you connect this on the same electrical network as your router, it will extend the signal. If you have a studio outside the house and the studio has a separate electricity supply, this won't work. It's important to change the default password on your router and extender, to avoid people hacking into your network.

WiFi extenders:

<https://www.currys.co.uk/gbuk/computing-accessories/networking/wifi-range-extenders/tp-link-re450-wifi-range-extender-ac-1750-dual-band-10136364-pdt.html>

General WiFi security -

<https://www.lifewire.com/changing-default-password-on-wifi-network-816567>

WiFi Extender specific security - Wifi extender security links -

<http://www.sciencesandtechnology.com/networks/steps-for-improving-your-wifi-extender-security.html>

ZOOM SETTINGS

Recording setting

Disable the recording setting for the classes, because once you enable the recording option, it will also be an option for anybody who's joining the class, which would take away the interactive element (this could have insurance ramifications - see insurance guidelines).

There is also an option for all meetings to record the video to the Cloud.

Mute/unmute - make sure you are not muted! Anyone muted will see a red microphone symbol with a cross through it. We suggest you mute all students during teaching so that sounds from individuals' audio do not interrupt the class. You can explain you are doing this and you can suggest students can wave at the camera or there is an option to type a comment if they have a question.

Viewing your students

It helps to have a larger screen to view your students.

There are two main ways to view the others on a call: **Speaker View**, where the person speaking is shown in a large window; and **Gallery View**, where all participants are shown in a grid.

For students viewing the teacher, for large classes it is recommended to mute everyone joining the class, as it can get very chaotic very quickly when people start speaking all together, with echoes etc. If you have a small class you can greet students and then mute people before teaching. Once everyone is muted, instruct them to have Speaker View, so that you are on their screen as the one speaking.

For teachers viewing students, it makes sense to use the Gallery View, so you can see all your students at once. If you have a small screen and lots of students, you may need to scroll down to see them all.

If you want to see a particular student, click on their tile and you'll see an option to 'pin video' which enables you to see that person in full view.

Remember it's just the same as teaching in the room, demonstrate to the left while instruction to the right. They are all facing you.

PART 2: Advice and questions from Uday's meeting

What to do with sequencing; therapy cases; various students' problems

The purpose of these kind of classes is to maintain the connection during this difficult time, this is something which is unforeseen and we don't know how long it will last. Given a choice we would get back to teaching classes in person, but this is the next best thing. At least you get to see the students, you are directly instructing the students. Try to limit the sequence to stick to safer poses. If I am teaching a beginners' class, and my beginner students are there, and I'm not confident about their ability to go up against the wall in Sirsasana, or Sarvangasana if they need a lot of monitoring, I would say it doesn't harm from just refrain from teaching that. Rather than just sticking to getting all the inversions done, you may want to stick to a safer option such as Tadasana, Prasarita Padottanasana, Halasana, where you go low if they're capable to go on their neck. Better to stick to something like Setubandha, or even Chatush Padasana. That's what I've done with the beginners. I have taught one intermediate class which most of the teachers have come to that. That's an experienced group, so there I will go for inversions. So, I have chosen to stay safe in that way. As the time goes by, we can of course change and adapt with the sequences. **If there's even a tiny bit of doubt as to whether I should do this or not, the answer is don't do it.** Because we cannot go and adjust over there.

Hazards for students

Check at the beginning that students haven't got any objects around them that they might trip over. Because they're looking at a camera which is completely different to looking at a teacher face-to-face, so they might be focussing on their iPad or phone and might not notice a block or something that they might trip on, and the risk of accident is

a bit more than usual. So, every class, remind students about trip hazards, including animals!

Execution

People will join in from various devices including laptops, computers and mobile phones. So the screen size varies and I ask them to come close to the screen when I'm demonstrating something. I will show them properly first what I expect them to do, and then I ask them to go back on the mat, not to look at the screen because nothing is being shown there. I'm only coming close to the screen to observe everyone, and now I start instructing what I've just shown them. So actually it becomes a different experience where it is more like a private personal tuition, because you're listening to the words and you're not being disturbed by your neighbours, or looking around at who's doing better etc. So it works well in this kind of setup. If I see some common mistake or somebody going wrong, I ask them to please come up closer and watch, then go back again.

