

Baby and Toddler Wearing – is it for me?

Getting out and about with your baby can sometimes feel daunting and complicated. Slings and carriers are an easy solution to this, in addition to all the benefits to your baby, of feeling safe, secure and warm. High street shops sell very, very few of the wonderful carriers on offer, and these are not all necessarily the best, so do your research before buying.

Many people choose to carry their child because of the wide range of benefits for the child such as promoting the bond between parent and child, easing colic in young babies and encouraging earlier independence. There have also been research studies showing that carrying your baby can be good for mothers who suffer from depression, as the bond is increased without having to 'find ways' to interact.

There are lots of practical benefits of using some kind of baby carrier such as:

- Being able to have your hands free to do other things whilst carrying your baby
- Walking in areas where buggies are not practical – such as up steps, through kissing gates, or on rough ground
- Easing colicky babies or babies that are feeling the need to be carried due to illness or simply a developmental stage.
- You can exercise by walking briskly while your baby is asleep
- Carrying a younger baby round whilst doing things with your toddler
- You get to cuddle your baby – lots!
- Enjoy carrying your baby as he/she grows older – many carriers are suitable up to the age of about 3 – some beyond!
- They come in fantastic colours and fabrics, so they look fabulous

There are lots of different types – slings, wraps, pouches, and lots of other fabulous soft carriers – so make sure you try on a couple of different ones before you make a decision about what is best for you and your baby. You can do this at a slingmeet – got to www.slingmeet.co.uk to find out what is local to you or to set one up.

What are the best types of baby carrier?

There are hundreds of different types of baby carriers in a wide range of fabrics, colours and styles. The reason there are so many is that different styles suit different adults and different babies/toddlers – so it is a case of having some fun trying them before you buy. Many of them are suitable up to the age of 3 – so they are a good investment.

As a very brief summary there are:

Slings

Usually secured with two rings (hence 'ring slings') - these are suitable for a newborn lying down, through to a toddler in a hip carry or even back carry. Definitely the best carrier for breastfeeding.



Pouches

Similar in use to a sling, but bought in a size to fit your frame with a curve sewn into the fabric, so that there is no need to adjust with the rings. They fold up really small so are a great handbag carrier.



Wraparound Sling/Wrap

These are a long piece of fabric that you tie around you in different ways according to the age of your child. The way you tie it will depend on the age of your baby (newborn – toddler) and your personal preference. Different fabrics and lengths affect the feel and use of the wrap.



Soft Carriers/Asian Inspired Carriers

Many of these are based on the far eastern designs that have been developed over hundreds of years. They carry the weight on your waist and shoulders, and pull your baby tight into your centre of gravity making your baby/toddler feel much lighter, and reducing any strain. Most can be worn on your front and back, and some on the hip as well.



For independent advice, look at these websites:

www.slingguide.com

www.getyourhandsback.com

<http://ukbaby carriers.ning.com/>

www.slingmeet.co.uk

For further advice and guidance, call Sarah at Slingtastic on 07825442110

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Pictures courtesy of Slingtastic www.slingtastic.com

Ellaroo Ring Sling, Hotslings Pouch, Calin Bleu Fleece Wrap, patapum Toddler Carrier