

Step-by-step: swishing

Great for: Adults **Fun factor:** ★★★★★ **Effort:** ★★★★★ **£ potential:** ★★★★★

A swishing (or clothes-swapping) party is a fun way for your supporters to freshen up their wardrobes while raising money for your cause.

Step-by-step

1. **Six weeks before:** Choose a date and time for your event, and book the venue. Agree the rules of the swish and decide how and where tickets will be sold. Get these printed - tickets should include the date, time, address, contact details, the rules of the swish and clothing drop-off cut-off times. Start spreading the word - put up posters and use local events listings.
2. **Four weeks before:** Create a floor plan of your venue. Beg, borrow or hire an appropriate number of hanging rails (and hangers). Work out where you can create a changing area, and source some full length mirrors. Consider how to separate different clothing sizes on your rails. You can buy rail dividers and hanger size cubes on eBay, and sell them again when you're done! If an item is sized S/M/L, try to get an approximate UK size from the guest. Collect carrier bags for people to use to take away their items.
3. **Three weeks before:** Finalise what refreshments will be provided and who will be in charge of this on the day. Any supply of alcohol (even if offered free with the ticket price) will require a TEN. Submit your application to your local council at least ten working days before your event.
4. **One week before:** Set up a pre-event clothing drop-off if possible - ask people to leave their name and email address with their items, in order to collect their vouchers or points card on the night.
5. **On the day:** Lay out the rails, tables, clothing items and refreshments. Allow half an hour at the start for guests to arrive and hand over remaining clothes. Allow 15 minutes for people to browse the rails and see what items they might like to swap - no items can be taken during this time. Then, explain the rules again before declaring the swish open. Guests swish and try on items, placing unwanted items back on the rails.
6. **After the event:** Return any hired equipment. Any leftover clothing items can be donated to a local charity or stored for your next textile recycling collection. Be sure to thank all your supporters and let them know how much the event raised!

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Tips & advice

Swish rules: The simplest swish is conducted on a 'one for one' basis. A voucher is issued to each guest with their number of items written on it, to be checked off at the end of the event. A more complex system is to grade the items by type or price, e.g. 'standard' = high street/less than £40 (one point), and 'premium' = designer/more than £40 (three points).

Condition: All items should be freshly laundered, ironed, and in good repair. Ask people to bring them on hangers. Shoes and accessories should be brought in boxes, if possible.

Raising money: Charge a 'per person' admission fee. Invite third party stallholders to attend (e.g. selling beauty products, clothing or accessories), and charge them a fixed fee of between £10-£25. Stallholders must have their own public liability insurance - if not, speak to your PTA insurance provider to see whether additional cover is available. Hold an auction or raffle. Sell refreshments.

Licensing: You don't need a licence to run a swishing event, but if you're selling or providing alcohol you will need a TEN (England and Wales). Complete a risk assessment.

Venue space: You will need a pre/post-event milling-around area, plus a dedicated space for the swish. Have a changing area with mirrors, and additional space for people to sit and chat. Have a separate coat rail/cloakroom to stop coats getting mixed up with the swaps!