

Swapping - from closet captivity to fashion freedom

You have to love clothes swapping. This is a simple, sociable and sustainable fashion practice that releases pre-worn and pre-loved clothes from closet captivity back into fashion freedom.

Let's examine the harsh realities. Firstly, it's estimated that around 30 percent of all clothes hanging around in UK wardrobes haven't been worn for at least one year. Worse still, other commentators suggest that most of us wear only 20 percent of our clothing for 80 percent of the time, leaving the majority of our wardrobes' contents to wallow.

One has to marvel at the myriad of possible reasons for not donning our clothes. Perhaps it's because of size or style issues, the result of misguided purchases or from unwanted gifts, having duplicated similar pieces or because the closet owner simply changed their taste in clothing. Put simply, millions of people around the world are, literally, closet hoarders who are sitting on valuable stock (just the unworn clothes in UK wardrobes are estimated to be worth USD 50 billion) whilst simultaneously wasting money (and natural resources) on new, new, new.

So, this month we saluted the cost-effective, sociable and fashion-forward activity of clothes swapping by celebrating the clothes swapping advocates from Hong Kong to London who are managing their clothing stock sensibly, resulting in wardrobes with less waste.



On day 307, Katherine from [Redress](#) shared, 'It's so much fun having a swapping party with friends as you know that your wardrobe 'waste' is going to a good home and that the 'new' clothes you are taking home will not burn a hole in your wallet! I swapped this Chinese qipao-style dress with my colleague, which she had bought from Beijing. It's perfect for me to wear to my Spanish friends' up-coming wedding!'



On day 319, Karen co-founder of [Swap and Shop](#) shared, 'I am often asked 'What should I bring to swap?' I think people should think as a 'swapper' and not a 'donor'. A clothes swap is not only a fashion-sharing event that reduces waste. It is also an enjoyable chance for fashion lovers to find items that they would wear. If you think you are 'donating' and you bring along the damaged or ugly items from your #wardrobe, then your swap won't be a success.'



On day 315, Judy from [JupYeah](#) shared, 'Having been a 'jupper' since 2012, I have received most of the things I need through our swapping events and our online platform. I've been an avid swapper for years now and sharing unused belongings with others pulls like-minded people together and the satisfaction of helping your items to find a new owner encourages more sharing. Don't waste the used - but use the wasted! This is something we all have to learn.'



On day 317, Ren from [JupYeah](#) shared, "I received this note along with a vintage scarf at an intimate swap. The note asked me to 'treasure my 'new' scarf. This human touch reminds us of clothes' values and of what defines us. When you do a swap, don't treat it merely like a guilt-free trash bin. Instead, swaps are an opportunity to connect with people and the goods you let go and get. So, make every interaction personal!"



On day 328, [The Clothing Exchange](#) volunteer, Felicity shared, 'Swapping is a great excuse not only to have a good sort through what you own and pass it on, but also to refresh your wardrobe without putting more pressure on natural resources from buying new!'

On day 323, Lisa from [ADM Capital Foundation](#) swapped her black leather peplum top with Redress' Christina. 'Christina and I love swapping not just stories and encouragement throughout life's ups and downs, but also clothes.'

Swapping is better than shopping!

These contagious swapping stories may have inspired you to organise your own swap, so here are some tips to get you going.

- ✓ **Presentation is key** - Provide rails and hang the clothes nicely to give them the best chance of fashion freedom.
- ✓ **Quality first** - Only bring good quality and lovable clothes to a swap.
- ✓ **Cleanliness is a must** - Up the hygiene and out with the stains!
- ✓ **Enjoy it** - Make an evening out of your swap so as to catch up with friends, not just their clothes! Add a splash of vino and dash of gossip to bring the fun back into 'shopping'.
- ✓ **Get the buzz** - Enjoy getting the buzz of shopping, the fun of friends and the feeling of 'new' all whilst remembering that swapping is better than shopping!

Next up... [Your Get Redressed Stories](#)

In December, we are giving our Instagram platform to you, our followers, as we unwrap your personal 'Get Redressed' stories from across 2014. We're excited to reveal that collectively your small changes can make a big difference! Join the challenge by #GetRedressed on [Instagram](#).