Could you use two devices for example using your phone to show details?

You could do this by having a co-host, who has their phone.

It helps to have two mats crossed, one horizontal and one vertical. If I have to show something from the front I use the vertical mat. The horizontal mat will be positioned depending on how much the camera can cover. If I have to show something to do with my arms, I will move closer to the camera.

Choice of clothing colour

Another hint, around choice of colour - with dark colours you would not be able to see what I'm doing with my shoulders, for instance, to see if the arm is rolling in or out. So lighter shades are better for this.

Because the times are such that we are being isolated, if the numbers are smaller, what I have done is before the class we leave ten or fifteen minutes where people are on unmute so that people can exchange greetings and talk to each other, because that's somewhat similar to what happens in a class. As simple as it sounds it has quite a deep effect, so just getting together can be quite emotional for some people. Before the class, or maybe even after the class, just allow a few minutes to have that exchange.

So if the class is scheduled to start at 6pm, I will open the class ten or fifteen minutes early. And the same at the end, those who want to leave after Savasana can do so, and some can stay for a chat if they want to.

Will you be able to see yourself on speaker view?

If you put it on speaker view, you will see whoever is speaking at the time. If somebody else speaks, I will see that person on my screen. On the gallery view, if the screen is big enough, you will be able to see everyone clearly in this kind of setup.

Lighting

We are using the lighting in our house, but if there's a lot of sunshine coming through it can make one side completely dark. If there's a stand-up light somewhere it's best to provide light from behind the camera or set up the camera in such a way that there's a light source coming in from behind so that the light is on the person in front of the camera.

What's the maximum number of students?

Maximum number of students is 100. To add more students than that, you can buy an add-on. But for insurance purposes there would need to be different insurance in place for this.

If I'm a student and I'm seeing other students instead of the speaker, why is that happening?

When speaker view is on, whenever anyone makes a noise it will highlight that person's window. So when you mute everyone, then you are the only person who will be visible. As a student, you can just pin the teacher's video and you will only see them.

So what if the student wanted to ask you an important question, but you had them on mute?

So there is this option of chat you can use, you can type the question. There is an option for the teacher to unmute individuals.

Can I use the same password for every class or would I need to have a different password for each class?

You can share a personal meeting invite so they cannot share with anyone else. The meeting password may be the same, but the link will be unique.

You reminded students to have the device fully charged...

Maybe that's a good reminder to send students before the class, to remind them to charge their devices so that it doesn't run out of battery. That's actually a very important thing, because it will consume a lot of battery with the video on. With the screen settings, you can ask the students to check that their screen is not too bright, because that will use more battery.

If you record the meeting and you change between views, what does it record? Does it record everything you change?

It records whatever is happening on the screen.

I have a question about people coming to the class, some people I told and sent an invite, and some people just came anyway - I don't know how they joined. How do you regulate that?

On the Zoom setting you could set the meeting in such a way that you can say that the person who's joining in has to register first, and then that way you can control who has registered for the meeting and who's joining in. We need to find out how to see the email addresses of everyone who is joining in with the meeting.

Participant: When I set up a class they get a link and they register on the link, and when they register they go into a room and on the side of the screen I have to admit them when I start the class, so I can see exactly who I'm allowing into the class. So I don't have to admit people I don't know. So when you schedule a class, in the advanced settings it gives you those options including 'enable waiting room' and other things.

Should I teach from my Centre or from home?

If we go to a studio and have everything around us we are in a different setup to our students, because students are at home. So if they have their prop kits, then that's fine they can use all of that. But maybe as teachers we have to be a bit creative about what props to use, how to make things around us work as props.

Sound quality

Participant: One of the issues as well is we need to make sure our sound quality is good. We had a problem earlier on and I've seen somebody else doing a class in a centre and the sound quality was poor. It kept coming and going. And because you have to stand quite a way back to show the pose, you need to make sure that you can be heard by your students, and I think that's something to practice beforehand just to check. I've had a couple of practice sessions and decided to get a microphone just because I was aware I was using my voice a lot, and I felt it would be better to get a wireless microphone.

