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# Covid-19: #StayInWorkOut - moving your activity classes online

Earlier this week, we [published a new resource](#) that highlighted the ways that tech innovators are responding to the covid-19 crisis by making

**available services to support physical activity while people are based at home.**

Since then, Sport England have launched a huge, national campaign to support people to be active in their own homes: [#StayInWorkOut](#).

Having spoken to many activity instructors and teaching businesses over the past week that have suddenly had to stop delivering face-to-face sessions due to the coronavirus situation, we wanted to explore what instructors and deliverers can do to help keep the nation moving from their own homes.

We know that this is a stressful and worrying time for those whose business relies on delivering local activity classes and that for their participants, these local classes are often vital for social connection as well as a chance to be active.

While moving classes online may not be an option for every activity instructor, with some basic equipment and the right online platforms there are ways to continue to deliver services to your participants (and potentially a much wider audience).

**We spoke to Marie Page, a digital marketing expert ([The Digiterati](#)) and part-time Yoga Instructor ([MariePageYoga](#)) about her experiences as she shifts to delivering online classes.**



As someone who has run a variety of training businesses for many years with a digital delivery method – either through pre-recorded video courses or live video-based ‘webinar-style’ training – Marie is very much up-to-speed with all the options available as she uses them daily.

*"But over the last few weeks I've been applying this to my own Yoga business by livestreaming all my classes so that students self-isolating can still take part", she says.*

Her students have described the switch as ‘a godsend’ and ‘a lifesaver’ and have continued to pay the same fees despite the remote access. This article tells that story and also examines the technologies available to you.

**Which platform should I choose for live online training?**

There are many options available on the market. The obvious free options are Facebook Live, YouTube and Skype. For more features, including the ability to see your students Zoom and Microsoft Teams offer good functionality.

Here I compare the options:

### **Simple livestreaming – Facebook Live**

Almost all my students are on Facebook so as an initial pilot Facebook Live was the obvious choice.

Your choices with Facebook Live will depend on the degree to which you want to monetise your classes. If you are happy offering them free-of-charge then a Facebook Page or a public Group is the way to go.

If like me your students have already paid for a term of teaching you may want to put them into a Private or Secret Facebook Group and livestream to that.



*Screen grab from Facebook Livestreamed yoga class*

All you will need to do is set up your phone on a tripod, open up the Facebook Group and select the red 'Live' button underneath where you post. Write the title of the class and start teaching.

The downside of Facebook Live is that you can't see your online students so feedback and adjustments that you'd normally do as a response to poor alignment is not possible.

You'll need to provide much more of a running commentary on the common issues normally seen in particular postures and demonstrate the right and wrong way yourself from in front of the camera.

Participants can type in questions and offer the usual reactions (Love, Thumbs up etc) but you'll not want to be overly distracted by them when

you are guiding through a physical class, especially if you also have real life students in the room with you as well.

### **Zoom – the professional choice**

Zoom is a great piece of software, simple-to-use and provides you with the option to see your students while you are teaching them (assuming they have their phones or webcams appropriately positioned).



## *Teaching an in-person and online yoga class using Zoom*

You'll be able to see everyone logged in via a grid view and you can zoom in to have any one person fill the screen. So you could incorporate some Q&A at the end if you wanted.

Zoom has a free option but it is limited to 40 minutes per broadcast and you don't get a cloud-based recording of the class.

Better to go for the £11.99 a month Pro option where you can have up to 100 participants, a lot more functionality and the ability to have Zoom record and host the class for people that were not able to attend live. A full list of pricing options and features for Zoom [is here](#).

You send a link to the students before the class starts and they can either attend live or watch the catch-up.

What I've done with Zoom in the past is to download the recording and then upload to my YouTube channel or Facebook Page/Group.

### **Skype**

Once the de-facto video conferencing solution, Skype has really fallen behind in recent years to be overtaken by other solutions I've outlined above. That said, Skype continues to be used by a faithful crowd of seasoned users, so if your students are already familiar with Skype it could make perfect sense to utilise it.

Skype works on PC/Mac and on mobile phones. You can invite participants to join the live call so you will see them on a grid, much like Zoom.

However, just like Microsoft Teams (which is itself based on the now Microsoft-owned Skype), each participant requires their own Skype account. This will give them a username which they will provide so you as the host can invite each of them to join your call.

As with Microsoft Teams, this is quite different to Zoom and Whereby with which you can create a unique link that you email or text to your students en-masse to join the session at the schedule time with a single click.

You might see this as a benefit rather than a limitation; you may feel the personal connection with each student suits your style and class numbers.

Plus you will be able to keep tight control over who is on the call because you will need to add them, although this could also be problematic if students are late as you would need to stop to add them.



*(Left) Using Skype for virtual teaching*

## **YouTube**

YouTube also allows for live streaming. Your account will need to be verified (not difficult but takes 24 hours) and you will need to stream via webcam unless you have at least 1,000 subscribers in which case you can stream via the mobile app.

Access can be public, private or unlisted.

Private access allows sharing to a max of 50 different people.

