

KNOWLEDGE SWAPS

*I teach you something,
you teach me
something*

How to Run Your Own Knowledge Swap

A step-by-step guide to sharing knowledge without money



www.knowledgeswaps.org

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What are Knowledge Swaps?

Knowledge swaps are exchanges of knowledge between people. They're **not free** — they're **money-free**. The currency is knowledge itself.

A knowledge swap goes like this: if someone teaches you something, you have a duty to teach something you know to others, at some point (soonish!) in the future. That's the cost. That's the commitment.

No money changes hands. No regulations. No complications. No accounts to keep. Just people teaching people — the way it's always been.

The Principles

These are non-negotiable. If it doesn't follow these principles, it's not a knowledge swap.

- A knowledge swap is always money-free. Always.
- Knowledge is the only currency.
- If you attend, you commit to offering your own workshop in return.
- Anyone can run one, anytime, anywhere.
- Keep it simple. A kitchen table is enough.
- Products may be available for sale alongside a knowledge swap, but the swap itself is never a commercial event.

Where Did This Come From?

The knowledge swap concept was developed by Elisabeth Cave in Karamea, on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island, in 2004. Workshops were held fortnightly and covered everything from bread-making to herbal medicine to wool processing.

When Elisabeth left Karamea, the community carried the knowledge swaps on without her. That's how you know it works — it doesn't need a central organiser to survive. It belongs to everyone who participates.

Now we'd like the concept to spread. Every knowledge swap you run plants a seed for the next one. Every person you teach becomes someone who can teach. That's how it grows — **organically**.

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These are photos from the original knowledge swap, which was originally called a 'summer school', back in 2004.

Karamea Summer School

"Back to Basics" Living



Marg and Jocelyn doing Knife sharpening with David Bateman

Thank you very much to everyone who helped to make the first Karamea Summer School as success: Paul at Rongo Backpackers, all the tutors, all the students, and everyone who helped advertise and support the summer school. Many thanks.



Everyone is absorbed in weaving.



Carrie demonstrates flax paper-making.



Brittany from Florida with her flax kete, in Carrie Snowden's workshop.



Ray Maybee explains his hydroelectric power system.



Peter explains the composting toilet system that he's building.



Cindy and Jenny making a plaited mat in the mat-making workshop.

Thank you for sharing your knowledge- we love to learn!



Ross explains how black wattle trees benefit the soil, in accordance with the permaculture methods of Masanobu Fukuoka.

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How to Run Your Own Knowledge Swap

You don't need permission. You don't need funding. You just need something you know and someone who wants to learn it.

Step by Step

1. **Choose your topic.** What do you know that others would love to learn? It doesn't have to be complicated. Baking bread, pruning fruit trees, darning socks, basic first aid, knife sharpening, seed saving, guitar chords — if you know it, someone wants to learn it.
2. **Choose a place.** Your kitchen, or garden, a community hall, a friend's shed or a park or the beach. Anywhere people can gather comfortably which suits the workshop. It doesn't need to be fancy.
3. **Choose a date and time.** Pick a time that works for you, at least two weeks in advance so people have time to hear about it and plan. Two hours is usually plenty for the workshop itself.
4. **Spread the word.** Tell people at least two weeks before. Put it on Facebook, pin a notice at the local shop, tell your neighbours, put it in the community newsletter, or drop flyers in letterboxes (there's a template at the back of this booklet). Make sure your announcement clearly explains the knowledge swap concept — that it's money-free and that anyone who attends commits to running their own workshop on something they know. People need to understand the deal before they turn up, not after. Include your phone number or email so people can book a place, and state how many places are available (e.g. "limited to 6 places").
5. **Build the buzz.** Post a reminder one week before ("one week to go!") and again the day before ("tomorrow!"). This keeps the interest building and reminds people who meant to book but haven't yet.
6. **Run your workshop.** Teach what you know. Be yourself. People aren't expecting a professional course — they're expecting a real person sharing real knowledge.
7. **Pass it on.** At the end, explain the knowledge swap concept to your participants. Give them a copy of this booklet if you have one. Remind them of the deal: they've learned from you, now they have a duty to share something they know with others, and that you look forward to attending their knowledge swaps. 😊
8. **Give them your certificate.** There's a certificate of thanks at the back of this booklet. Ask your participants to sign it for you, and then give it to you! — it's a fun way to mark the occasion and a reminder that what you did mattered.
9. **That's it!** You've just run a knowledge swap. And you've planted seeds for the next ones.

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Practical Tips

- **Keep the group small.** Three to ten people is ideal. Everyone gets hands-on time, and the conversation stays real.
- **Have everything ready.** If people need materials or tools, have them set up before anyone arrives. First impressions matter.
- **Make a cup of tea.** Hospitality is part of it. A cuppa and a biscuit goes a long way.
- **Don't overthink it.** It doesn't need to be perfect. It needs to be real.
- **Collect names.** Ask people if they would like some help in setting up their knowledge swaps. If so, ask them +to write down their name, how to contact them, and what they could teach. This becomes your seed list for future swaps.
- **Selling products is fine.** If you make something — jams, soap, kits, tools — you can absolutely have them for sale alongside your workshop. The workshop itself is the swap. The products are separate.



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What Could You Teach?

