



Quality Exchange and Creative Innovation

How to host a clothing swap in your area:

1. Identify your target audience. Who do you want to visit your swap? (Friends and family, neighbors, or local community members)

2. Determine a location. How much space and exposure do you need to accommodate the swap? (For friends or family you may choose to host a swap inside your home or garage while larger or community based swaps may be better hosted in a public space with proper approval, or in collaboration with a local business or organization.)

3. Communicate your goals. If you are planning a larger community swap, contact local businesses or organizations to ask about collaboration opportunities. Tell you friends and family that you are working to put together a clothing swap in your area. This will not only help you gauge interest in your area, but it may also increase community participation, clothing donations, helping hands, exposure, and more.

4. Pick a date and time. Choose whatever date works best with potential collaborators, team members, or verified guests. QEACI recommends 4 hour-long clothing swaps, this ensures enough time to explore the selection as well as time for guests to bring new items to the swap. (If starting with little to no clothing supply, we recommend beginning with a friends and family swap or begin accepting donations prior to the official clothing swap.)

5. Create a flyer and market your swap. This can look different in every circumstance, for example a small friends and family swap might only require a descriptive text message. However, a larger community-based swap will require more marketing such as a digital or print flyer for collaborators to market with. In this situation, it is best to ask the business or organization that you are collaborating with if they would like to create the flyer or vice versa. Additionally, consider creating a Facebook event listing for your swap and sharing it across groups instead of limiting it to a single post.

6. Prepare and gather your supplies. How do you want to display your swap? (On tables, clothing racks, bins, bags, floor, all of the above) What else might you need? (Measuring tape, rubber bands, extra bags, scale to measure the impact of the swap, signage for clothing categories, extra hangers, water and a snack, gloves, ect. There is no correct answer, find what works for you and your target audience.)

7. Arrive early and set up your swap. All of this prep work and the day has finally come! For larger or community based swaps, QEACI recommends beginning to set up 45 min to an hour early, in case of early arrival and to reduce the risk of incoming donations piling up. Also consider time for hanging up items if you are planning on using clothing rack(s).



8. Maintain the flow of the swap. For a small friends and family swap, each member may be bringing and displaying their own items, with everyone exploring and collecting from each other's selection. Or, what typically works for larger swaps, you can choose a designated “donation drop-off” point, where items are collected, sorted and then moved to a display area for clothing swap guests to collect from. This method works best when you have a pre established selection of items to display, as well as fellow community members to assist in sorting and displaying items.

9. Pack up the swap. Congratulations on hosting your first clothing swap! Chances are, you ended up with more clothing and textiles than you began with. While breaking down the clothing swap, consider where the leftover items will go? (Store them for the next swap, sort out certain items for reuse or to donate to fellow community members or organizations, crafts or a sewing project, ect) **AVOID DROPPING OFF ITEMS TO ORGANIZATIONS SIMILAR TO GOODWILL OR ROADSIDE DONATION BINS AT ALL COST.**

10. Plan the next one! Together we can keep textiles in use longer while combating overproduction and empowering the community. There is already enough clothing on the planet to last the next 6 generations of humans! Current recycling plans and business models of large resale chains largely rely on selling and exporting donated goods, where a vast majority end up in oversized landfills **(That can literally be seen from space!! Look up landfill near Alto Hospicio, Iquique, northern Chile).** The more community members that are hosting swaps, the more textiles we are able to keep in our community.

[Why your recycled clothes could end up in the Atacama desert](#)
[TEXTILE MOUNTAIN - The Hidden Burden of our Fashion Waste](#)

Two main methods of clothing swaps:

Personal swaps: These swaps typically consist of close friends, family members, or even school mates, and can range from a select few guests to larger groups. Participants arrive at the same time, each bringing items that they no longer want and display them in their own “market place”. Guests travel around and collect items from each member’s station, which could be displayed on tables, towels, clothing racks or more.

Pros:

- Easier and Faster set up and break down
- Different styles at each station
- Does not require a designated clothing sorter

Cons:

- Might take longer to view the items and find something in the correct size.
- Might be easier for one guest to take over another participant’s whole collection.



Community swaps: These swaps typically include a designated “donation drop-off” point, where items are collected, sorted and then moved to a display area for clothing swap guests to collect from. Swaps hosted by QEACI are open for guests to come with an empty bag and fill, otherwise, guests bring a bag of their items to donate. In this case we weigh the donations, dump them into the sorting area, and return the bag to the participant to fill with WHATEVER they like from the swap. Additionally, QEACI weighs guests bags when they exit the swap.

Pros:

- Easier to view and display items
- Larger selection in one place
- Individuals collections are spread across a larger audience = more people benefit from each donor

Cons:

- Requires one or more designated people to sort and display donations
- Longer set-up and break-down time
- Potentially larger initial cost for set up supplies

We wish you the best of luck in your clothing swap and sustainable endeavors. Together, we can stop passing this burden to another and redefine textile waste by forming a local solution! If you have any questions or need help finding a trustworthy location to donate your excess textiles to, please reach out to Kaylee@qeaci.org.



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HOW DO YOU SWAP?

IF YOU ARE BRINGING DONATIONS:

1. PLEASE DROP-OFF YOUR ITEMS AT THE FRONT TABLE SO THAT WE MAY WEIGH AND RETURN YOUR BAG.
2. HELP YOURSELF TO THE AVAILABLE ITEMS.
3. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, STOP BACK BY THE FRONT TABLE TO WEIGH OUT.

IF YOU ARE NOT BRINGING DONATIONS:

1. HELP YOURSELF TO THE AVAILABLE ITEMS.
2. WHEN YOU'RE DONE, "CHECK OUT" AT THE FRONT TABLE.

WHY DO WE WEIGH DONATIONS WHEN THEY ARRIVE AND LEAVE?

WE USE THIS INFORMATION AS A WAY TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF OUR CLOTHING SWAPS.

THE WEIGHT OF YOUR DONATED ITEMS, DOES NOT IMPACT HOW MANY ITEMS YOU CAN TAKE.

LEARN MORE AT QEACI.ORG