

Facebook lets friends watch shows together while apart

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There are more than 150 million video calls a day on Facebook Messenger, according to the company

Coronavirus lockdowns have led to a sharp increase in virtual watch parties as a way to get together with friends, and Facebook is getting in

on the action.

The world's largest social network on Monday launched Watch Together, a free feature it is rolling out globally on its Messenger communication platform.

"Connecting through video has understandably become more important for our Messenger community in the past few months," Facebook product manager Nora Micheva said in a blog post.

"We created Watch Together to make spending quality time with friends and loved ones feel as close to an in-person experience as possible."

There are more than 150 million video calls a day on Messenger, and more than 200 million videos sent each day using the service, according to Micheva.

Watch Together is designed to let people enjoy videos simultaneously while chatting with friends on screen in a [video call](#).

"Whether it's watching a trending video, a movie, a sports highlight, a makeup tutorial, or a Facebook Watch original, the feature allows you to watch your friends' reactions at the same time," Micheva said.

For the launch, Facebook has partnered with celebrity fitness trainer Melissa Alcantara to create a series of workout videos.

Watch Together can be activated from a Messenger video call capable of handling up to eight people, or in virtual "rooms" that as many as 50 online friends can visit at the same time.

Facebook this year launched the virtual "rooms" feature, where friends can pop in for visits via online [video](#) as part of an effort to help users

locked down during the pandemic.

The social network has also made it possible for artists, teachers, creators and others to host paid events online as real-world gatherings have been thwarted by virus prevention measures.

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