

The Dos and Don'ts of Taking Zoom Dance Class

[Haley Hilton](#), Apr 17, 2020

Since social distancing measures mean none of us can get to the dance studio, Zoom has suddenly become a critical part of dance education. Thousands of dance classes are now happening via the videoconferencing service, with dancers participating virtually from their living rooms.

That gallery of squares is the lifeline connecting you to your dance friends, your mentors, and your ability to keep up your technique. But getting the most out of a Zoom class can be tricky. To fill you in on all the dos and don'ts of Zoom dance class etiquette, we caught up with Sam Williams from Center Stage Performing Arts Studio in Orem, UT, and Karli Koelliker from Dance Academy USA in Cupertino, CA.

DO Ask Your Family for Some Privacy

"We've had a couple classes where little siblings would distract or join," Koelliker says. "Let your family members know that you shouldn't be interrupted." Of course, not all of us have the luxury of private space right now. If your situation means true privacy is impossible, ask family members to be respectful of your teacher and classmates by staying quiet and out of the way.

DON'T Be Late

You wouldn't arrive at the dance studio exactly at the scheduled class start time, would you? Same goes for Zoom class. If possible, log on a few minutes early. Technology can be unpredictable, so you'll want the extra time to get set up.

DO Wear Proper Dance Attire

Although circumstances are strange, there's no reason you shouldn't dress the part. "It'll help you take class seriously," Williams says. "If you're in your dance clothes with your hair up and your water bottle nearby, you'll be in the zone, and you won't be wasting your time."

DON'T Forget Your Charger

Don't let a low battery keep you from participating. "Technology issues are bound to happen, but a charger is an easy thing to have on hand," Koelliker says.

DO Keep Your Video On

It's important for your teacher to be able to see you dancing in order to correct you. "Unless there's a really good reason, your video needs to be on," Koelliker says. "If it's not, for all I know you could be sitting on your couch, eating a snack."

DON'T Keep Your Audio On

Muting your audio will prevent the background noises in your home from distracting the class, and keep potential echoes to a minimum. If your teacher asks you a question that requires more than a yes or no answer, unmute yourself as quickly as possible to respond.

DO Make the Most of Nonverbal Communication

By now, most Zoom-using dance teachers have figured out the usefulness of communicating via nonverbal cues ("Thumbs-up if you want me to go over that again!"). Make sure you respond to these prompts quickly and visibly.

DON'T Use Virtual Backgrounds

Yes, you may be familiar with Zoom and its many tricks from school, but this feature is super distracting. As you move around the screen, you and the background can cut in and out, making it difficult for your teacher to properly see and correct you.

DO Provide Feedback

If you're having trouble with an element of your Zoom education—the sound quality is poor, or the instructor keeps moving out of frame while demonstrating—politely communicate your concerns to your teacher. This is an ever-changing landscape, and it's helpful for teachers to know what is and isn't working so they can make adjustments.

DON'T Abuse the Chat Feature

Yes, online banter with your dance friends is fun, but this isn't the time. "Rather than dancing, we had some students who'd be up at their computers, chatting back and forth with one another," Koelliker says. Nobody can dance and type simultaneously.

DO Treat This Like Any Other Class

"As a teacher, I expect my students to be just as present and focused on Zoom as they are in the studio," Williams says. "Like anything else, what you put into this experience is what you get out of it."

DON'T Trade in Your Studio Community for Flashy Classes

Sure, the idea of taking class with that big social media star is enticing, but always prioritize your own studio's offerings. "Zoom classes with your friends allow you to maintain a sense of community, and to continue to work with teachers who know you and your individual needs," Williams says. Extra classes should be an addition to your studio training, not a replacement for it.

DO Prioritize Kindness

This is a new and complicated scenario for everyone involved. And there are a lot of people involved in a Zoom dance class: you, your teacher, your classmates, plus the people with whom you're all social distancing. If (when) glitches or miscommunications occur, be compassionate. We're all in this together!