Zoom is a video call app that you can use on a computer or mobile phone, and lets you connect online for live chats and video conference meetings.

During the Covid19 crisis, Zoom has seen a surge in popularity, with millions of people using it to stay in touch with others.

**The app is available to download for free**, and Zoom users can choose to sign up to the free service, or for a number of paid plans. The **free service** allows users to create unlimited meetings with up to 100 participants, although the time limit for group meetings is **40 minutes.**

Zoom allows you to set up a meeting [host], or just join in a meeting where you can chat with others using video and audio (see and hear each other).

To join a Zoom meeting, you need to have the Zoom app, and either the meeting link, or a Meeting ID and a password. While **you do not need a Zoom account to join a meeting**, you need to set up an account in order to host a meeting. This just means providing an email address and setting a password.

**How can you join?**

Like most things, this might seem a bit tricky the first time – but stick with it!

If you haven't used Zoom before, you might want to do this a few minutes before your class is due to start.

1. Click the link that was sent to you (on your phone, tablet or computer) - just click on the long link (below where it says ‘Join Zoom meeting ’).
2. If you haven’t used Zoom before you’ll be asked to install a little piece of software on your laptop (or the app if it’s on a tablet or phone) – you’ll only do that once.  Just follow the instructions.

1. If you already have Zoom, click on Open Zoom when it appears on the screen.
2. Answer the question about the audio:

* On your phone, pick from Wifi or Cellular Data [Wifi if you’re at home and have broadband]
* On a laptop, click on Join with Computer Audio

* Make sure that your camera is turned on – there should not be a diagonal line through the camera. If there is, just click on the picture of the icon and the line will go.

1. You might be asked to enter your name and email (in the case of a Pilates class for example, just so the host know who’s in the class) and confirm you aren’t a robot (tick the box). This may not happen at all.

(If a new tab opens asking you to sign in with Google, ignore that and just click back on the Zoom icon)

**Video and audio** – When joining a Zoom meeting, you can choose to turn your video on or off, but you’ll want it on if you are chatting with friends so they can see you. And you will also be able to see the other people if they have their camera on. (The host has additional controls to disable the video or mute the audio of those taking part in the meeting).

**Waiting rooms** - When the meeting is set up, Zoom automatically sets up a waiting room for that meeting. If you sign in to the meeting before the host is ready, you can just wait and when the host is there, they will see that you have logged in and they will let you into the meeting. As people turn up for the meeting, the host sees a message and clicks that to let them in. This is also safer because the host will only let in the people you want to chat with, and not strangers.

**Setting up a meeting** – A host can choose to set up an instant meeting, or schedule one for a particular time. This generates the Meeting ID and password, and a **link** for the meeting which can be shared with people you want to join, usually by email, but it can also be sent by WhatsApp.