How to Use Breakout Rooms in Zoom

Breakout rooms allow you to split your Zoom meeting in up to 50 separate sessions. The meeting host can choose to split the participants of the meeting into these separate sessions automatically or manually, or they can allow participants to select and enter breakout sessions as they please. The host can switch between sessions at any time.

Limitations

By default, only the host or co-host can assign participants to breakout rooms. They can choose to allow participants to choose their own room, but this must be done in the meeting when launching the breakout rooms.

Users who join a Zoom meeting from the Zoom Mobile App, their phone using the call-in numbers, or from a web browser can participate in breakout rooms but cannot manage them, so your designated host or co-hosts need to join using the Zoom client on a desktop or laptop.

Those participants who called-in and those joining via a web browser also will not be able to select their own breakout session and will have to be placed into a room by a host or co-host. Also, users will have to update their client to at least version 5.3.0 or later before being able to select their own room as well.

If the meeting is being recorded to the Zoom Cloud, only the main room will be recorded, not the individual breakout rooms. Alternatively, when a participant chooses to record their session using the "Local Recording" option, the recording will record the room in which that participant resides.

Multiple participants can record locally to their devices but hosts will have to manually select which participants are allowed during the meeting by hovering over their name, clicking the **More** option, and choosing the option **Allow Record**.

Verifying Breakout Rooms Are Enabled for Your Meetings

Sign into the Zoom web portal at dasnr.zoom.us with your OSU email address and password.

In the navigation menu, click **Settings**.

Navigate to the **Breakout Room** option under the **In Meeting (Advanced)** section and verify that the setting is enabled.

If the setting is disabled, **click the toggle to enable it**. If a verification dialog displays, choose **Turn On** to verify the change.

Creating Your Breakout Rooms

After the meeting has started, you can click the **Breakout Rooms** button on the main bar at any time during the meeting.
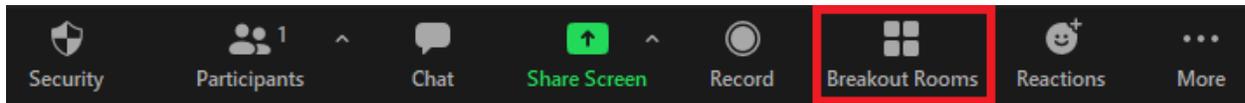
Select the number of rooms you would like to create, and how you would like to assign your participants to those rooms:

- **Automatically**: Let Zoom split your participants up evenly into each of the rooms.
- **Manually**: Choose which participants you would like in each room.
- **Let participants choose room**: Participants can select and enter rooms on their own.
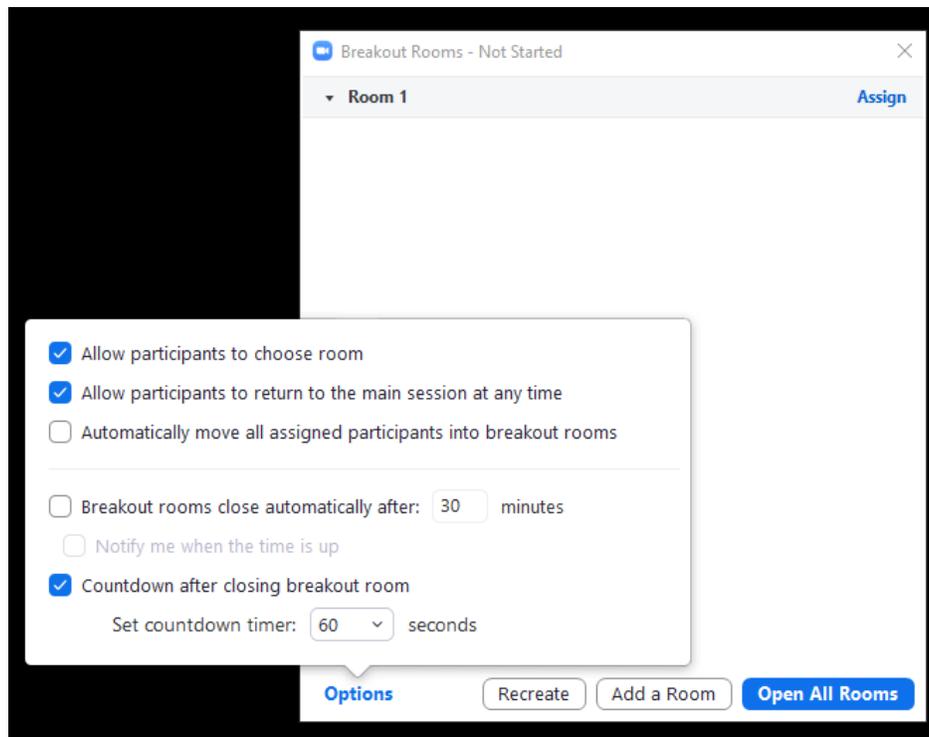
Options for Breakout Rooms

