

TIPS ON HOW TO PREPARE A SESSION & KNOWING ZOOM BETTER

A) PREPARATION

Prepare the session with plenty of time. Be aware of where your session fits within the overall course structure. Which session was given before yours? Which is the next one? Are there connections with important points in other presentations? Make sure the seeker/participant feels that the whole course is truly interconnected!

1. Watch Mother's talk for the session. See the spreadsheet of link talks and the timing chosen for a specific subject.
2. Read the powerpoint and background information. These can be found in the respective folders.
3. We recommend you watch the video we have recorded of the presentation. This will help you to see how you can put that session together - how the powerpoints can be used and developed. And to see the relationship with the background material and Mother's talks and any other videos we have used. The pre-recorded videos can be found on their corresponding page at <https://100.sahajayoga.pl>
4. Take time to make the presentation your own - do not make it in a rush! Everyone is free to create his/her own presentation. Just bear in mind that this course has been developed so that each session builds on the previous ones. So you might like to keep the essential points.
5. Keep the slides concise. A simple and elegant aesthetic with minimal text works best and helps the seekers to keep their attention and absorb what is being said.
6. Check the detailed structure for each session. (The weekly structure is a pdf to be found in each general folder). Is there a certain technique to be explained for this session? Or a specific meditation? These are often not shown in the powerpoint but explained/done during the second meditation. All the materials can be found in the respective folder.
7. Try to become as familiarized as possible with all possibilities of Zoom (Sharing screen, recording, making someone else (co)host. Even without Covid we may still be using Zoom for quite a while! (more about this below)

B) THE SESSION

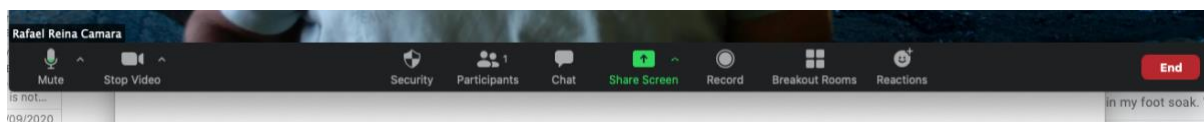
1. Be there at least 20 minutes before the course starts to test that everything works (for both a live and online session - or, many times, both)! Welcome the seekers and prepare the altar.
2. For online sessions, make another yogi co-host. If there are any technical problems, then the co-host can 'take over'. Have at least 2 people on screen (with video on) at the same time whenever possible. ask a yogi to join you in the screen.
3. When you start the online presentation: Start to record the session! Then you can send the link afterwards to the seekers.
4. We found it works really well to make the sessions as collective as possible. So ask different yogis to lead different parts of every session (footsoak/balancing, cleansing techniques, final meditation) beforehand, if possible.
5. The footsoak/balancing in the beginning shouldn't be too long! It's easy to lose track of time ;)
6. Person who leads footsoak/balancing can be charge of answering chats if using Zoom or live-streaming, or interrupting if seems to be needed.
7. Try to make the session as interactive as possible. Try to engage the seekers with more questions, if they have understood, sometimes asking if they can summarize what has been said!
8. Take time between slides. Don't rush the presentation! Let the 'concepts' sink in!
9. Make reference to points that will be dealt with in future sessions. It's a very didactic way of engaging people and awakening their interest for the next sessions!

C) AFTER

1. If using a simple email account, write an email to your group of seekers with the email addresses in bcc (we have to be careful with privacy rules). Use this format:
 - To: Sahaja Yoga course
 - Bcc: Your group of seekers (and eventually the course team so everyone gets it)
 - Subject: Week XXX + TOPIC and specify Beginners, Intermediate or Advanced course
2. If you have someone in the team who is a bit more technically acclaimed, you can look into using a (free!) service like [hubspot.com](https://www.hubspot.com), which allows you to manage beautiful group emails, registrations, landing pages, etc. in a very elegant way. It does require some effort to initially set up however. For assistance you can contact sandernotenbaert@gmail.com.
3. Suggested content of the email:
 - Pdf of power point, background information, and extra info (basically all the elements that are to be found in the Google drive folder) + link to the recorded session.
 - Short reference to the topic of the next session
 - “homework”: some related challenge or concept they can put into practice for the coming week
4. Check the emails for a week after, in case there are questions about any element of your presentation.