To stream on desktop go to Creator Studio Tools then Live Streaming. You may need to wait for 24 hours to get access to live streaming the first time you attempt it.

You can schedule your livestream ahead of time to let your subscribers know when you are going to be live. As with Facebook Live you won't be able to see your students.

## **Other options**

I've been exploring some other options as well including Microsoft Teams, Whereby, Facetime, Google Hangouts and Instagram IGTV. To read about these see my full guide [here](#).

## **Tips for delivering classes online**

### *Music:*

If you are running a class which is normally delivered with music, you will need to consider how to incorporate this.

As long as other participants microphones are muted then you as the instructor should be able to play music in the background as you normally would.

Note that you will not be able to synchronise music from two sources so, you would not be able to play along with your student or have them playing along to a backing track you are playing. This is due to the delay experienced when working online regardless of platform.

If you are creating publicly accessible content such as via Facebook Live or YouTube, then be aware of any licensing restrictions that may apply to the music you use. YouTube will simply put ads onto your content (and use that revenue to credit the publisher) but Facebook Live Streams are likely to be auto cancelled and removed.

#### *Camera set up:*

For live teaching, especially when you need to demonstrate postures at a wider angle you will need your phone/camera set a lot further away than your webcam would usually be.

So, if you are teaching you'll have your phone/camera set up a long way in front of you and likely too far for you to read the comments from participants or to even clearly see what they are doing.

If you can screen cast to a large TV (perhaps using Apple TV or a Firestick) you will find it a lot easier to see your students.

Alternatively use an additional device such as a laptop or tablet and have that on your mat so you can easily see what is going on whilst teaching to a different device/camera set up in front of you.

Be aware that this will lag a few seconds behind you.

The selfie camera on a phone is generally of inferior quality to the front facing camera so ideally use that (you'll maybe need someone to help you set it up so you are fully in picture) and use another device set in front of you to monitor what is going on live.

Do make sure that the subject is well lit so your students can see what you are doing.

#### *Content:*

The most obvious thing, particularly if you are shifting existing face-to-face clients to an online scenario is to carry on teaching broadly the same type of class as you normally would. These can be livestreamed or pre-recorded.

If livestreamed, then make sure there is also an option for people to use to catch up too if they missed the class time live.

You may, however, want to adapt your normal content to the online setting. People may not have all the equipment you would normally bring to classes yourself and you may simply find that a more chilled vibe feels more appropriate online.

You could think of a series of classes around particular themes. In yoga this could be a focus on chakras, hip openers, developing flexibility, strength and power but, especially with the concerns around coronavirus you could

work to include pranayama classes, meditation, dealing with stress and anxiety.

You could also set up online mastermind calls that would work as group coaching. This could be a combination of pre-recorded content if you wanted along with live elements and a Q&A.

### **Equipment you will need**

A **phone** or **web cam**, a good **wifi connection** and a **tripod** (with an adaptor to support the phone). Best to have the phone plugged in as videoing takes a lot of battery.

It is always best to use a **mic** if you can. For more traditional (non yoga teaching) Facebook Live I would typically be using a **wired clip mic** (Lavelier) on a long cable but a wired mic is going to be problematic when teaching some moves! You could use Bluetooth earbuds – like AirPods or similar – as these contain a reasonably good mic and will sound much better than relying on your phone mic if it's some distance away.

I have found that live-streaming using a web cam attached to a **laptop** enables me to plug in a decent mic which you can place on the ground or suspended on a stand (so that any bangs on the floor are minimised). The other advantage of using a laptop or tablet is that it will be easier for you to see your students.

If you are outdoors do ensure you have a mic with a furry cover to reduce wind noise.

Unless the room has very good lighting you will need some additional lights. **Professional studio lights** are the best way to go. They start at about £70. As the one I use is very bright I tend to angle it at the ceiling to have the reflected light in the room.

London Sport have arranged a free webinar delivered by Marie Page and Carlton Jefferis from The Digiterati focused on 'Transferring Activity Classes Online' at 2pm on Thursday 2 April.

## **[Free Webinar: Transferring Activity Classes Online - Thursday 2 April at 2pm](#)**

Marie will share her top tips for transferring your face-to-face classes to an online setting examining the choice of platforms available and with recommendations from her own experience as a yoga teacher and digital marketer.

Marie and Carlton will also be available for Q&A at the end of the webinar session. Attendance is limited to 100 participants, so book now to secure your place. [Registration available here.](#)

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## About London Sport

London Sport aims to make London the most physically active city in the world. Supported by the Mayor of London and Sport England, our target is to get Londoners more physically active.

For more information on London Sport, visit [www.londonsport.org](http://www.londonsport.org)

## Contacts



### **Chris Scott**

Press Contact

Head of Corporate Communications

[chris.scott@londonsport.org](mailto:chris.scott@londonsport.org)

020 3848 4630

07498 753 851



### **Andrew Lawton**

Press Contact

Communications Officer

[andrew.lawton@londonsport.org](mailto:andrew.lawton@londonsport.org)

020 3848 4630

07398 215 076