

Audio Settings for Playing Music on Zoom

Introduction

Zoom is designed for people talking in meetings, and the default settings treat music as background noise. So you need to change the settings to make your music sound its best. The setting you want is called “original sound.”

This document provides step-by-step instructions to:

1. Install Zoom
2. Configure audio settings on Mac or PC
3. Configure audio settings on Apple or Android mobile devices
4. Advanced topics: external microphones and internet latency

It is best to do this before your first Open Mic performance, but you can also do it after you’ve joined the meeting. Either way, once you’ve changed the settings, they’ll persist for future meetings.

Zoom Open Mic Etiquette

At the start of the open mic, the host will leave everyone unmuted so performers can ask questions if they need help getting set up.

Once the music starts, the host will mute everyone except the MC and each performer when it is their turn to play. They will unmute everyone briefly for applause at the end of each song. Please do not unmute yourself to avoid accidentally distracting from the music.

Zoom audio setup instructions

1. Install Zoom

First, install the Zoom app on your device. You can download and install from here: <https://zoom.us/download>

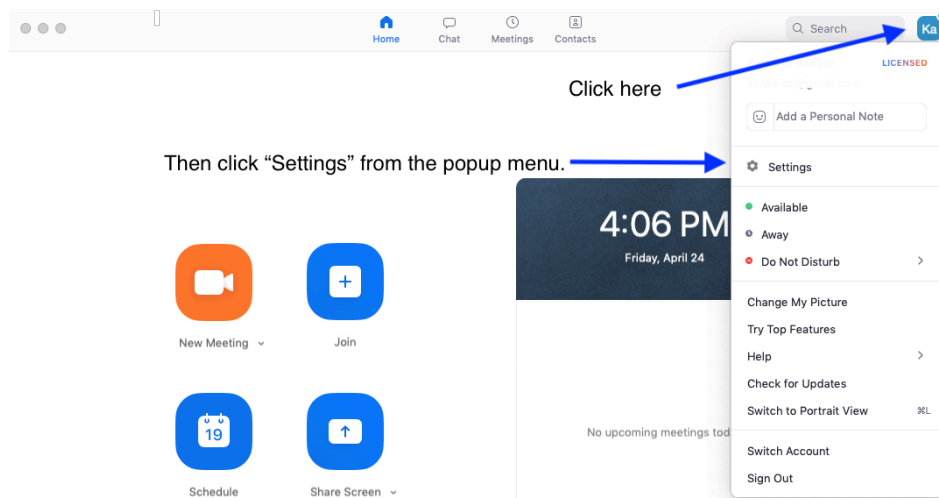
Make sure you have the latest version of the app. This is especially important for mobile devices, as Zoom only recently added these audio settings to the mobile app.

2. Configure audio settings on Mac or PC

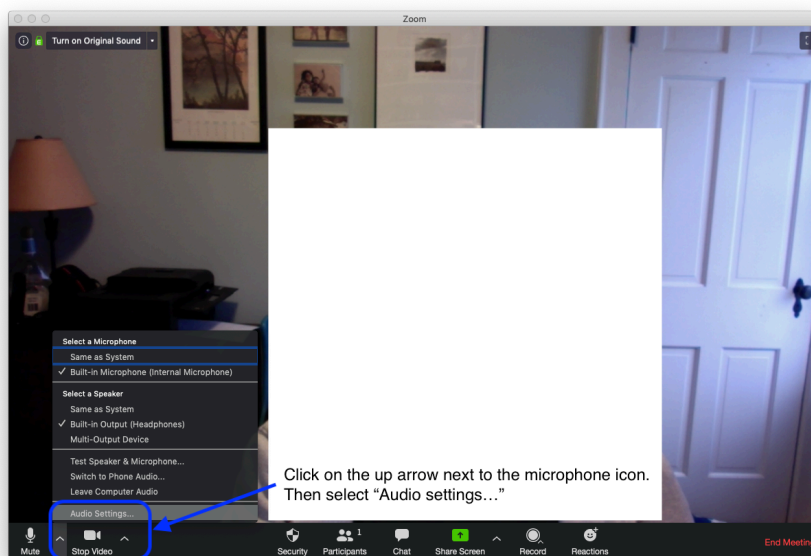
Open audio settings

(Recommended) Before your first performance, open the Zoom Client for Meetings – it is “zoom.us” on a Mac. Then open the settings page and select audio settings.