After creating the breakout rooms, click **Options** (on Windows) or the **gear icon** (on macOS) to view additional breakout rooms options.


Check any options that you would like to use for your breakout rooms.

- **Allow participants to choose room**: Participants can select and enter rooms on their own once rooms are launched.
- **Allow participants to return to the main session at any time**: If this option is checked, the participants can move back to the main session from their meeting controls. If this is disabled, they need to wait for the host or co-host to end the breakout rooms.
- **Automatically move all assigned participants into breakout rooms**: Checking this option will move all participants into the breakout rooms automatically. If this option is unchecked, the participants will need to click Join to be added to the breakout room.
- **Auto close breakout rooms after () minutes**: If this option is checked, the breakout rooms will automatically end after the configured time.
- **Notify me when the time is up**: If this option is checked, the host and co-hosts will be notified when the breakout room time is up.
- **Set Countdown timer**: If this option is checked, the participants will be given a countdown of how much time they have left before being returned to the main room.

Follow the steps below to assign participants to rooms or click **Open All Rooms** to start the breakout rooms.
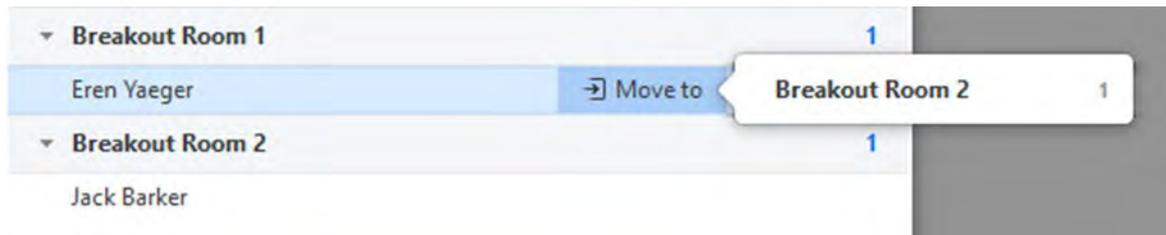
Preparing Breakout Rooms

To assign participants to your rooms, select **Assign** next to the room you wish to assign participants to and select the participants you want to assign to that room. Repeat this for each room.
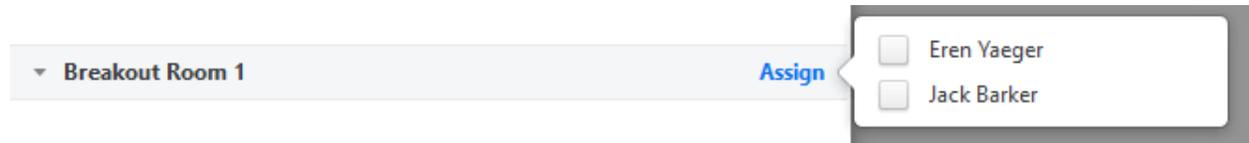

Once a participant has been assigned (manually or automatically), the number of participants will show in place of the Assign button.

After manually or automatically assigning participants to rooms, you can rearrange the participants. Participants who are not assigned to breakout sessions will remain in the main meeting when the rooms are started.

- **Move to** (participant): Select a room to move the participant to.

