

# Defeating the Zoom Zombie: Notes & Resource Guide

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## Notes

### Strategy #1: Structure is key

- Use zoom meetings for interaction like demonstrations and discussion. If you only need to share information, draft an email or do a recorded presentation. If you want people to pay attention, they have to be doing more than just passively listening!
- Have an agenda and share it with the group ahead of time or at the beginning of the meeting. This not only helps participants understand the purpose of the meeting and lets them know what to expect, it demonstrates that you are prepared and know what you are doing.
- Respect people's time by starting and ending when you say you will. End a bit before the hour to give people a break in case they have Zoom meetings scheduled back-to-back.
- Explain the ground rules up front. Do you want people to speak out to or ask their questions in the chat? Should they raise their hand on-screen or use the participation tab? This will prevent confusion and make novice Zoom users more comfortable.
- Have a co-host who can help monitor the chat, make sure that no one is left in the waiting room, and alert you if you miss cues like people's hands being raised.
- There is no specific time limit for a Zoom meeting, but shorter is always better. Most should be no longer than 90 minutes. When meetings need more time than that, plan for stretching or lunch breaks.
- Hosts should be the first ones in the meeting and the last ones out. Get in early enough to make sure everything is set up correctly and make yourself available to the participants who may want to linger and ask questions at the end.

### Strategy 2: Think about what people will see

- Examine your appearance in the camera view before sharing your video with others on Zoom.
- Choose neutral clothing that doesn't draw attention away from you. Solid colors tend to work better on screen. Remember that your clothing, accessories, and all the objects that people can see on your screen are communicating information about you. Make sure you are sending the right message.
- Make sure that nothing behind or beside you will be a distraction to viewers (clutter, other people, pets, posters, waving palm trees, etc.).
- Remember that the camera is always on, even if you are not speaking. Rolling your eyes at the speaker, munching on chips, obviously checking your phone, doing other tasks, etc. will likely be seen by others. Think about how these types of behaviors may be interpreted by others.
- Record yourself in meetings and review the recording paying attention to your body posture, gestures, nervous adaptors (drumming fingers, playing with hair, etc.). This is an excellent way to improve your Zoom presence for future meetings.
- Camera Tips
  - Look at the camera when speaking; it's ok to look at others as they speak.
  - The best camera angle is at eye level (it's also the most flattering!).

- Frame yourself in the middle of the image with at least your head and shoulders showing. Don't cut off the top of your head or appear to be just peaking over the bottom of the screen with just your eyes showing.
- Make sure that position yourself so that nothing in your real or virtual background is "growing" out of your head or otherwise positioned awkwardly.
- Make sure there is light behind the computer illuminating your face, not behind you casting shadows

### **Strategy 3: Think about what people will hear**

- Block out as much background noise as possible before the meeting. Let others at home know your Zoom schedule and ask them to hold interruptions until you are done, silence your cell phone, and use a quiet space with the door closed if possible.
- If you have to share a physical space with others while you Zoom, invest in noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds. This is also helpful if your computer mic doesn't pick up your voice well.
- If you are wondering if other people can hear something in your environment, ask them.
- Watch for cues that others are having trouble hearing you such as them leaning forward or turning their ears toward the screen.
- It is recommended that you mute yourself if you are not the one speaking but remember to make sure you unmute before you talk.
- Even if you are muted, be careful about what you say. There are many awkward stories of people making comments that they didn't mean to be overheard when they thought they were muted!

### **Strategy #4: Engage your audience**

- Let people know ahead of time how you want them to participate. Sharing things like discussion questions, requests for information, or asking different people to lead specific parts of the meeting should happen well in advance.
- Since you have given them this heads up, don't be afraid to call on people to ask for their input. Some people are just waiting to be asked before they will share.
- Don't be afraid of silence. Maintain eye contact and silently count to 30. You probably won't make it to 10 before someone speaks up, but this allows people time to process and see that you really do want their input and are willing to wait for them.
- Use polls to start conversations with icebreaker questions, get anonymous feedback, or find out what the participants already know or think about a topic.
- Use breakout rooms to give people a chance to discuss, brainstorm, or get to know each other in a smaller group. This can also stimulate conversation in the larger group when people share out what happened in the breakouts.
- Build up your co-leaders or guest speakers as you introduce them to give your audience a reason to listen to them. If you are enthusiastic about what they have to offer the group, your participants will be too.
- Thank people for their participation, applaud their contributions, express appreciation for their time and hard work. When people know that you are paying attention to them, they are more likely to pay attention to you.