In the Zoom home screen, click on the icon in the upper right to open the popup menu, and then select Settings.



Alternatively, if you are already in the Zoom meeting where you will be performing, you can also access the settings. Move your mouse into the meeting window, and click the up arrow next to the microphone icon. This opens a popup menu where you select “Audio settings.”

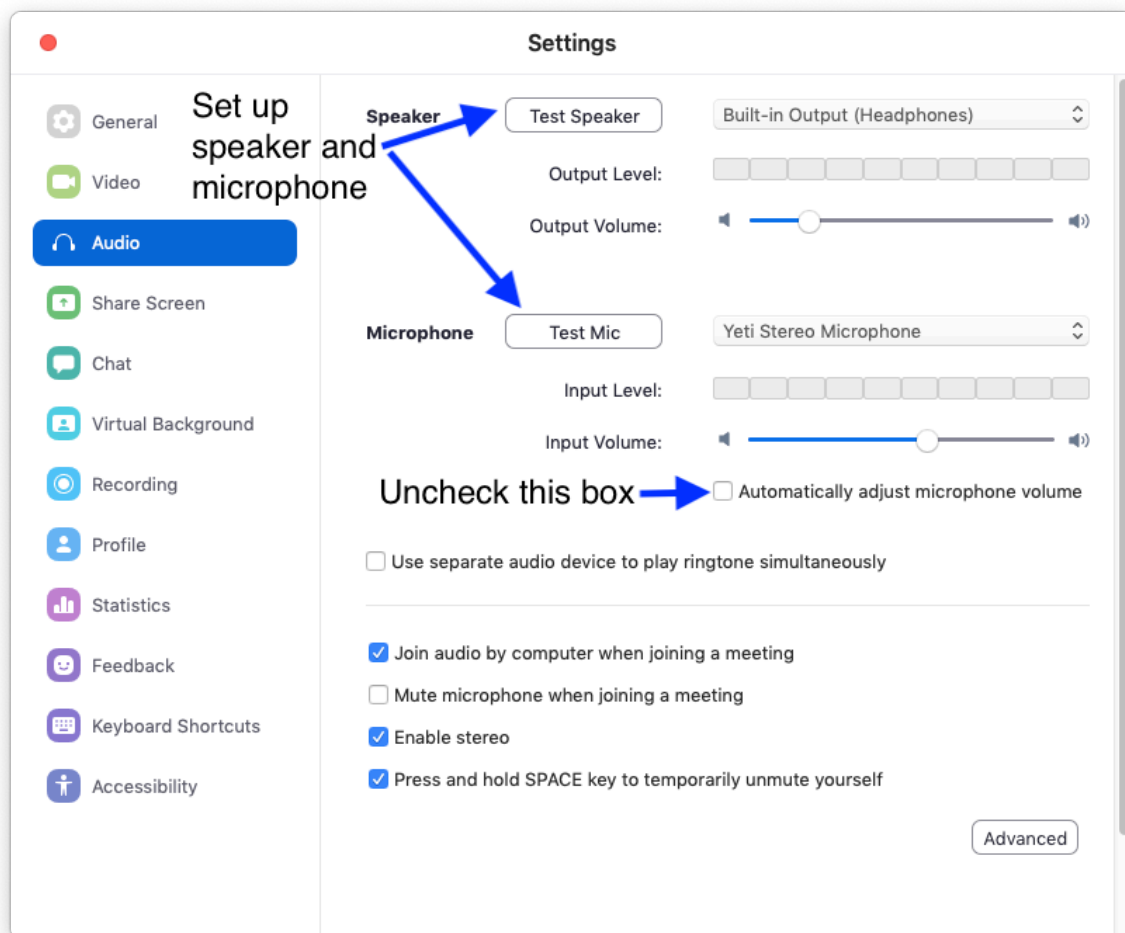


Adjust the Zoom audio settings

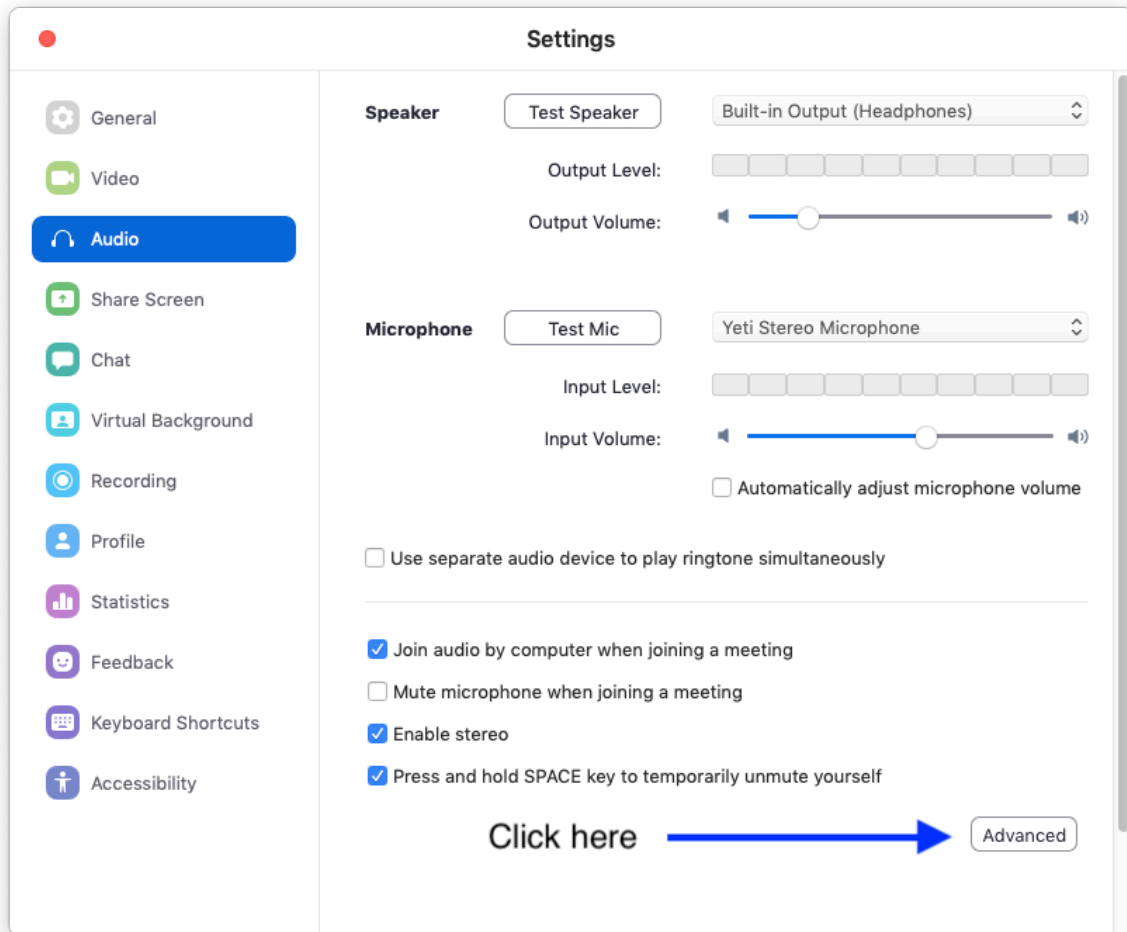
The next screen controls all Zoom settings. Select Audio from the menu on the left, and you will see this screen.

First, set your microphone and speaker. You can use the popup menus to select your particular microphone input and speaker/headphone output. Test them by clicking the “Test Speaker” and “Test Mic” buttons. The level meters should light up halfway or more, but not all the way to the right.

Make sure that “Automatically adjust microphone volume” is turned off.



Now, click on the “Advanced” button at the lower right.



