

## Beginner Tips for Safe Babywearing

Babywearing is a very natural practice that has been used everyday in cultures across the world for thousands of years. However, like breastfeeding, just because it's natural doesn't mean it's easy or intuitive. Depending on the type of babywearing you want to do, there can be a steep learning curve. Here are some key things to keep in mind to help you and your baby stay safe as you get used to it and figure out which carrier and position works best for you.

### Use the Right Type of Carrier

The popularity of babywearing means that there are lots of different carriers to choose from, and which one you go with is largely a matter of personal preference. Buckle-type carriers like the Ergo and the Tula are great if you just want to be able to click and go without the learning curve that comes with woven or stretchy wraps, and mei tais and ring slings provide a nice middle ground option. However, some carriers, including stretchy wraps, are meant for certain size babies and using an Ergo without extra padding to keep a newborn in the proper position or using a stretchy wrap for a back carry can be dangerous. Always check the instructions and guidelines before using your carrier.

### Follow the TICKS rules.

Developed by the [UK Sling Consortium](#), TICKS is a great checklist to help you remember the key rules for safe babywearing.

#### Tight

No matter what carrier you're using, it should be nice and snug. You should be able to walk around comfortable without feeling like you have to have a hand on your baby, and you should be able to squat down to get something off the floor and turn in all directions without feeling any kind of wiggling or looseness. Some carriers, such as stretchy wraps, will naturally loosen after a while of wearing, so make sure to check and see if you need to retighten every so often during long babywearing sessions.

#### In View at All Times

With the exception of back carries, you should always be able to see your baby's entire face — not just the head — while babywearing. If you're doing a back carry, you can do a check on every mirror and window you pass to ensure your baby's face is fully visible.

#### Close Enough to Kiss

Babies need to be upright enough on your chest that they are where you would carry them if you had them on your shoulder while rocking. You should always be able to just tilt your head down and kiss the top of your baby's head — again with the exception of back carries.

#### Keep Chin Off Chest

There should always be at least one adult finger width between your baby's chin and chest. If your baby falls asleep while babywearing, you can usually tuck their head under a strap or wrap pass to make sure that the head is positioned properly.

### Supported Back

Proper babywearing position for both front and back carriers means that the baby is in a squatting position with the bum and back supported (the carrier should come all the way up the baby's back) and the knees higher than the hips.

### Ask for Help

With strollers and snap-in baby seats the norm in today's culture, babywearing can take some getting used to. It's always a good idea to have someone experienced in babywearing help you the first few times you try it (or a new type of carrier or wrap) so you can have an extra set of hands and eyes to ensure both you and your baby are safe, comfortable, and happy.