

Welcome to our online Zoom line dancing sessions. This document has information to help everyone have a better experience.

Zoom dancing can be a bit frustrating. You don't have others around you to watch, especially when facing away from your device. The sound quality is not perfect because Carole and I don't have the gear for good sound and video recording. Internet speed and congestion can cause slowdowns and glitching. That being said, you can still have fun, get a bit of exercise, and remember how to dance. :-) And the advantage is that no one can see you, and you can't distract or run into anyone if you make a mistake.

Right now we are holding three sessions per week. Mondays and Thursdays are 'mixed-level', meaning we do a mix of easy, medium and harder dances, repeating the same dances on Thursday that were done on Monday. On Friday we do all harder dances. On all three days we start teaching at 11:00am Ottawa time but typically open the meeting 20 - 30 minutes early, so people can check that their equipment is working, and/or chat. We do not lock the meetings once started, so you are free to join late.

Here are guidelines and information to help you and us:

To make Zoom work better for us:

- Mute your microphone and turn off your camera as we get started. This cuts down on data, noise, distraction and screen clutter.
- Make sure you know how to use Zoom before joining the session. If you've never done it before or are unsure of some things, contact one of us and have a quick tutorial session. We want to avoid doing tech support during the session.
- Use the Chat option if you're having a problem or want to bring something to our attention. We'll try and keep an eye on it.
- It's nice if, when you enter the session, your name pops up rather than the name of your device. There should be a way to do this as you're joining, depending on your device. On a phone/tablet, if you join once without using the link but instead open the Zoom app and choosing 'Join a Meeting', you have the option to 'Join with a personal link name.' If you do this once, it uses the same name from then on. Once you have joined, please check that your name appears in the corner of your picture, and if not, rename it. On a laptop, right-click on your name in the corner of your picture box. I don't know how to do it on a phone/tablet (if you figure it out please let me know).

To make Zoom work better for you:

- Close as many applications on your device as possible.
- Try using external speakers for better sound quality and volume. If you have several devices, experiment and see which one works best.
- Know how to mute and unmute your mic, so that if you have a question after the walk-through you can quickly unmute and shout out. (On a laptop, you can temporarily unmute your mic by pressing and holding the space bar. If this doesn't work for you, check the Audio Settings and make sure that option box is selected.)
- To get rid of all the empty black boxes that stay behind once people turn off their cameras: On laptops, in the Video Settings of Zoom is a check-able box "Hide non-video participants". On phone/tablets, that same option is found under 'More'.
- You can use Gallery View before class starts to say hello (somewhere on your screen is a one-click option to switch between gallery view and speaker view). Once we start, I'll use the Spotlight setting to highlight whichever one of us is teaching, so that Carole or I will fill most of your screen.
- On a laptop, in the Audio Settings of Zoom, is a box you can check that is labelled: "Automatically join audio by computer when joining a meeting." If you are having issues with getting your audio to work, this may help.
- Be careful, if using a cell phone, that you're not running up huge charges unknowingly.

Some hints for dancing:

- The hardest part about line dancing over the internet is that you can't see what's going on when you turn to the back wall. Here's a tip stolen from the World Line Dance Newsletter: *I put my videos on my TV and in an adjacent area, I prop one of those long door mirrors up so it is focused on the TV. I don't put the mirror directly behind me because then YOU are in the way, but I put it in an area kind of at an angle so that I can see it and it can see the TV. That way, when you turn away from the TV screen, you can still see the lesson on the mirror and not have to look over your shoulder.*
- Another option is to link in with a second device, but position it at the back wall such that you are looking at its reflection in a mirror. I tried this with my tablet and a small (5"x5") makeup mirror, propped up on the floor, and it worked quite well. Here is a picture of Mary's set-up for being able to see us properly when she's facing the 'back' wall. The laptop is on a bench, facing a long rectangular mirror propped up at an angle against the table. Apparently it's working very well. She has another computer at the 'front' wall.



- If a dance is beyond your comfort level, my suggestions are: do the walk-through, take note of bits that are too hard and figure out how to remove them (is there a turn, a weight change, can you just stand there and wait). When we dance it, do the bits you can, facing whichever way works. If you get lost at the back wall, just watch the screen and keep track of where we are in the dance and join back in when we start the next wall. Or you can take the opportunity to sit and rest up for the next one. :-)