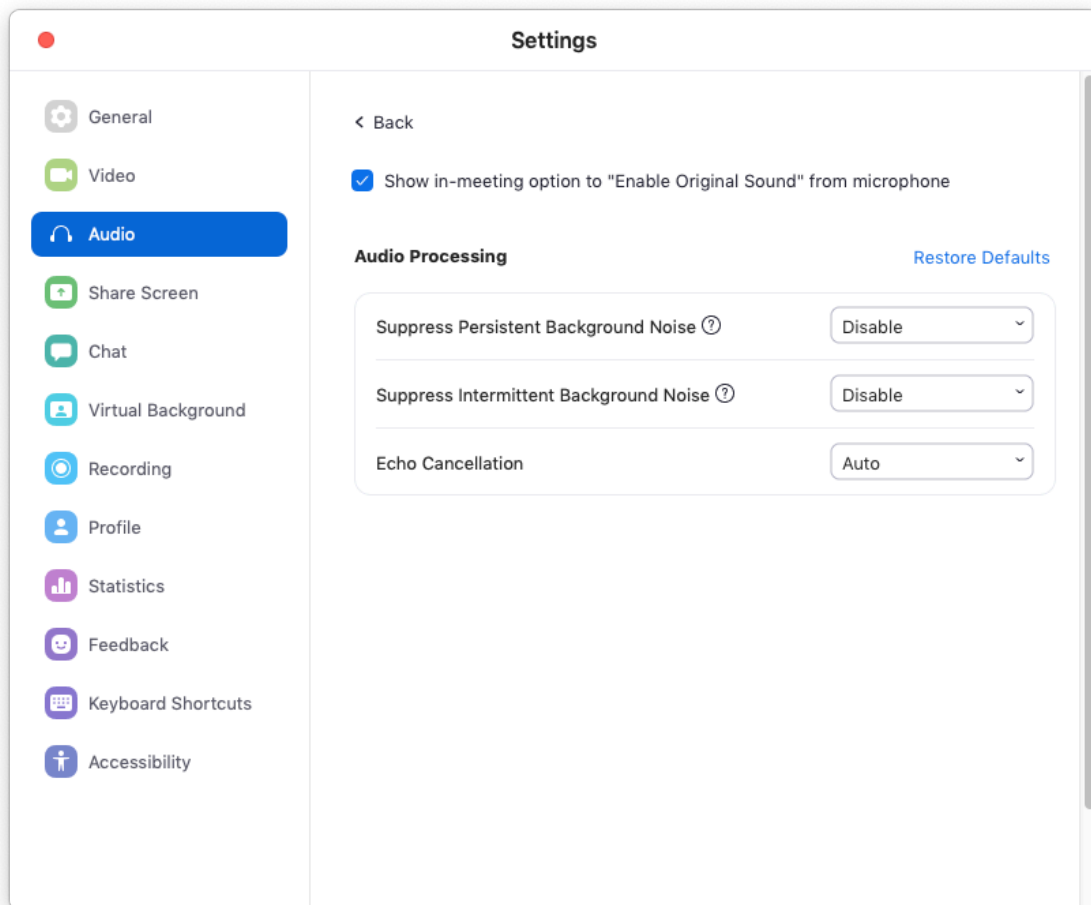
The next screen is where you optimize your sound. These settings bypass the audio processing that enhances speech in meetings but messes up music. Do the following:

- Check the box next to “Show in-meeting option to ‘Enable Original Sound’ from microphone”

Original sound is what you want. It turns off the undesirable audio processing.

