Delivering a wonderful livestreamed experience

Equipment (the techy stuff)

- While tablets and phones can be used, **laptops and computers** will give better results and have more places to tweak settings. Zoom settings on a tablet or phone are extremely limited.

- **Wired is better.** Video and audio will be vastly improved if you **wire your device to your modem with an ethernet cable** instead of using WiFi. Ethernet cables available on Amazon in a multitude of lengths. If you're using a phone or a tablet, or if you have a laptop without an ethernet port, you'll need an adapter to plug the ethernet cable into your device. Contact Ginty for more information.

- **Video quality:** You can also improve video quality by using an external webcam instead of the built-in camera. External cameras also give you more flexibility with placement. Recommended are:

  - Logitech C920 or C922 Pro Stream (connects through USB)

  - Logitech BRIO 4K Ultra HD Webcam (connects through USB)

  - For those who want amazing video quality, a DSLR camera is a great and expensive option.

  In all cases, make sure you can connect the camera to your device. For tablets and phones without USB ports, you will need adapters. For the DSLR camera, you will need special cables and adapters. Contact Ginty for more information.

- **Sound quality:** Built-in microphones don't usually deliver a good result unless you are standing close to them and not moving. Better is to use high quality earbuds with a mic, a wireless clip-on mic, or a USB mic. But for tablets/phones, if you plug in an external mic you will not be able to hear others speaking to you.

  Recommended:

  - Apple AirPods. These connect through Bluetooth to both Apple and non-Apple devices. Gives you the freedom to move wherever you want, but the sound is still a little muffled.

  - Hey Mic (www.loveheymic.com). A wireless clip-on mic that connects through Bluetooth. Easy to set up and decent sound.

  - Yeti Blue Mic (https://www.bluemic.com/en-ca/products/yeti/). A large free-standing mic that connects through USB. Good quality sound and several adjustments (including mute) available on the mic itself.

  - Rode Wireless Go mic. The most expensive. A clip-on mic with a receiver that plugs into the mic jack on a computer/laptop/camera/tablet/phone. If the device you're connecting it to does not have a separate mic jack (these are often combined with earphone jacks, especially with Mac products), it's still possible, but you have to use a splitter cable (available from Amazon!)

Hey Mic   Blue Yeti   Rode Wireless Go Mic

Your home environment

Yoga Seven has chosen to offer classes from teachers' homes rather than ask them to travel to a particular location. This fosters a sense of community by allowing attendees to see something of how their teacher lives, and allows us to present classes with a bit of character. However, the yoga space should still be clean, tidy, and well lit. Tips:

- Make sure the **main light source is in front of you**. Videoing with a bright window or lights behind you will make you almost impossible to see. At the most basic level, you can use an adjustable floor light directed at you. Or you can go further and get a photographic light on a tripod. (Guess what… these are available on Amazon!)

- Wear clothing that makes you stand out from your mat and walls/floor. It's hard to see what someone's demonstrating when they blend in with their background.

- A plant or two, or a mascot, can add to the scene. Just make sure the plant doesn't appear to be growing out of your head when you're seated on the mat.

- If you cannot use wired Internet and have to use wifi, make sure others in your home are not streaming music or video at the same time as you are teaching. Better still, put all devices in the home on airplane mode except for those you're using for the class!

Getting the better of Zoom

There are a few video and audio settings that can be tweaked to improve the Zoom experience for all. Zoom constantly changes these, so if something's not there, this document is out of date already. Note that these instructions apply only on a laptop or computer – phones/tablets do not allow any control.

You'll want to get the settings right long before class starts so you're not fiddling with the laptop/computer when students arrive. The best way is to ask Ginty to set up a separate test class for you, so you're not concerned with technical things while trying to prepare for teaching. Once you've changed the settings, they should stay that way as long as you're using the same device.

The following are instructions for Zoom on a laptop or computer.

- **Zoom audio Settings:**

    - Click the arrow to the right of the Mute (or Unmute) button to display a menu.

      The button is usually at the bottom left of the Zoom meeting screen.

