



**This document is intended to provide you with a launch point for remote delivery of your Better Bones & Balance programming. This is an emerging delivery modality and there is still much to learn. We have NOT tested the effectiveness of using this delivery approach.**

## **GETTING STARTED**

- **Download/sign-up** with the video conferencing platform of your choice (Zoom, Google Meets, Skype, etc.).
- If you have questions regarding the set up and use of your video conferencing application, **search the web for video tutorials** and articles for how to set up and answer your specific questions.
- When you are ready to promote and teach a class, **follow protocols set by your organization**. If not affiliated, please consider **establishing a registration process** for your class, either through your video conferencing platform (for example, Zoom has a way to take session registrations), through a Google Form, or through another method. Then **send your participants the link and passcode** to connect to your class at the time/date of your session.
- Whether you are teaching a class independently or on behalf of a fitness facility, make sure you have proper liability insurance and **obtain signed waivers** from class participants.
- When you're ready to begin your virtual class, open your video conferencing application and click on the "Start Call" or "Start Meeting" button.
  - Be sure to start your meeting 5-10 minutes before the class start time (treat this as you would a normal class).
  - Greet each participant by name and make them feel welcome (just like you would in an "in-person" class!).
  - "Spotlight" your video or make your video "full screen" prior to beginning your class if your video conferencing platform has this function.
- When you're done with your virtual class, click on the red button to "End Call" or "Leave Meeting."

- Always say 'Goodbye' and thank everyone for joining your class. Even in a virtual setting, we still want a certain level of personal connection.

## Tips for Your Students

- Encourage your students to **try the video conferencing platform before the class starts**. If you are able, consider offering a 10 to 15-minute practice session prior to the start of your first class to allow students to orient themselves to platform functions (mute, turn on/off video, etc.) and to ask questions. Creating a dedicated time for this reduces participants' stress or worries about holding up the exercise class with questions.
- Keep in mind there may be a delay between you and what your students experience so **give extra time** when waiting for a response or for feedback from the class. The delay should not affect the class experience.
- Have your students **mute their mics** to avoid interference with your class. If connectivity is poor, you can also recommend participants **turn off their cameras** to reduce lag and improve viewing quality.

## VIRTUAL LIVESTREAMING TIPS FOR INSTRUCTORS

### Bandwidth/Internet Connectivity

- Ensure that you have **quality internet connectivity and bandwidth**. The same can be said for your participants – often the source isn't the issue. Sometimes the viewer has a poor connection or low bandwidth. The suggested connection to comfortably watch HD video is at least 5-10 Mbps.
  - Definitions:
    - **Bandwidth:** The maximum amount (volume) of data transmitted over an internet connection in a given amount of time – calculated in megabits per second (Mbps).
      - The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) provides a set of guidelines for Mbps needed based on digital activity and recommends 4-25 Mbps for telecommuting. If you have questions regarding your bandwidth, contact your internet provider.

- Plug your computer into an Ethernet cable for faster internet connection.
- If bandwidth is low or internet connection is unstable, **turning off participants'** cameras can sometimes improve the streaming quality.

## Sound Tips

- Be sure to **project your voice** when speaking/cuing. Consider investing in a fitness or wireless microphone if you are teaching a format where you talk and coach throughout the class. There are many different types of microphones available, so do your research and select an option that works best for you.
- If you choose to use music in class, be sure to **know the sound settings** for your chosen video conferencing platform to improve the sound experience for your participants.
  - For example, if using Zoom:
    - Click on "Share Screen" → "Advanced" → "Computer Sound Only." Make sure you see "Sharing Computer Sound" highlighted in green. Play your music directly from your computer so the sound goes straight to the livestream. There may be a small lag between the computer sound and the instructor's movements based on the internet connection.
    - In the lower left corner of your screen, click on the "up" arrow to see the settings option appear. Your microphone needs to be "on" during the class. Select "microphone same as the system" (unless you are using a fitness microphone), and then do the same for the speaker ("speaker same as the system").
  - When playing your own music, control the volume via the volume bar *within* the music application (i.e. iTunes). If you're using small external speakers, make sure the speakers are in front of the computer so the microphone can clearly catch the sound.
  - If music is not a requirement for your class, **consider encouraging your participants to play their own music** instead. This will help eliminate any potential technical difficulties.

Remember to **mute your participants**, especially if they are playing their own music. During your first class, make sure all participants know where the mute button is located and how to operate it.

### **A Note on Music Licensing**

- If you plan to use music during your classes, please keep in mind that teaching livestream classes generally requires you to have a public performance license with one or more of the Performance Rights Organizations located in the country in which you're livestreaming. This license gives you the right to stream music during your classes. Each country has their own Performance Rights Organization(s) and the license is generally not too expensive. If you're already paying for a performance rights license (to teach your in-person classes), this license may also cover your virtual classes — please contact the Performance Rights Organization(s) in your country to confirm. If you are teaching a class on behalf of a fitness facility, contact your employer to see if you are covered under their licensing policy.