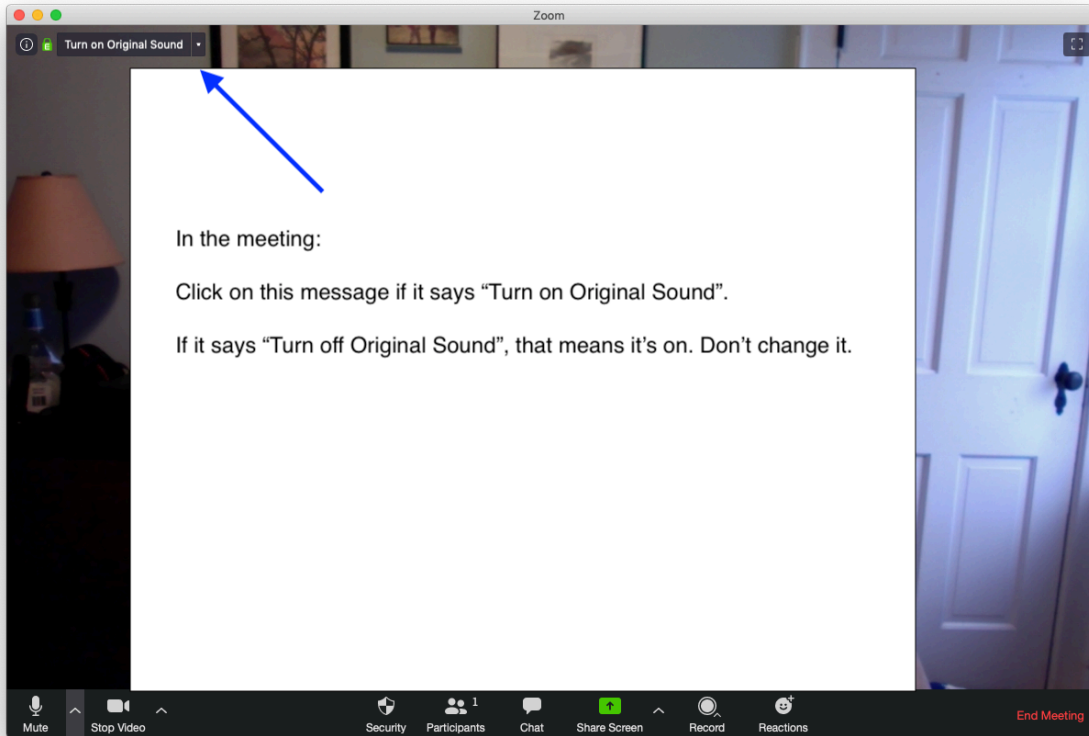
- Under audio processing
 - Set Suppress Persistent Background Noise to Disable
 - Set Suppress Intermittent Background Noise to Disable
 - Set Echo Cancellation to Auto

By default Zoom can treat music as background noise, which also disrupts the sound you want. These settings are more music-friendly.



Once you’ve enabled these settings, you will be able to turn on Original Sound when you join the Open Mic (or any other Zoom meeting).

You'll see a small message in the upper left corner of the Zoom meeting window. Click it to turn on Original Sound. When it says, "Turn off Original Sound," you're ready to go.



3. Configure audio settings on Apple or Android mobile device

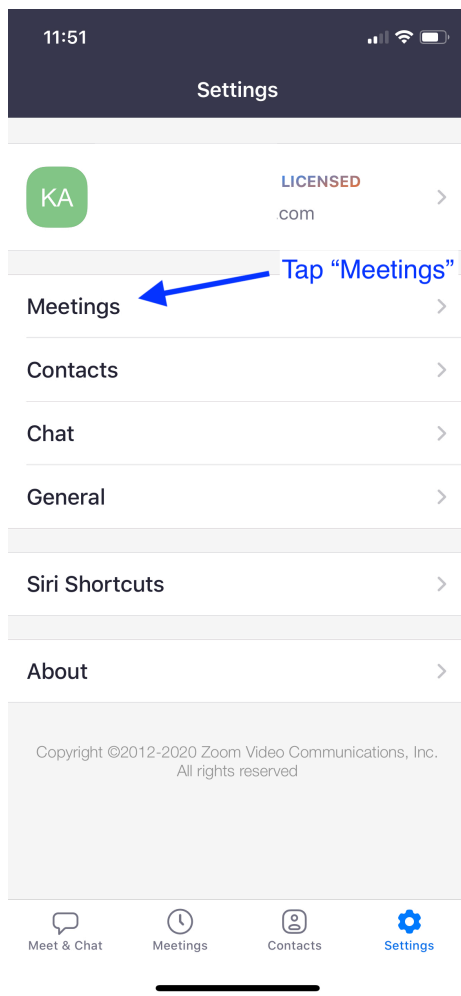
On mobile devices, you can enable original sound on the Settings menu. No other audio processing settings are available on mobile devices.

Before you join a meeting, tap the Settings gear icon to open the settings screen, then tap “Meetings”.