    - Choose Audio Settings. A dialog box appears. The following items should be checked or changed, and more detail is on the next page.

        - Speaker

        - Microphone

        - Microphone Volume

        - Suppress Background Noise

        - Show the Enable Original Sound option (this appears when you click Advanced at the bottom of the dialog box)

      Many of the settings described on the following page are ones that cause sound to cut out unless you change them. And if you choose to sing or play music, you will get better results with the settings recommended below.
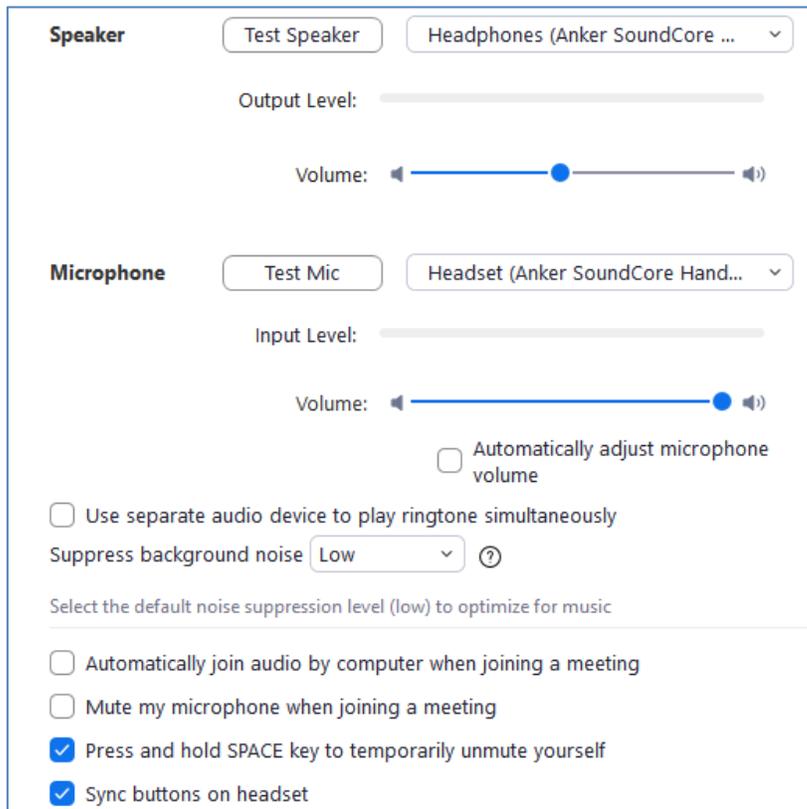
- *Speaker:* Make sure Zoom is displaying the speaker you want to use to **hear other people speaking**. If you're using Apple AirPods, those would be your speaker. If you're using the computer's built-in speaker, makes sure that option is selected. If you've connected an external mic, be careful that Zoom hasn't selected that for your speaker as well, because you won't be able to hear anyone else through the mic.

- *Microphone:* Make sure Zoom is displaying the microphone you want to use **so people can hear you**. If you're using Apple Airpods, those would be your mic as well as your speaker. If you've plugged in a Blue Yeti Mic, that's your microphone and it needs to show up in the dialog box. And so on.

- *Volume:* It's best to **turn off "Automatically adjust microphone volume"** and **set the microphone volume slider fairly high**.

- *Suppress background noise:* Generally, **set this to low**, especially if you are going to play music.

- *Show the "Enable Original Sound" option:* Click the Advanced button at the bottom of the audio settings dialog box and make sure the checkbox for "Show in-meeting option to enable original sound" is checked, and that the Echo Cancellation setting is Auto. After you've done this, a button to *Enable Original Sound* will show up somewhere on your Zoom screen in all meetings. You click it when you want the sound to be as close as possible to the real thing, although if you have a lot of background noise from, say, a noisy fan or air conditioning system, you may not want to use this option. Enable Original Sound does not stay on: you have click it for each meeting/class.

- Close the dialog box when done.

