



Addressing Zoom Fatigue

Teaching and learning on Zoom can be exhausting. With reduced visual cues and an intense focus on faces, connectivity issues and delays, and distractions from other computer applications or being seen on-screen, videoconferencing stresses us differently than in-person social interactions. While some aspects are inherently part of remote classes, instructors can make several adjustments to bring the focus back to content and connection.

Course Structure & Logistical Decisions

Save class time for activities. [Flip your classroom](#), or provide multiple opportunities for student interactions in class – making plenty of time for your Zoom sessions to be interactive.

Provide “bio” breaks. Particularly for longer class sessions, provide 3-5 minutes for students to stand up and stretch, use the restroom, or grab a snack or drink. A short break away from the screen can help restore focus. For all-day events, provide plenty of time between sessions so students can make a meal, take a walk, and decompress from time on Zoom.

Co-create class agreements around video usage. Requiring video can let the instructor know students are present and paying attention, but can pose issues for students without great internet service and create distractions. Create alternate means of engagement through the chat or other tools. You might request that students show video for class discussions or particular activities. Students may choose to [use a virtual background](#) or [blur their background](#); instructors may find using virtual backgrounds reduces distraction. Users can also elect to [turn off self-view](#) even while video is on.

Allow renaming so students can add their nickname, share their pronouns, or spell their name phonetically. This setting can be changed in the [Zoom online settings menu](#).

Presence

Check in. Create space to connect with one another. Have everyone drop one word in the chat to describe their current state, or ask students to [select an emoji to display](#) (in Reactions).

Mindfulness exercises may help students relax and refocus in the online environment. Take a collective class breath, read an inspirational quote or poem, or have students turn off videos and write their response to a prompt or take a moment of silence together.



Engagement

Start class with a fast chat. Give a prompt and send students into [breakout rooms](#) of two or three, giving just a few minutes for them to check in and answer the question. Ask another question and recreate rooms to let students talk with multiple peers.

Use [annotations](#) to facilitate marking up a shared document, or [share a whiteboard](#) for a game or collective class activity.

Share student answers to a prompt with [Mentimeter](#). Whether checking for conceptual understanding or asking a just-for-fun question, students enter a code to answer from their device. Pull up the results, share your screen, and watch the word cloud of answers change in real time.

Kick off class with a warm-up activity designed to get students moving and interacting. The [Community Performance Toolbox](#), published by CU Boulder faculty from theatre and dance, has some great suggestions.

Create a class playlist. Use the Zoom chat or a Google Doc to co-create a class playlist with students. [Share your computer sound](#) and play as students arrive on Zoom for class.

Hold a chat storm. Ask a question and give everyone time to type their answer in the chat without pressing Enter. On the instructor's signal, everyone hits Enter and adds their answer to the chat at the same time.

Additional Reading & Resources

[Getting ready for class on Zoom](#) (CU Boulder Center for Teaching & Learning)

Familiarize yourself with Zoom settings, accessed online: <https://cuboulder.zoom.us>

[How to Combat Zoom Fatigue](#) (Harvard Business Review)

[Stanford researchers identify four causes for 'Zoom fatigue' and their simple fixes](#) (Stanford News)

Get on Zoom and practice! Sharing your screen, running breakout rooms, managing participants and more will go smoothest with plenty of practice.