



# how to hold a swish/ swap shop ▶

what  
is a swish?

why swish?

planning a  
swish or  
swap shop

after  
the event

useful links

case studies

## contents

what is a swish? 3

why swish? 3

planning a swap shop or swish 4

after the event 8

useful links 9

case study 10



what is a swish?

why swish?

planning a swish or swap shop

after the event

useful links

case studies

# What is a swish?

The idea is to get together with a group of people and swap clothes, accessories (hats, scarves, jewellery) and shoes.

## Why swish?

- It's a way of getting a whole new wardrobe at zero cost.
- It's a good way of clearing out your wardrobe. The average UK household owns around £4,000 worth of clothing and on average, 30% of the clothes in our wardrobes haven't been worn in the last year.

- It's fun and can be a great way to meet people. Invite your new neighbours over, or get to know your fellow students, or just use it as an excuse to catch up with old friends.
- It helps the environment. An estimated £140 million worth (around 350,000 tonnes) of used clothing goes to landfill in the UK every year (source; [www.loveyourclothes.org.uk](http://www.loveyourclothes.org.uk)). It would be much better to see that clothing go to a new home instead.



what  
is a swish?

why swish?

planning a  
swish or  
swap shop

after  
the event

useful links

case studies

# Planning your swap shop or swish

## Who?

- Decide who you want to invite - friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, fellow students or your local community.
- You may want a specific type of Swish - females only, males only, parents only (if you're swapping children's clothes, school uniforms or maternity wear) or your sports club (if you're swapping fitness clothing).

## When?

- Once you've decided on your audience, you can agree the best time of the day/week to hold

your event. If it's stay-at-home mums, you may be able to hold it during the daytime, but if it's working people, then an evening or weekend may be suitable.

- Give everyone plenty of notice so they have time to sort through their wardrobes.

## Where?

- If you have enough space you could hold it at home, but if not, think of other locations such as a village hall, community centre, workplace, pub/hotel function room or even in a council meeting room. There may be a charge, so worth checking out first (you can always charge an admission fee to cover the hire costs).

what is a swish?

why swish?

planning a swish or swap shop

after the event

useful links

case studies



## How?

- Send out invites, or if it's an open event publicise it through social media, local press, emails, posters, local radio, websites and don't forget word-of-mouth. Contact local organisations who may help promote the event such as the council, libraries, community groups, "What's on" websites. Invite journalists.
- Make sure the invite/advert is very clear as to what you want people to bring i.e. as many items as possible, specific items e.g. maternity wear, just one high quality item, accessories etc.
- Consider extras such as;
  - having someone there who can do minor repairs or upcycling to items
  - having a style consultant who can do mini makeovers or give style advice
  - make it a social event with afternoon tea or drinks and nibbles (and ask for contributions or an entry fee if necessary to cover the cost or ask them to bring bottles/nibbles)
  - Making it a charity event so people pay an

what  
is a swish?

why swish?

planning a  
swish or  
swap shop

after  
the event

useful links

case studies

entry fee, or give a donation to charity for every new item of clothes they take away.

- Make it clear that people should bring items that are in good condition, clean and ideally ironed.

- Have a mirror so people can see what their new clothes look like on
- If possible, provide a private area where people can try on items
- Provide tables or clothes racks and hangers to display items.
- Take photos for post-event PR.
- Ask people to bring their own re-usable bags to take items home in.
- Measurement; You may want to measure the success of the event for future press/funding opportunities.
- In this case, you could consider;
  - Counting the number of items brought to the event (by type i.e. clothing, shoes, jewellery etc)
  - You could weigh the items if you have the facilities
  - Do a pre and/or post event questionnaire to see if people enjoyed the event, if they'd previously swished or bought 2nd hand clothing, if it's changed their attitude to 2nd hand clothing, if they use charity shops to buy/donate items etc.
- Arrange staff/volunteers to take money at the door, coordinate activities, make announcements.
- Arrange a float/cash box if money is going to change hands.



what is a swish?

why swish?

planning a swish or swap shop

after the event

useful links

case studies

# Rules

Have a clear set of rules and make everyone aware of them before you start.