- **Zoom video settings:**
  - Click the arrow to the right of the Start (or Stop) Video button to display a menu. The button is usually at the bottom left of the Zoom meeting screen.
  - Choose Video Settings. A dialog box appears:

  - Make sure that the selected camera is the one you want to use, especially if you're using an external webcam.
  - Don't use Enable HD unless you have a really good wired Internet connection.
  - If you're having trouble with the camera view being too wide, you may need to switch it to Original Ratio and turn off Enable HD.
  - You may choose to mirror your video if you don't want to worry about mirroring for your students. But be aware that any writing in your environment (such as text on pictures or books) will also be mirrored.
  - You may be excited by "touch up my appearance", but be aware that it does so by blurring the image, which is not ideal for demonstrating yoga.
  - You can experiment with "adjust for low light" but better is just to have good lighting in front of you.
  - It's probably best not to play with any of the other settings!
  - Close the dialog box when done.

It's class time!

A few things to pay attention to once you've started Zoom for your class:

- Start the Zoom meeting 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.

- As soon as you've started the meeting, check your audio and video settings, as well as the light and the placement of your mat. Have any required props easily visible.

- Remember that people doing yoga at home will not necessarily have yoga props to hand, so have some fun exploring and offering alternatives for blocks, bolsters, straps, etc. that you might find in a typical home.

- Greet people as they come in.

- **Mute your notifications for emails and other messages. Put your own phone on silent.**

- Maybe open the Chat window and leave it open so you can see if people are "speaking" to you this way before, during, or after class.

- **Be sure that you mute all participants immediately before you begin the class.** You will usually find this setting by clicking on the Participants button at the bottom of the Zoom screen. This is important to prevent unwanted interruptions such as a participant chatting with a family member or making a phone call. Even something as simple as a participant coughing or sighing can disrupt the video and audio stream.

- At class start time, pause for a few seconds and then make a clear start to the class with something like this: "It's time to begin, so welcome to your Hatha class at Yoga Seven. My name is XX and I'll be guiding you through the next hour. I encourage you to turn your video on, but whatever makes you comfortable. I will be muting your mics for the class, so if you want my attention during the session, please unmute yourself to call me or turn on your video and wave at me *[Alternatively you can ask them to use Chat if you are sure you will be monitoring it during the class]*. I'll hang around for a while after class too if you have any questions or just want to say hello,"

- Try to keep your voice at a fairly consistent volume. In particular, watch that you don't drop in volume at the end of sentences.

- If you approach your own camera during class, be aware of how your body is displayed on the screen… sometimes students can get way too much information (particularly from female teachers) from someone leaning over very close to the camera!

- If you're going to be moving around during Savasana, mute your own mic so students don't hear shuffling or moving of items (it's amazing how much the mics pick up when you least expect it). Just don't forget to unmute again when you're ready to start talking.

- Don't use Savasana or other resting poses as a time to check your phone for messages: you can't guarantee that people aren't watching you!

- After class, allow people a little time to say thank you or chat briefly. Check the Chat notes to see if anyone has sent you any messages. If you're teaching another class or a workshop, publicize it!

Summary checklist:

Your environment

- Quiet, uncluttered space with lighting from the front
- Computer or laptop (ideally wired to your modem; otherwise high speed WiFi and no-one else using it)
- Clothing that contrasts with your surroundings
- ALL NOTIFICATIONS OF EMAILS, MESSAGES, AND TEXTS TURNED OFF!

Zoom settings check (at least 15 mins before class starts)

- Audio:
  - Correct speaker selected
  - Correct microphone selected
  - Automatically adjust microphone volume OFF
  - Input level (mic volume) high
  - Suppress background noise Low
- Video:
  - Correct camera selected
  - Enable HD on or off depending on your internet quality
  - 16:9 Widescreen or Original Ratio selected depending on the view from the camera

When students arrive

- Greet people
- Explain props and their alternatives
- Open Chat window and monitor throughout
- **Check again that all your own notifications are turned off**
- **Mute ALL participants just as class begins**
- Make a clear start to the class by pausing and then introducing it
- Keep your volume consistent throughout
- Mute your own mic if students are in resting poses and you are moving around