OPTIMIZING THE USE OF ZOOM

Before we give specifics for each role (please, read below), here is some important information to get a good sound. These are the features you see in the bottom of your screen:

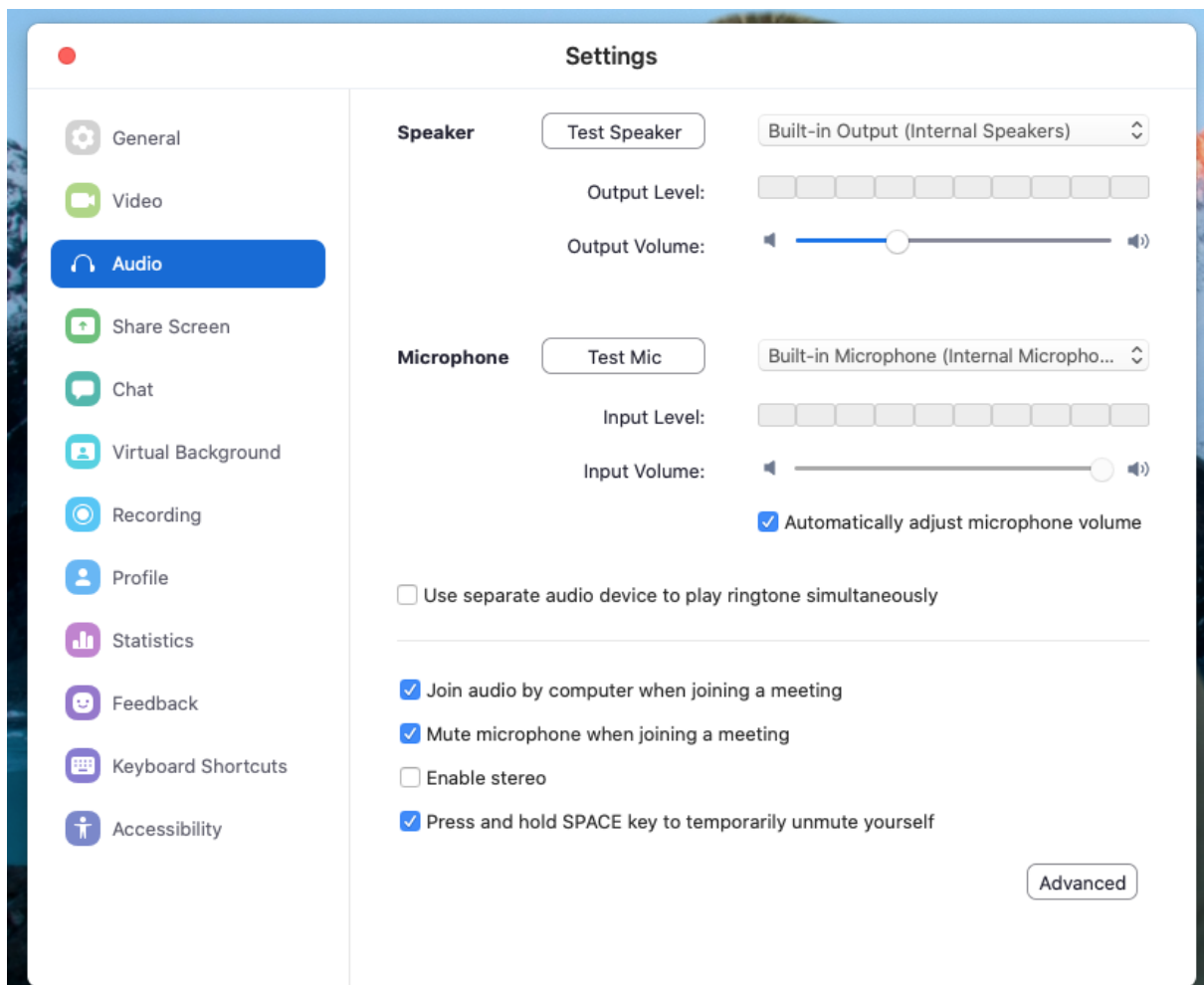


1) In the bottom left you'll see the microphone icon. Next to it there is a small arrow: Click on it and you'll open a menu. The last item of this menu is 'Audio settings'



