waltons new school of music

Zoom for Students

Most online tuition with Waltons New School of Music uses a video 'meeting' application called Zoom, which is free to download for students. If you are not familiar with Zoom, we have included some essential information for you.
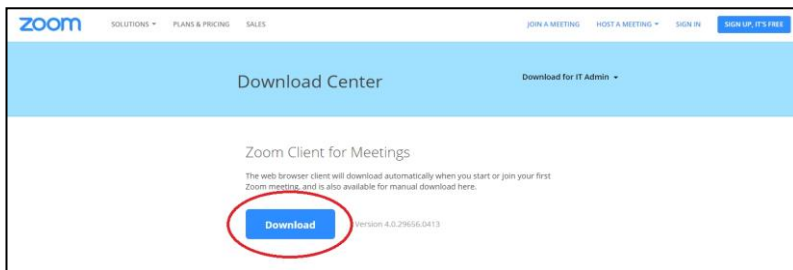
What You Need to Get Started

- An internet-connected laptop, computer, tablet or smartphone.
- If using a laptop or computer, it will need either an integrated or separate webcam (camera) and microphone.
- A laptop or computer with webcam and microphone is recommended, as it will have the largest picture.
- Ideally, internet speed at least 1.5Mb per second. (You can test your speed using Measurement Lab's Speed Test.)
- Headphones or earbuds generally provide the best sound quality for online music tuition and reduce the risk of hearing echoes when you talk, sing or play. However, they may not be ideal for all types of tuition; your teacher will recommend what's best for you.
- A USB microphone is recommended for intermediate and advanced students. (See Audio Settings below.)

Downloading Zoom

1. For laptops and computers, go to the Zoom website.
2. Scroll to the bottom of the page. Under Download, click on Meetings Client:

3. This will take you to a new screen, where you can download and install Zoom Client for Meetings:
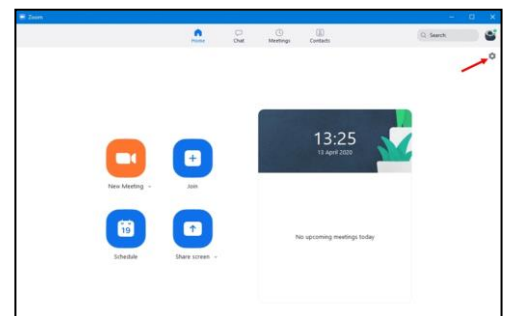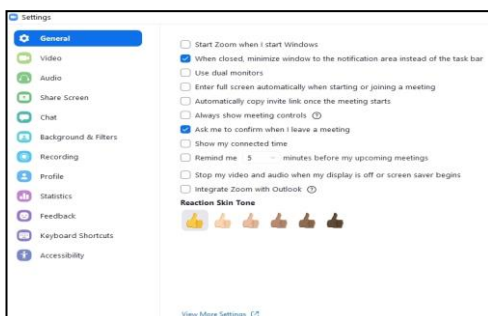

For iOS (Apple) and Android devices, you will need to install the Zoom mobile app:

- For iOS devices, download Zoom Cloud Meetings in the Apple App Store.
- For Android devices, download Zoom Cloud Meetings in Google Play.

Audio Settings for Music Learning

Zoom is an excellent app for online music learning, but it requires a couple of small adjustments for best results.

1. Open the Zoom app.
2. Click on the gear icon in the top right corner of your Zoom screen.
3. This will take to the Settings screen, with Video and Audio at the top.

- Clicking on Video will show what your webcam sees, and you can use it to adjust the position of your laptop, computer or device. Your teacher will suggest where to position it (for example, to see your hands on a piano keyboard).
- Clicking on Audio allows you to test both your speaker (what you will hear) and microphone (what your teacher will hear).
- Zoom's standard sound setting, which is designed for speech, is not ideal for music lessons, so you will need to make these changes:
    1. Click on the Advanced button in the lower right corner of the Audio screen. This will take you to the Advanced Sound Settings screen.
    2. Tick the 'Show in-meeting option to "Enable Original Sound" from microphone.'
    3. Change the Suppress Persistent Background Noise and Suppress Intermittent Background Noise settings from Auto to Disable.
- Regarding audio, for intermediate and advanced students, we recommend investing in an inexpensive USB condenser microphone, which will dramatically improve the sound quality of what you play or sing. (USB mics are also ideal for recording performances for one of the New School's Virtual Student Concerts.) There are a number of USB mics available, but here are four possibilities to begin with: Blue Snowball Ice, Samson Go, Fifine K669 and T.Bone SC 440. For tablets and smartphones, you can either get a USB adapter to use with one of these microphones or get a mic specifically designed for tablets and smartphones, such as the RODE SmartLav+.
- Headphones or earbuds (Bluetooth preferred for ease of movement and to avoid trailing wires) generally provide the best sound quality for online music tuition and reduce the risk of hearing echoes when you talk, sing or play. However, they may not be ideal for all types of tuition; your teacher will recommend what's best for you.

Joining a Lesson or Class

Before each lesson or class, your teacher will send you an email invitation, which will include a URL (web address), meeting ID and password.

1. Shortly before your lesson or class is due to begin, either click on the URL or open Zoom Client for Meetings on your laptop or computer or the Zoom mobile app on your device and type the meeting ID and password.
2. Your teacher will either admit you directly to your lesson or class or you will be in a virtual 'waiting room' until the previous lesson or class finishes.

Bottom Menu

When you are in your lesson or class, there is a menu at the bottom. Here's what it means:

Useful Tips

BASICS

- Make sure that your laptop, computer or device is either connected to power or fully charged before your lesson or class.
- If your internet speed is relatively slow, please ask other members of your household not to use a streaming service or play online games while your lesson or class is taking place. Zoom needs a steady internet connection to work properly without freezing.

LIGHTING • POSITIONING

- Position yourself in a well-lit spot without too many shadows. You need to be far enough away from the camera for your teacher to see details while having a good overall perspective.
- It's always better to be front-lit than back-lit.
- Make sure that your laptop, computer or device is resting steadily on a stand, table or chair.

RECORDING

- Zoom has a recording feature that allows you to record part or all of your lesson or class. Your teacher will need to enable this feature for you to do this.