Consider the following;

- For the first hour or half hour, people lay out their items and browse what other people have brought, but no one is allowed to take anything until the hour is up.
- Alternatively, get people to drop their items off prior to the event so you can sort them out before everyone arrives.
- Consider how you'll lay things out – just random, or sorted by mens/ladies/childrens, sizes etc.
- Everyone must bring at least one item of quality clothing.
- Set rules as to how people take items;
  - Either allow people to take what they want when the swish opens (first come, first served)
  - You get a token for every item you bring and can take as many items as you have tokens
  - If two people want an item, toss a coin, or draw names.
- Number items and then get people to make a wish list, itemising their top 3 choices of items to receive.
- Ensure everyone is polite – no scratching, spitting or fighting!
- Make sure people try on clothes before they take them so no one takes something they can't wear.



what  
is a swish?

why swish?

planning a  
swish or  
swap shop

after  
the event

useful links

case studies

# After the event...

- Leftover items. Decide what will happen to leftover items.
  - Allow whoever brought them to take them home again (but only if they promise to wear them again)
  - Donate them to a charity shop
  - Put them in a textile bank (many schools have these to raise money for the school funds, or you'll find them in town centre or supermarket car parks)
  - Repair items that are damaged
  - If items are not fit for purpose, use them as dusters
  - Offer them via freecycle/freegle/online auction sites
- Consider whether you want to do a report on the event or get some PR (useful to drive demand if you plan to do another event, or just want to promote your group).



what  
is a swish?

why swish?

planning a  
swish or  
swap shop

after  
the event

useful links

case studies





## Useful links

[www.loveyourclothes.org.uk](http://www.loveyourclothes.org.uk)

[www.swishing.com/home](http://www.swishing.com/home)

[www.letswasteless.com](http://www.letswasteless.com)

[www.shrubcoop.org](http://www.shrubcoop.org) (a permanent swap shop set up by and for Edinburgh University Students – see Case Study 2 for more info).



what  
is a swish?

why swish?

planning a  
swish or  
swap shop

after  
the event

useful links

case studies

# Case Study 1

## Jewellery swap party, Peebles

A swish is so easy to arrange. During Pass it on week 2015, Jackie held a Jewellery swap party. She emailed an invitation to a small group of friends and asked them to bring their unwanted jewellery and if possible, a cake. The event was held from 2-5pm on a Saturday afternoon.

Jackie decorated the tables with cloths and got creative using things like mug trees (for necklaces/bracelets) or old chocolate selection boxes (for earrings) as ways to display the jewellery. Jackie wrote out some instructions and had a donations box on display. You donated your old jewellery, took away new jewellery and made a donation to charity (if you wanted to).

All leftover jewellery was then donated to charity (a number of charities will take old or even broken

jewellery). Guests came away delighted with their haul of new treasures, cleared out some jewellery they hadn't worn for years, and raised over £100 for charity – as well as the donated jewellery which would have raised more money



what  
is a swish?

why swish?

planning a  
swish or  
swap shop

after  
the event

useful links

case studies

# Case Study 2

## Swap and Re-use Hub (SHRUB), Edinburgh

[www.shrubcoop.org](http://www.shrubcoop.org)

Universities have a very transient population – students come and go, and so do their belongings. Students may well be leaving home for the first time and need a whole host of items such as kettles, toasters etc.

Then when they leave, they may be going home again and not want to take those items with them. Edinburgh University students saw an opportunity to facilitate the distribution of items to save students money and reduce waste. They set up a cooperative called SHRUB.

They now have a shop where students (and non-students) can take their unwanted items and swap



them for other items (or buy items if you have nothing to swap).

They look at second hand prices for things, and then people can swap things for items in roughly similar price brackets. If the swappers and shrubbers are both happy with the swap, then it's a deal.

They also provide educational events where you can learn new knowledge and skills (such as bike repair).

So far, SHRUB estimate they take in and give out roughly 150kg of items in a normal month with roughly 10 tons at end-of-year collection. More accurate measurement is planned for the future.

what  
is a swish?

why swish?

planning a  
swish or  
swap shop

after  
the event

useful links

case studies



[passitonweek.com](https://passitonweek.com)

[#passitonweek](https://twitter.com/passitonweek)



what is a swish?

why swish?

planning a swish or swap shop

after the event

useful links

case studies