2) Click on Audio settings and you'll see a new window. Turn on (it will turn blue as you do so) the following features

- Join audio computer when joining meeting
- Mute microphone when joining a meeting
- Press and hold SPACE key to temporarily unmute yourself



3) You'll see 'Advanced options' in the bottom right. Click on it

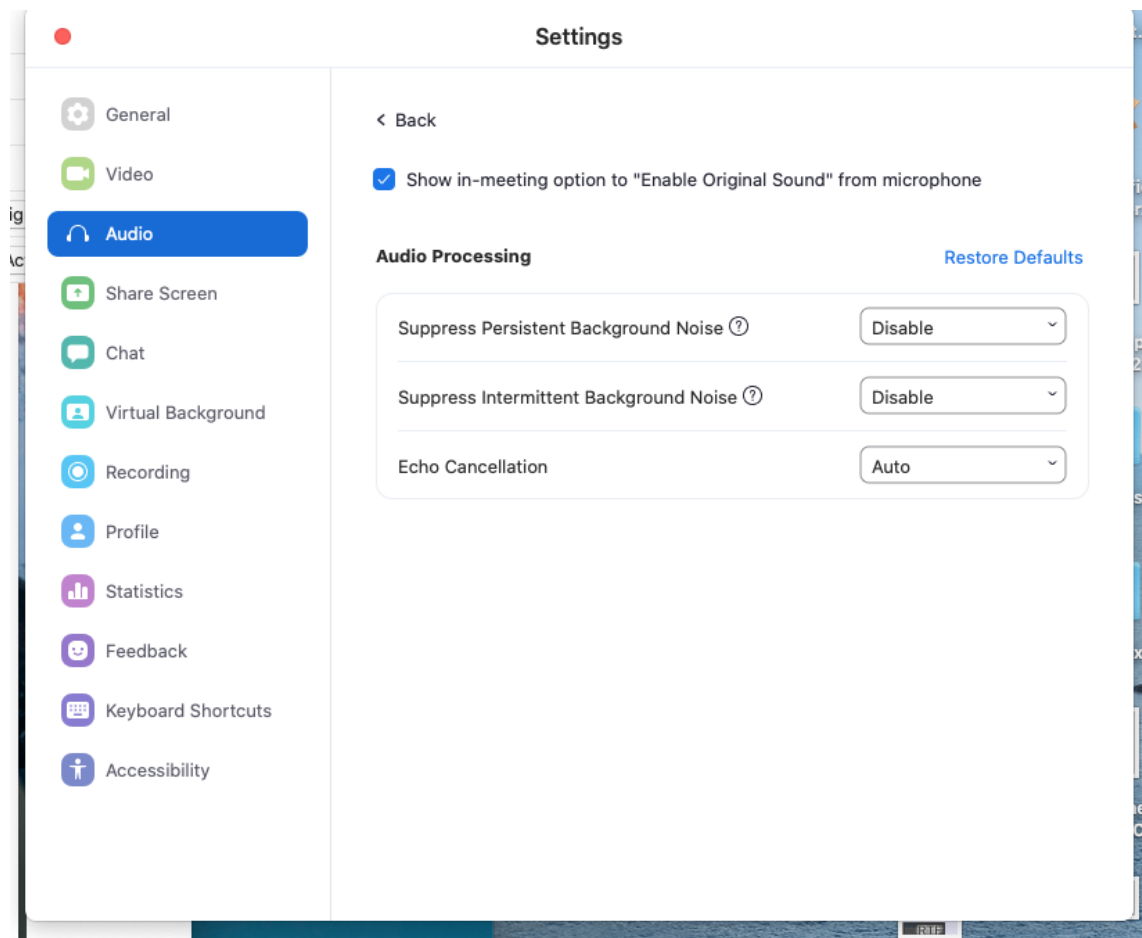
4) Tick the feature 'Show in-meeting option to enable original sound' from microphone