Uday: To be honest I am thinking of that, because it is quiet streaming and I have to keep my voice loud compared to a normal class, and it does feel exhausting for the throat.

If you are in a hall there may be lots of echo, so sound quality would again be hampered with that.

Participant: I have a Sabinetek microphone which seems to be working well.

Uday: We have to be careful just checking how it fits, because [if we have the camera attached to ourselves] when we move there's a little bit of friction when raising the arms for instance, which can create a lot of sharp sounds for the ears. So I don't know how it works.

Participant: It doesn't have to be on you, it's Bluetooth.

Uday: Or you can get a headset. So, a mic is an option, or if not you can be a little louder when you stand back.

Do I need a fast broadband speed?

At our place we have Virgin fibre optic. The demand was quite high.

Have you found that on the whole teaching in this way the classes end up being the same length of time? Because it seems to me it's such a different experience for you and for them. I just wondered if you've changed the timing.

From the teaching perspective, it is different to conduct a group class in this way, because you have to precisely ask everyone to wait and watch while you are showing, and while everyone else is doing you get closer and observe. The usual method has to be adapted a bit, so it does take some amount of time. Plus, if the number is larger, to check that everyone is doing the right thing you have to perhaps make them repeat or go on with the instructions and ensure everyone is doing fine, or when you are correcting people. It takes some time to get that direction executed.

Positioning for the camera

Along the same lines, maybe it helps to have instructions such as when you are facing the camera, turn towards your right side. So when you do that, your left side is facing the camera. So this helps the orientation better. So if I want you to go from Adho Mukha Svanasana to Trikonasana, let's say we jump. So if I want you to go with the right leg, I will tell you to face towards your right side, your left side facing the camera, Adho Mukha Svanasana. Now I ask you to jump to Trikonasana right side, you will face the camera. If I want you to face me again on the left, I will say turn around, your right side facing the camera, Adho Mukha Svanasana, jump forward with your left leg.

Participant: I felt very conscious of how the students felt about it, and how did it come across and so on. And what I've found now I've taught two classes, I find that because they're my students and they know me, we have the same sort of interaction. I'm just having to be a little bigger in my demonstrations so they can see them; I'm having to show them very specifically, but I find that it works. They are all very excited just to be in the same room at the same time, and that it's a shared experience. So I think if you haven't had a class already, not to fret, they're your students, say hello, and just be familiar with them and will work very well.

How much should we charge?

What my logic has been is my time is saved on travel, so the expense for me is I don't own a studio yet, so I can definitely cut down my costs. Those of course who want to cover the costs for rent they have to pay, obviously have to see that their fees help them to cover it. The reason I have kept my fees almost nominal for some classes is because I felt that it's important to just get together, have a chance to interact and practice. And as some of us lack a source of income, because of the isolation process, if that is stopped, let's not pinch the pockets further.

Participant: I've set up a fee, because people want to pay, but what I've said is that at some stage some of us are going to lose our incomes, so please don't worry about paying because I'm happy that you don't pay at all, but I'd like you to come.

Participant: I teach children aged 7-12 and teenagers from 13-20, and actually it was them who, when we had the lockdowns of the yoga studios a week ago, it was the kids who wrote to me and asked me to teach classes online. I got really scared about it because I'd never done it, but then I tried it with Zoom, a 30 minute class with three or four kids just to try it out. And actually they were so happy, they loved it and were so happy to have the yoga back. So I can only really agree with what people have been saying here. It's not about in the first place making money, it's about giving something to students who are like all of us in a difficult situation. It's surprising what just half an hour of yoga was doing for children, parents were contacting me to say it made their day. So I'd like to encourage everyone to just try it out and don't worry about being not perfect, be open and try it. Our students are I think very open and don't expect something perfect.

If you have further questions or tips you would like to add to this document please email katie@iyengaryoga.org.uk