## Strategy 5: Practice, practice, practice

- Start a meeting with just yourself and check out how you look, play with settings/controls, and just get comfortable with the Zoom environment. It's okay; no one's looking:)
- Hold practice sessions with colleagues, friends, or family. You will be improving your skills and theirs at the same time.
- When multiple people are running a Zoom together, write out a plan specifying who is doing what and when it is to be done. For high-stakes meetings, do a full rehearsal to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Ask for feedback. Like any skill, hosting Zoom meetings is something that you can improve on over time, but you won't know what to improve if you don't ask.

## Resource Guide

### What resources exist for novice meeting hosts?

- Great overview how-to article: <https://interruptmedia.com/how-to-use-zoom/>
- Basic steps for hosting a Zoom meeting and inviting participants: <https://oit.colorado.edu/tutorial/zoom-host-meeting-and-invite-participants>
- Here is a list of settings you have to choose from as a host: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005756143-Changing-your-meeting-settings>
- Host/co-host control information: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362603-Host-and-co-host-controls-in-a-meeting>
- How to do polling in Zoom: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/213756303-Polling-for-Meetings>
- How to do breakout rooms in Zoom: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Getting-Started-with-Breakout-Rooms>
- What to do when the video isn't working: <https://www.support.com/how-to/troubleshoot-zoom-video-not-working-13298>
- What to do when the audio isn't working: <https://www.support.com/how-to/troubleshoot-zoom-audio-not-working-13264>

### What is the best way to educate meeting participants on how to zoom effectively when working with less tech savvy participants?

- Send out a short video tutorial on participating in a Zoom meeting ahead of time like this one: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-meeting>
- You can share Zoom etiquette tips ahead of time. Here is a link with simple suggestions: <https://blogs.otago.ac.nz/zoom/zoom-etiquette-attendee/>
- Invite novices to join the meeting early to test everything out.
- Have a co-host in the meeting who participants can text or call with issues.

### How do I use virtual backgrounds in Zoom?

- How-to information: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background>
- Troubleshooting virtual background issues: <https://nerdschalk.com/7-ways-to-fix-zoom-virtual-background-not-working-problem/>

- Sites with free, downloadable Zoom background images:
  - Salisbury University Zoom backgrounds (Show your Seagull pride!): <https://www.flickr.com/photos/supublications/albums/72157713973335418>
  - Unsplash.com <https://unsplash.com/backgrounds/apps/zoom>
  - Pexels.com <https://www.pexels.com/search/zoom%20backgrounds/>
  - Canva (customizable, but requires free account signup) <https://www.canva.com/templates/search/zoom-virtual-backgrounds/>

### What can I do with Zoom besides host meetings?

- Record presentations to share with others (can save as an mp4 file on your computer or save on Zoom and get a shareable link to the video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR199W7HdCO>
- Zoom icebreaker activities for adults: <https://www.summitteambuilding.com/icebreakers-10-activities-to-energize-your-zoom-meetings/>
- How to host a company/team retreat on Zoom: <https://www.microverse.org/blog/how-to-run-a-fully-remote-team-retreat>
- How to host a Zoom Happy Hour: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/home/the-six-dos-and-donts-of-zoom-happy-hours/2020/05/14/e173af4e-93a0-11ea-82b4-c8db161ff6e5\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/home/the-six-dos-and-donts-of-zoom-happy-hours/2020/05/14/e173af4e-93a0-11ea-82b4-c8db161ff6e5_story.html)
- How to hold a Networking event on Zoom: <https://hbr.org/2020/06/how-to-network-when-there-are-no-networking-events>
- How to set up Zoom to host a video or live stream watch party (share video & sound): <https://sas-lps.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/42000069726-how-to-play-a-video-in-zoom>

### How do I use Zoom with kids?

- Tips & tricks for teachers educating on Zoom: <https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Tips%20and%20Tricks%20for%20Teachers%20Educating%20on%20Zoom.pdf>
- How do I help my kids who are learning on Zoom? <https://www.commonsemmedia.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-zoom>
- Zoom games for kids: <https://parade.com/1025105/stephanieosmanski/zoom-games-for-kids/>

### Is ZOOM accessible for people who are visually impaired or need other types of accommodations?

- Yes! Check out this list of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) for all sorts of accessibility issues: <https://zoom.us/accessibility/faq>