

How to organise a successful swishing (clothes swap) event

EXCHANGE GOOD QUALITY CLOTHES IN A FUN, RELAXED ATMOSPHERE - WHETHER IT'S A BIG OR SMALL EVENT.

TOP TIPS
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We hope that you find the tips and suggestions in these guides and videos helpful and fun to follow. We recommend that you take care using social media particularly when sharing personal details or arranging face to face meetings or events.

----- CHOOSE A VENUE -----



Find a venue to suit the expected turnout for your clothes swap (swishing) event. This could be a table in the office at lunchtime to swap amongst colleagues, your front room with a group of friends, or your local village hall/community centre if you want to invite even more people.

--- PROMOTE AND MAKE IT FUN ---



Promote it via friends, colleagues and family - don't underestimate the power of local word of mouth - you really want as many people as possible! Emphasise the fun, social aspect, and offer incentives to share details of the community event on social media.

Don't worry about starting small with a group of friends as these swaps can be great fun. However, the more participants you have the greater the choice of clothes will be!

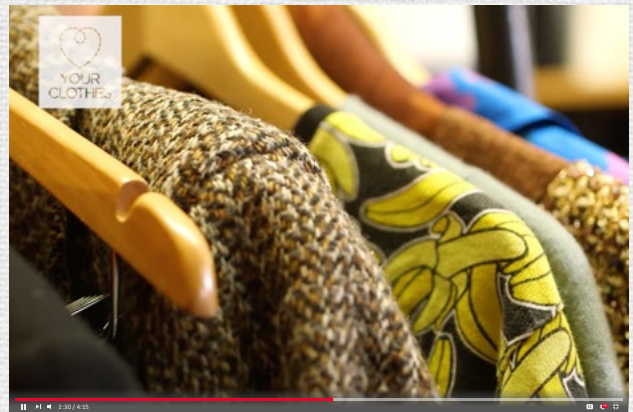
Why not ask everyone to bring two of their friends along?



- LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT TO BRING -



Ask people to bring clean, dry, good quality clothing and make it explicit if there's a minimum number of items they must bring, as well as if there's an entry fee. You may want to specify that they should bring items on hangers to put up around the room or on a rail. Let people know if you're happy to swap other items such as pieces of fabric, shoes, bags, vintage homewares etc too, and perhaps set this up in a different area of the room.



----- HOW TO SWAP -----



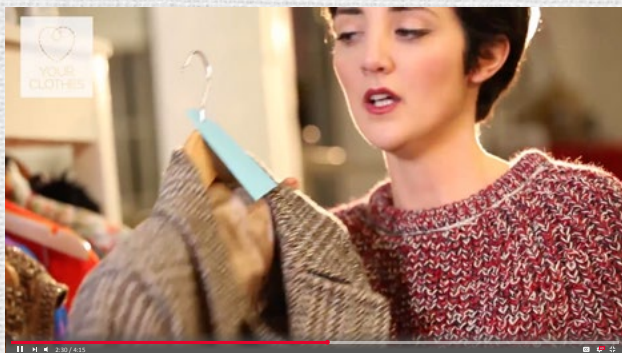
Encourage a spirit of goodwill, and remind people that they should only bring good quality second-hand clothes that they don't mind giving away to a new loving home, and not to have an equivalent value in mind when swapping.

On the day it can help to play some upbeat background music and you may like to provide some food or drinks (away from the clothes). Larger swaps sometimes incorporate a raffle

so that attendees get a raffle ticket for every item brought to the swap. A clear swapping system can be important, especially for larger swaps, or those with an entry fee – although for small swaps with friends a free-for-all can be great fun!

It's up to you what system you use but here are a few popular options:

- Tokens can be handed out according to the number of garments accepted into the swapping pool. Each token is then exchanged for an item in the swap. This is a good way of making sure that only high quality items are accepted into the pool of clothing, and people don't leave with significantly more than they came with.
- Coloured tokens based on value: coloured tokens (e.g. pieces of coloured card) can be used to distinguish between items of higher value, or higher weight. This would mean that people can swap a light top for a similar item, but not for a heavy coat – which would require a higher value of token. Tokens can be awarded different numbers of 'points' if you want them to be interchangeable.
- For larger events, it might be useful to have someone on the door who checks the quality of items people have brought and decides the value before handing out the correct level of token. If this will be the case it can help to let people know in advance so they aren't surprised to have their clothes checked over and awarded a value of token.



- Swaps with an entry fee often set item limits (e.g. £4 entry fee gets you 4 items) – if people want to take more items home you can offer the opportunity to pay another entry fee and take home more items of clothing.

Layout is important. You may want to set it up like a boutique (with items hanging up, on rails if possible) or have a pile to rummage through or both – think about what will work best depending on how many people are coming and the volume of clothes expected.

It helps to have a good starting stock built up beforehand, for example clothes that are left behind from previous swaps or stuff you've gathered from friends and family, this means there's less chance of someone going home disappointed or empty handed.



It's always handy to have a full-length mirror available, and a separate room to try items on, or a makeshift changing room. This will cut down on people taking home things they don't actually want, which devalues the clothes swap and potentially refills their wardrobe with things they won't wear!

Remember to donate any unwanted items to charity at the end of the swap, or keep them aside to create a larger starting pool at your next clothes swap event!