



General Information about an Online Retreat at Home

We are happy that this online retreat makes it possible for you to practice in your own environment. Of course, such a retreat differs from a retreat in a center and has its advantages and disadvantages.

If you have none or very little experience with an online retreat, you might find the suggestions below helpful to make these days as beneficial and supportive as possible for you.

Setting up the Meditation Place

- Provide all the necessary technical equipment: Computer, laptop or tablet with camera and microphone, possibly a headset, a smartphone is less recommended.
- Reliable internet access.
- If possible, setting up a special practice space for the retreat time, such as a designated room in the home that is relatively quiet and free of distractions.
- Suitable area for walking meditation of about ten to fifteen steps for walking up and down. This can be in your home or if possible a quiet outdoor location.

Seclusion / Silence

- Clarify how much seclusion is possible during these days.
- If the time is entirely dedicated to a retreat, it is recommended to go completely offline and be entirely in silence for the duration of this time.
- Do not schedule any other appointments / activities.
- It is helpful to set up an automatic message of absence.
- For those who do not want to or cannot go completely into seclusion, there is the option of using the time as a practice support in every day life. Plan to be present for as many shared practice times as possible.
- In this case, it may be helpful to clarify before the retreat what times you are available and talking and what times you are in silence. The times of sharing are a good way to practice mindfulness in communication.
- Posting the daily schedule so family members or roommates are informed.
- Compromises might be necessary so that all involved can get through these days harmoniously.

Meals

- Plan your meals and do all the shopping and possible preparation before the retreat begins.
- Keep meals simple.

During the Retreat

- Refrain from using other electronic devices or using other media (books, magazines). It might be helpful to cover up your desk, book shelves etc.
- Practice self-discipline by attending all sessions and sticking to the practice schedule if you have decided to use the time as retreat time.
- Engage in the meditation together and the teachings offered just as you would on a retreat in the retreat center. This also means, for example, not taking notes during the sitting meditations, except during the Dharma talks.

A little Zoom Etiquette

- Even if we are not physically together, it is important to be present on time. Please join a few minutes before each session begins and set up at the meditation site so we can begin together.
- Please do not drink, eat or walk in and out during the meditation sessions or evening talk.
- Keep the microphone muted except during Q & A group meetings when you interact with the teacher for questions and answer about your practice. This helps to avoid background noise that will be heard by all.
- It is supportive for all of us to keep the camera on while we are together in front of the computer because it helps our sense of practising together. However, if your location needs to be changed or if there are distractions at home, it is better to turn the video off for that time.
- Please refrain from multitasking, turn off all other devices and all other programs. Also refrain from mutual chat use except for something urgent or when asked by or needed by the teacher for some information.

And last but not least: it is always possible that the technology, yours or the host's, will fail temporarily. In addition to keeping your equanimity at such a time, it is best to wait for the host to reconnect or to reestablish your own connection. If this is not possible for an extended period of time, it is best to disconnect, continue practicing, and rejoin in the next scheduled online session.

We wish you insightful days!