If you're thinking "I don't know anything worth teaching" — you're wrong. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Cooking, baking, preserving, fermenting, or smoking food
- Gardening, composting, seed saving, or pruning
- Knitting, sewing, darning, felting, or weaving
- Woodwork, whittling, tool sharpening, or repair
- Herbal remedies, natural health, or first aid
- Music, singing, or instrument basics
- Photography, drawing, or painting
- Animal care, beekeeping, or cheesemaking
- Budgeting, mending, or making do
- Anything you know how to do that someone else would love to learn

How to Promote It

You don't need a marketing budget. You need a community.

- Post on local Facebook groups and community pages.
- Pin a notice at the local shop, library, or café.
- Put a small notice in the community newsletter or newspaper.
- Drop flyers in letterboxes in your area (use the template on the next page).
- Tell your friends and neighbours in person.
- Ask the people who attend to tell others.
- Post reminders one week before and the day before.

Word of mouth is your best tool. One good experience and people will come back — and bring others.

Visit www.knowledgeswaps.org for more resources and to connect with other people running knowledge swaps.

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Template: Announcement for Facebook or Newsletter

Copy (digital version available on website) and adapt this for your own knowledge swap:

KNOWLEDGE SWAPS *I teach you something, you teach me something.*

[Your topic] with [Your name]

When: [Date and time]

Where: [Location]

Places: Limited to [number] people

What to bring: List what your attendees should bring (if anything).

Book your place: Contact [name] on [phone/email]

This is a knowledge swap — it's money-free. You learn from me, and in return you commit to running your own workshop on something you know. Knowledge is the currency, not money.

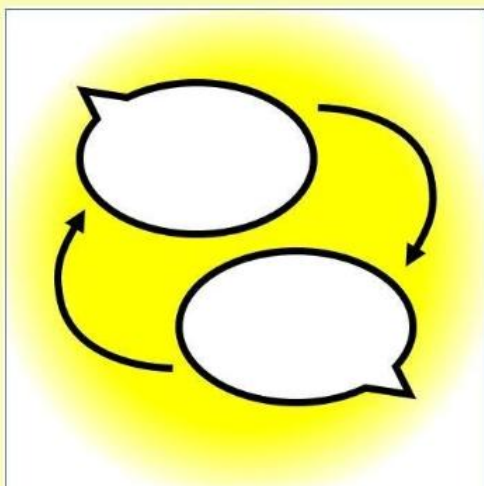
Book your place to avoid missing out.

Find out more at www.knowledgeswaps.org

Template: Letterbox Flyer on the next page

Print this out, fill in your details by hand, and photocopy. Drop copies in letterboxes in your area.

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Learn: _____ (*What you'll be teaching*)

With: _____ (*Your name*)

When: _____ (*Date and time*)

Where: _____ (*Location*)

Places available: _____

Book your place: _____ (*Your phone number or email*)

What is a knowledge swap? A knowledge swap is money-free. No money changes hands. The currency is knowledge. I teach you something I know, and in return you commit to running your own workshop on something you know — anytime, anywhere. That's the deal.

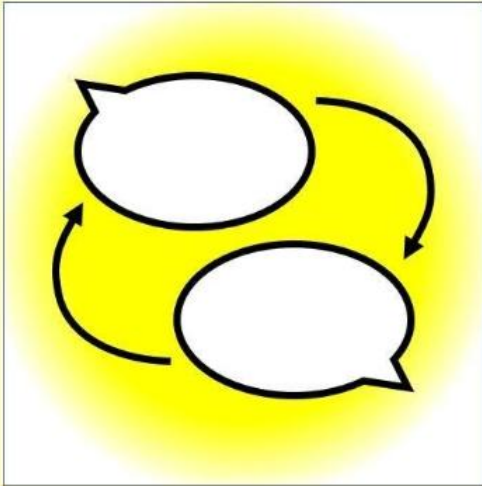
You'll receive a booklet showing you exactly how to run your own knowledge swap.

www.knowledgeswaps.org

Certificate of Thanks

Print the next page and ask your participants to sign this for you at the end of your workshop, and give it to you!. It's fun, and it's a reminder that what you did mattered.

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Certificate of Thanks

This is to recognise

_____ (Tutor's name)

for generously sharing their knowledge of

_____ (Topic)

with us on

_____ (Date)

Thank you for keeping the knowledge swap alive.

Signed by participants:

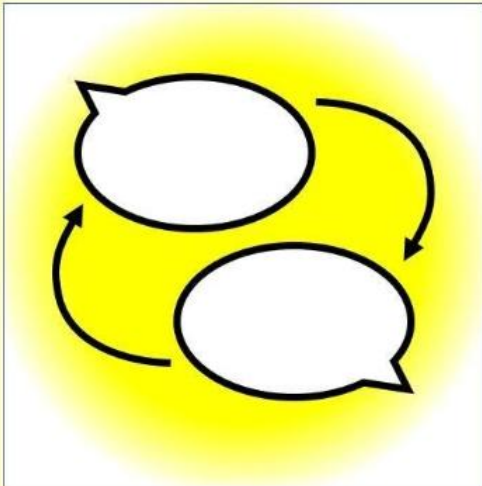
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This is not free. It is money-free. The cost is your commitment to share what you know with others, on your own future knowledge swap.

And along the way, you'll meet wonderful people in your area and make new friends. It happens every time.

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