- **Exchange** (participant): Select a participant in another room to swap the selected participant with.
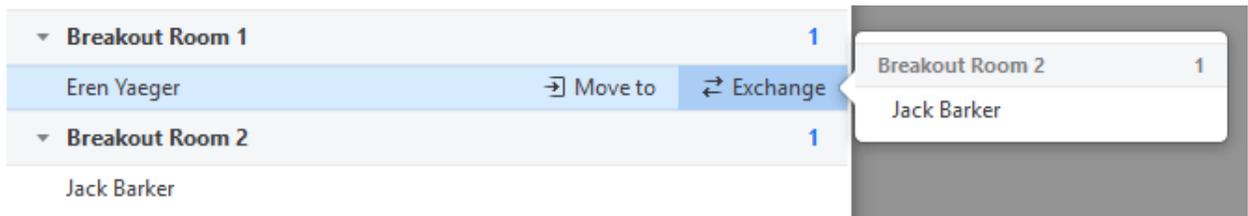
- **Delete Room**: Delete the selected room.
- **Recreate**:
  - **Recreate all Rooms**: Deletes existing breakout rooms and allows the host/co-host to create new ones.
  - **Recover to pre-assigned rooms**: Recreate the breakout rooms with the pre-assigned arrangement. This is only available if using the pre-assign breakout rooms feature.
- **Add a Room**: Add another breakout room.

- **Open All Rooms**: Breakout rooms are opened and all assigned participants will be moved to their respective rooms after confirming the prompt to join the breakout room. If allowing participants to choose their own room, they can open the list of rooms and choose which to join. The host, or co-host who launched the breakout rooms and the original host, will be left in the main meeting until they manually join a room. The participants (and the host/co-host when manually joining a room) will see the following message shown when joining the breakout room.
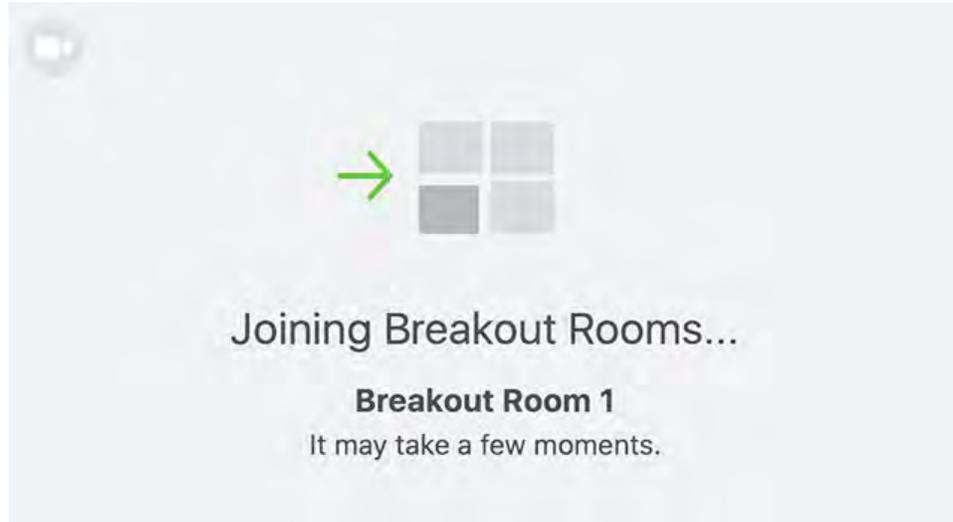
Managing Breakout Rooms in Progress

Once the breakout rooms have been started, the assigned participants will be asked to join the Breakout Session. The host, or co-host that launched the breakouts and the original host, will stay in the main meeting until joining a session manually. If a participant has not joined the session yet, it will be noted by (not joined) next to their name.

- **Join**: Join the breakout room.
- **Leave**: Leave the room and return to the main meeting (only shows when in a breakout room).
- **Close All Rooms**: Stops all rooms after a 60 second countdown, which is shown to the host, co-hosts, and participants, and returns all participants back to the main meeting.

The host or co-hosts can broadcast a message to all breakout rooms. This can be done from the main session or from within a breakout room. Click **Broadcast a message to all**, enter your message and click **Broadcast**.

In Conclusion

Breakout Rooms are a great way to open up your Zoom meeting to different techniques and ideas and a great way to expand your toolset for your trainings or In-Services. Like with all things, practice makes perfect, and as always, if you would like further information or assistance with Breakout Rooms in Zoom, please contact your designated Computer Support Specialist.