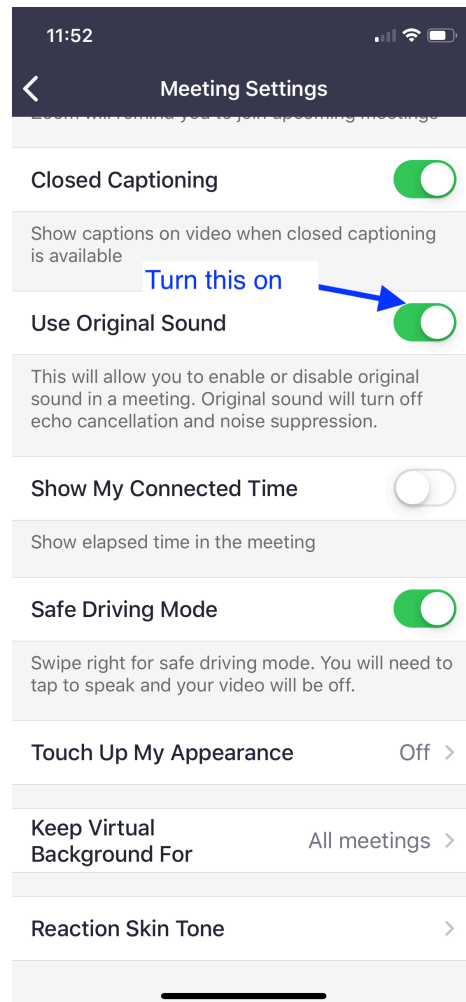
On the Meetings Settings screen, scroll down until you see “Use Original Sound”, and then toggle it on.

This is how it looks on an iPhone. An iPad or Android may look slightly different.

Settings Screen

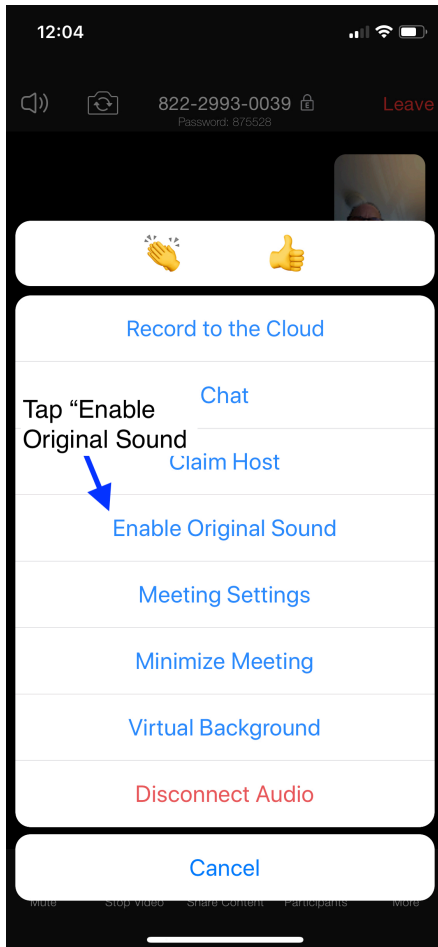


Meeting Settings Screen (scrolled down)



Finally, ***when you are in the meeting***, tap the “...” icon at the bottom of the screen, and you’ll see this popup menu. Tap “Enable Original Sound” to turn it on.

If you don’t see “Enable Original Sound”, download and install the latest version of the app.



4. Advanced topics: external microphones and internet latency

Using an External USB Microphone

You can further improve your sound quality of vocal and instrument reproduction with an external microphone. The simplest way is to use a microphone that plugs into the USB port of your computer (a “USB mic”). You can use a USB mic with a mobile phone or tablet, but you’ll need an adapter that fits the connector on your device.

There are well rated microphones ranging from \$50 to \$350. Amazon has a wide selection of USB microphones, and there are several "Top Ten" websites that offer listings and reviews.

This is entirely optional. If you don’t want to use an external mic, your device’s built-in mic will work just fine, too – so long as you use the correct software settings in Zoom.

About Latency

More than one person performing together from different locations will typically not work very well because of internet latency, which is how long it takes data to travel from one point to another. For example, several vocalists singing together on Zoom from different locations will almost always sound out of sync with each other.

So unfortunately, performing music on Zoom is a solo act unless you can recruit your partner and family to join you!