5) Below this you'll see Audio Processing. There are 3 features

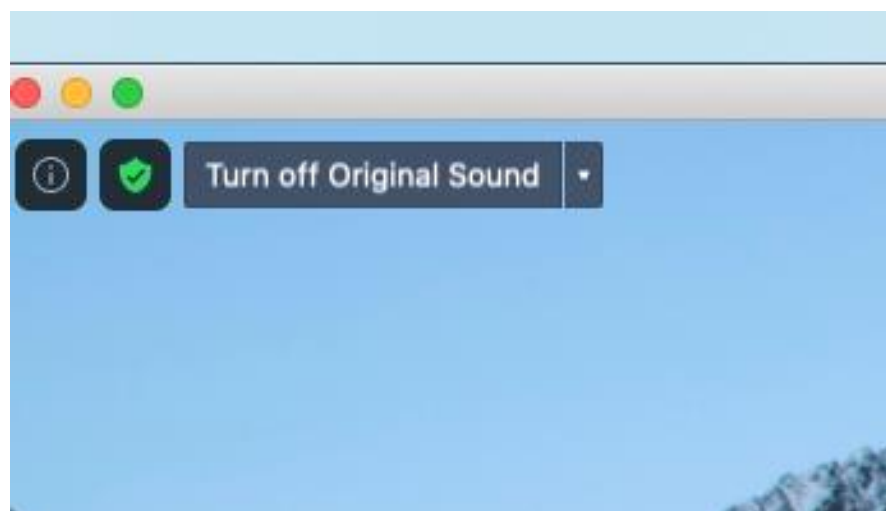
-Supress Persistent Background Noise: On the short menu to its right DISABLE it. DON'T leave it in AUTO!!

-Suppress Intermittent Background Noise: Also Disable it.

-Leave Echo Cancellation in Auto



6) Now you can close this window and return to the normal screen. Now you see ' Turn off Original Sound' on your upper left corner



7) There is an arrow on the right. Open it and you'll see at least one option of which microphone to use. The best is to tick on Built-in microphone. Now your sound will be much better!!!

There are 3 roles in an online meeting:

- Participants : they listen and eventually ask questions
- Host: he/she schedules the meeting and opens it.
- Presenter: he shares a video or a power point

Knowing this, here there are some best practices for each of the roles. Please read carefully and keep this handy as you may need to take any of these roles at one point.

PARTICIPANTS:

- Please always make sure you mute yourselves. We do not realize but mikes nowadays are extremely efficient and we hear it even when you yawn, and it can be very disturbing in the middle of a very silent meditation, and meditations are very silent because everyone is on mute.
- If singing bhajans or mantras, you can sing along from your home, but stay muted. There is delay in the transmission of sound when 2 different connections try to sing together. This transforms in a horrendous cacophony when several people try to sing together!!! So sing with all your heart but stay muted!
- As shown above you will find at the bottom of your meeting screen the following features: the mute button to turn on and off your mike, the video button to turn on and off your camera, the participant list button (if you want to see who is in), chat button if you need to communicate with a person privately or with the whole group, and the share button if you need to present.

PRESENTERS:

- before sharing please open the window you are going to share in your computer. For example: open youtube and search the video, and get it ready to play (find the exact starting point), and also open your powerpoint.
- then click on the Share Screen button: a window will open where you can see all open items in your computer and you can select the window you will be sharing BUT...

VERY IMPORTANT, before you select the one you will share, make sure to click both options at the bottom of the window:

>Share computer sound --- if you do not click this option, we will all see your screen/video, but we will not hear the sound.

>Optimize screen sharing for video clip --- if you do not click this option, the video of Mother will not play smoothly. Instead we will see the video as a succession of photos as it will play very slowly.

- last but not least: you will have to sing alone. Or with the people in the same room as you. Do not ask others to unmute and sing with you. If you do not want to sing a Capella, either share a video or audio of a mantra or bhajan, or ask someone who would like to sing the mantras for you. But in that case either mute yourself or don't sing along!

HOST:

- it may happen you will be the host or co-host of the meeting if the host gave you that 'privilege'. If so, you need to be aware that not all the participants may have read their instructions above, and not all may be computer savy and know where/how to mute themselves. So rather than asking several times to people to mute themselves just know you are your own master and you can mute them. Don't let noise go on unwanted. You can click on the participants list to check whose mike is not muted (showing grey instead of red) and (the one making the noise will be turning dark grey) you can mute the person.

- if you need to go, make another participant the host, or your departure might close the meeting.

We hope these instructions will help you to 'attend' the meditations and/or give courses with better quality of sound and video!

With Love!

The Amsterdam Course Team