

HOW TO DO PHONE MEETINGS

Listening to a phone meeting is easy. First you need to find the phone number and pin number (or access code) for the phone meeting you want to listen to. Keep in mind that calling in to a phone meeting is a long-distance call (or possibly an international call), so you need to be aware that you may incur charges on your phone bill if your phone plan doesn't cover the call for free or use minutes on your cell phone if you don't have an unlimited plan.

TO FIND A PHONE MEETING ON OA.ORG WEBSITE

You go to www.oa.org,

click on find a meeting,

then choose the find a phone meeting option,

making sure that you have indicated the correct time zone for your physical location (otherwise the system will give you the wrong meeting time).

There is an Advanced Search function that you can use if you are looking for meetings on a certain day of the week, time of day, topic, or language. Say you want a meeting on Wednesday morning in Spanish on the Big Book, you choose those options and the system will show you the information on that meeting if one exists. You do not have to use Advanced Search to find a phone meeting but because there are so many phone meetings now, choosing a day or time of day can help narrow your choices so you don't get overwhelmed. The search option can be used alone if you have set the correct time zone and you just want the next meeting coming up. You can also reset the search if you don't find what you want the first time you search, or if you want to look for meetings on different days or times.

I FOUND A PHONE MEETING LISTED ON OA.ORG, NOW WHAT DO I DO?

If you have found a phone meeting on the list that looks interesting, write down the phone number and pin number or access code for that meeting

and any notes related to it, like how to mute or unmute your line while on the call. If there is a contact person listed and you have questions ahead of time, you can call and ask that person, being aware of possible time zone differences. Remember that the contact person's number is not the number for the phone meeting.

WHAT YOU NEED TO HAVE FOR A PHONE MEETING

1. Phone
2. Pen and paper to write notes or jot down phone numbers or announcements
3. Any relevant literature (Big Book, For Today, Voices of Recovery, etc. if the meeting will be reading literature)

A few minutes before the meeting starts, dial the phone number listed for the phone meeting and you will hear a recording with instructions, typically to enter the pin or access code and then press pound or hash sign (#). Some meeting systems will ask you to record your name to be announced and then press pound again, but you don't have to record your name, just press pound to enter the meeting. If you are the first person on the line, you might hear music until the next person comes on the line. Typically, people just say, "Hi this is (your first name) from (wherever) and this is my first phone meeting" and other people on the line may welcome you. You may hear conversation until the meeting starts.

When it is time for the meeting to start, the moderator will announce it and may mute the lines and explain how to mute and unmute your line. Typically, you will hear a voice saying either that the line is muted or unmuted. If your line is muted, nobody can hear you and it is a good idea to keep your line muted unless you want to read or speak on the meeting. Usually the code to mute or unmute is the star key (*) with a number, like *6 or *7, make a note on your paper in case you want to speak. Meetings typically start with Serenity Prayer. Some phone meetings ask for volunteers to read the 12 Steps or the Traditions and you would need to be unmuted if you would like to volunteer to read. Don't be disappointed if you don't get called on, some phone meetings can have over a hundred people on the line while others are small. Some phone meetings also ask for newcomers to

identify themselves at which point you can unmute and leave your first name and phone number if you wish, some also ask your time zone and best time to call. The meeting has a format which the moderator will follow, sometimes it is easiest as a newcomer just to sit and listen and jot down names and phone numbers of people who said something interesting to you. Most meetings last 1 hour and on some systems, there are additional meetings that you can listen to on the same number or recordings of speakers that you can access at a different number. When the meeting is over (often ending with Serenity Prayer), you can hang up your phone, but some meetings have time for fellowship or questions after the meeting, so you may want to stay on for a few more minutes. If you took notes, you may have phone numbers of people you can call after the meeting or in the next few days. Phone meetings are a great way to connect with people in OA who are not in your local area, make new contacts, maybe find a sponsor or study partner if you need one. By using the OA.org website, you can find a phone meeting almost any time of day that you need one. Keep calling back, it works!