

What an amazing time to be a quilter! Thanks to technology, the world of quilting can arrive at your front door and walk right in. As our guild offers virtual workshops via Zoom, think about taking the plunge into this exciting world of on-line classes. In case you need a little nudge, here are some things to consider.

1. **The teacher comes to you.** No more packing up the sewing machine, cords, iron, cutting mat, 1,001 tools and notions, plus bin of fabric...then loading and unloading the car. Oh wait, then you have to load it up at the end of class and unload when you get home. (It is exhausting just typing this.) Also, weather becomes a non-issue when you don't have to drive to the class. Let it snow! Bring on the plague of locusts! It won't matter because you are snug as a bug in your own home.
2. **Opens up a whole array of classes that you otherwise couldn't attend.** Even seen an instructor or class listing for a quilt seminar that made you swoon...until you realized the seminar is 6,000 miles away? Zoom workshops don't require airfare or roadtrips or working out logistics.
3. **Learn in the comfort of your own sewing space.** We all learn better when we are in a familiar environment. Enjoy your comfy chair, favorite light, and sewing table at just the right height, with everything exactly the way you like it.
4. **All your tools, fabric, and supplies are within arm's reach.** I'm sure we've all had the jolt of arriving at a class only to discover we left behind some essential supply. It can be hard to recover from that. With a Zoom class, no worries. You have everything you need right there.
5. **Relaxed dress code:** Wear whatever you want! SpongeBob jammies. Bunny slippers. No judgement.
6. **You already know where the bathroom is**
7. **Camaraderie** One of the main reservations about Zoom classes is that you won't be able to chat with fellow quilters and enjoy the easy give-and-take as you work on your projects. That is not the case. I've taken many Zoom classes and in every one there was casual conversation as we all worked. Maybe you can't always see the face of the person talking, but if they have salad stuck in their teeth, that can be a good thing.
8. **Still get individual attention from the teacher** Instructors always encourage questions and you can hold your work up to the camera for the teacher to see what's going on. I've been in several classes where the instructor set up a break out room for students who wanted some extra help with a particular technique. Quilt teachers have become experts at how to make the virtual platform function well.
9. **You control the environment: lighting and temperature** One of my pet peeves with taking an in-person class is being in a big room with subpar lighting. And then it's either too hot or too cold. And maybe the ventilation system adds a whoosh that drowns out the teacher's voice. With a Zoom class in your own space, this all goes away.
10. **You can see and hear better.** Teachers use up-close cameras so you get the perfect view of the technique being demonstrated. No more crowding around the instructor, peering around classmates' heads to see what's going on. Honestly, I am able to follow the instruction so much better in a virtual class than in an in-person class.

Ideally, a laptop that you can take into your sewing space works the best. But if you have a desktop computer not located in your sewing room, there are still ways to enjoy a Zoom class. Use an iPad. People have even attended virtual classes with cell phones. When you see a class you want to take and it's on Zoom, don't instantly discount it. If you've never Zoomed a quilt class before, make 2025 the year you give it a try!