



## Don't shop, swish it!

By Pascale Palmer, published 26 April, 2007  
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**Swishing parties are being hailed as the new fun and free way to walk away with a new wardrobe while helping to save the planet. Pressureworks takes a peek at the new eco-fashionistas.**

Swishing parties are being hailed as the new fun and free way to walk away with a new wardrobe while helping to save the planet. Pressureworks takes a peek at the new eco-fashionistas. Basically, swishing is clothes swapping or recycling. You dig out all those skirts, shoes, jeans and T-shirts you regretted buying as soon as you got home, and you swap them for clothes and accessories you really do want and will wear.

The dictionary meaning of swishing' is 'to rustle, as silk', but Futerra, a PR firm specialising in getting the sustainability message out, has redefined it as 'to rustle clothes from friends'.

It hopes the term will give the idea of clothes swapping the cache it needs to have women all over the UK looking for their ultimate bargains at swishing parties rather than on the high street.

Times Online's 'Eco-Worrier' Anna Shepard experienced her first party a couple of months ago: 'A gaggle of girls rocked up with old clothes that we hung on a couple of rails. There was wine, bagels and a lot of eyeing of each other's frocks. When the Swishing officially began we were allowed to grab anything we wanted. Just imagine. Free clothes. And jewellery. And shoes. To take away forever...I left wearing a whole new outfit and a huge smile.'

### **Wasteful apparel**

According to Traid, the charity specialising in recycling textiles, 900,000 tons of shoes and clothing are thrown away every year in the UK with only 200,000 tons of this recycled. The rest is dumped in landfill sites. The government estimates that we throw away between 550,000 and 900,000 tons of textiles per year, with most of this coming from household sources.

Lucy Shea, Futerra senior partner, said: 'Everyone has something in their wardrobe that they just don't wear – I know mine is bulging with great stuff that never sees the light of day.'

'Swishing is a fantastic way to recycle clothes and accessories you just feel bad about getting rid of. It's a great reason to throw a party and doesn't have any of the hassles of Saturday high street shopping. And it has to be the most glamorous way to recycle and reduce waste!'

### **Rules of the game**

The rules of the swishing parties are pretty simple. First you set a date and invite your friends. On the night of the Swish you set up rails and hangers for clothes, or you can just drape items over chairs or rig up an indoor washing line.

Every invitee must bring at least one item to swish. However, they can leave with as many as they want.

As guests arrive, they add their item to the stash on show. Once most people are there, you explain the rules of the Swish and give them about an hour to rifle through the goodies and try on clothes they like. Remember to tell them that no clothes or accessories can be claimed before the opening of the Swish.

Then you officially open the swish.

At this point people can grab any or all the items they want.

It's as easy as that! And at the end of the night your friends go home with new, free clothes and a greener conscience.

### **The rules of swishing:**

- Every guest must bring at least one clean item of clothing or an accessory to the swishing party
- Before the opening of the swish, everyone's items must be on show
- Everyone has about an hour (depending on how big a swish) to look through all the goodies
- During this time, no items may be claimed
- Everyone is given a five-minute warning before the official opening of the swish
- As soon as the swish is declared open, everyone may take what they want
- Remember, you may have brought just one item, but you can leave with as many as you want!