## **ADAPTING TO CLASSES IN YOUR HOME**

### **Make the Most Out of Your Space**

- **Be creative** when finding a space in your home to use (i.e. a hallway, garage, etc.).
- You might want to rearrange easy-to-move furniture within your house to make a large enough space for teaching. Be careful — safety first! Remind participants to **clear their workout space** to avoid any obstacles or tripping hazards.
- Consider using tape to **mark off the area that is within view of your camera**, that way you ensure your entire body can be seen throughout the entirety of your class.
  - During class, you should be **focusing on clear cueing and modeling proper form** for movements (demonstrate movement/proper form from front, side, and back angles). Make sure that your arms and legs stay within view of the camera if doing any overhead or large movements of your limbs.
- Ensure the floor where you teach your class is level and not slippery.
- Consider using a **neutral background** that doesn't distract students from your movements.

- Make sure there is **adequate lighting** in the room where you teach so that you can be clearly seen on camera. Test the lighting and watch yourself on your screen. Lighting should be **above you or behind the camera**. If lighting is behind you, you will appear as a silhouette and it will be difficult for your students to see you.

### **Dress for the Occasion**

- Both you and your participants should **wear comfortable clothing** appropriate for movement.
- Wear appropriate footwear. Many folks refrain from wearing shoes in the house, but supportive footwear is a necessity so find a space that it is okay to lift the “no shoes in the house rule” during exercise.

### **Things to Remember**

- **Home interruptions happen!** Dogs barking, cats prowling, birds chirping, and babies crying are all part of working and teaching from home. Embrace your situation and know that your students will understand that virtual classes will have some interruptions. Be open with students about the experience you are having (to normalize their experience and be open to their suggestions).
- **Be mindful of your surroundings.** If you live in an apartment building, be conscious of neighbors above, below, and next to you. Jumping to loud music too early in the morning or too late at night might not be ideal for your community. Be respectful – remember, we’re all in this together.
- **When challenges arise, have a backup plan ready.** Remember there is a learning curve for everyone, so set a slower pace and think outside of the box. Create a safe space and be open to students’ suggestions. Have a sense of humor - learning happens best when everyone is relaxed and can laugh a little.

## **FITNESS EQUIPMENT FOR USE IN VIRTUAL CLASSES**

- Although aerobic steps are often used in different fitness formats, **we do not advocate fabricating a bench with furniture** or other household items not designed for the purpose of stepping exercises. While it is good exercise to walk up and down stairs if you are able, using a stair in your home or a step stool to perform stepping exercises during your remote class increases fall risk. Instead, demonstrate alternatives, such as high knees and walking in place. Encourage participants to save their stair climbing for a time outside of class on a dedicated set of stairs with a handrail, good lighting, and fingers crossed, sunny skies and temperate weather!
- Tape off areas of the floor to simulate the use of stepping “onto” an aerobic step
- You may be able to **create some of your own equipment at home** with household items:
  - Canned foods can be used as hand weights if dumbbells are not accessible.
  - Resistance bands can be used to provide additional resistance.
  - Be creative! Beach balls, scarves, bean bags (make or purchase inexpensively from a Dollar Tree or similar) can be used for a variety of coordination, mobility and balance training exercises.
- The Better Bones & Balance® program results are in large part due to compliant use of weighted vests with a progressive weight increases over time. Instructors often have trouble getting folks to wear vests when sessions are in-person, and it is likely that many participants who were wearing vests borrowed them from the fitness facility.
  - BBB has many larger-sized weighted vests, each with 4 pounds of weight included, for sale for \$25. We are happy to offer these vests to you and your participants. Additional weights can be made by filling plastic baggies with sand, beans, gravel, etc., wrapping them with duct tape, sewing them into old socks, or sealing them with some other creative vest weight hack and stuffing them in the vest weight compartments. The bottom line is to **keep encouraging participants to use a weighted vest** and explain why it is important! Education is your best offense on this issue!

## OTHER TIPS

- The remote environment is limiting as most of us find ourselves without the wonderful equipment we have available at our fitness facilities. This is an opportunity to expand our reach and consider how to provide impactful programming in a constrained context. Your best resource is one another.
  - **Use the Better Bones & Balance® Basecamp forum** or send ideas to [betterbonesbalance@oregonstate.edu](mailto:betterbonesbalance@oregonstate.edu) and we will post ideas on our website.
- It is easy to become disengaged when you are unable to see and interact with students in your class in the way that you are used to doing. Being unable to see your students is why it is more important than ever that you stay highly engaged. Double-down on your cuing and safety tips. Be repetitive since many participants may not be able to see you. Encourage them to use earphones or ear buds if they are having trouble hearing.
- **Drink water!**
- Have a towel handy to wipe up sweat and prevent slipping.
- **Don't exercise alone!** Inform someone when you will be participating in physical activity in case there is an emergency.
- Teaching a virtual class can be exhausting – **keep your energy up!** When in front of the camera, your energy needs to be at 200%.
- **Keep up the good work!** Use the tips from this guide that are helpful to you, and remember to do what works best for you, too!
- Lastly, **have fun!**

