

Using Your Ring Sling

The T.I.C.K.S. Rule for Safe Babywearing
 Keep your baby close and keep your baby safe.
 When you're wearing a sling or carrier, don't forget the T.I.C.K.S.

- ✓ TIGHT
- ✓ IN VIEW AT ALL TIMES
- ✓ CLOSE ENOUGH TO KISS
- ✓ KEEP CHIN OFF THE CHEST
- ✓ SUPPORTED BACK

TIGHT - slings and carriers should be tight enough to hug your baby close to you as this will be most comfortable for you both. Any slack/loose fabric will allow your baby to slump down in the corner which can hinder their breathing and pull on your back.

IN VIEW AT ALL TIMES - you should always be able to see your baby's face by simply glancing down. The fabric of a sling or carrier should not close around them so you have to open it to check on them. In a cradle position your baby should face upwards not be turned in towards your body.

CLOSE ENOUGH TO KISS - your baby's head should be as close to your chin as comfortable. By bumping your head forward you should be able to kiss your baby on the head or forehead.

KEEP CHIN OFF THE CHEST - a baby should never be cradled so their chin is always a space of at least a finger width under your baby's chin.

SUPPORTED BACK - in an upright carry a baby should be held comfortably close to the wearer so their back is supported in its natural position and their turning and chest are against you. If a sling is too loose they can slump. A baby's back **pressing gently** - they should not wriggle or be positioned in a cradle or carry in a pocket or ring sling should be positioned carefully with their bottom in the deepest part so the sling does not fold them in half pressing their chin to their chest.

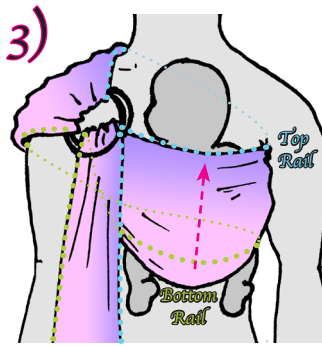


Helpful References

YouTube Playlist
 How to use your ring sling



Facebook Group
 Everyday Babywearing

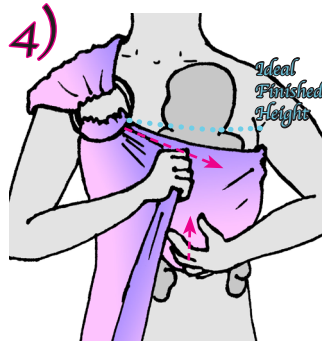


*The "top rail" is the edge that extends from the inside edge of the rings, around the top of your back, behind baby's neck, and down the inside of the tail nearest to baby.
 The "bottom rail" is the edge that goes around the wearer's arm, under baby's knees and to the outside of the tail away from baby.

3) Find the **top rail*** of the fabric bunched under baby and pull it up over baby's back while holding the **bottom rail** in place under their knees, along with any excess bunched width.

Newborns need the wrap up to their neck. Older babies (of an age that you would naturally pick them up under their armpits) can have the top rail pulled up to their armpit level with their arms outside of the sling.

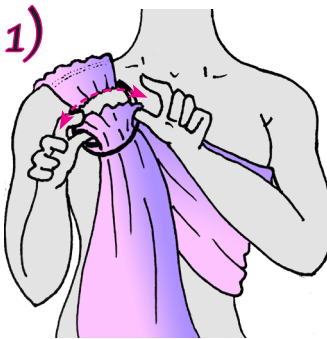
All extra fabric should be bunched under baby's knees. Baby's knees should be higher than their bum in a gentle, natural "M" shape. Their knees and bum should all be equally supported by the fabric like a hammock.



4) To finish tightening the sling, use your hand opposite the ring side to lift baby's weight up off the sling and your ring-side hand to pull the top rail **horizontally** behind baby's neck. Pulling straight down can cause the fabric to bunch in the rings. Ideally, the top rail should end up **completely horizontal** from the rings to your opposite armpit.

If needed, the middle of the tail can be tightened to snug up the fabric supporting baby's lower back and bum. The outside edge of the tail can be pulled straight down to tighten up the edge under baby's knees if needed, but using this method, this should rarely be needed.

A properly tightened sling should be hands-free, holding baby vertically and snugly against the wearer.

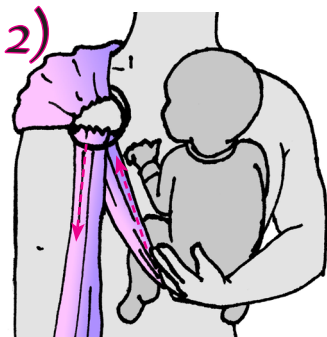


1) Start with rings on your shoulder, with the fabric spread across your back. Bring the tail up through the rings, then down over the 1st ring and under the 2nd ring.

*Work your thumbs under the fabric over the first ring and use your index fingers to walk the fabric from one hand to the other hand to straighten it out, making sure the edge along the top of the pouch continues to the inside edge of the tail, and the bottom edge of the pouch is on the outside edge of the tail. Then pull the tail down little by little (working from one edge to the other) to tighten up the loose slack over the rings where your thumbs were.

Position the rings just below your collarbone and spread the shoulder fabric out to cap the top of your arm.

"This process is called "finger walking" and can be repeated any time the fabric gets bunched up and won't tighten properly.



2) Pull gently on the tail to make the "pouch" where baby will be snug against your body. Do not feel the need to leave a lot of room for baby. Simply bunch the whole pouch up together and tighten until it is snug, but pulled as low as baby's bum will be.

Place baby onto the sling, with the fabric tucked under their knees. Their legs should be spread into a natural M shape. Newborns should be centered high on your chest. As they get older they can be moved off center, and babies who can sit unassisted can be placed all the way over onto your hip. Regardless of age, baby should be high enough to kiss the top of their head without having to strain.

Take this opportunity to move any loose fabric around your back, under baby's bum and **toward the rings**. Pull the tail down so that the bunched fabric is snug under their knees.

If you can't find a local babywearing group, take a mirror selfie and post it to an online babywearing group. Discomfort while wearing is often fixable with a few easy adjustments.

Never use bleach or fabric softener on your ring sling! Bleach will damage the fibers and fabric softeners can cause the fabric to slip through the rings too easily. Liquid detergents are better for the fabric than powdered.

If your sling is still new and stiff, you can soften it by steam ironing, running it back and forth through the rings, or even just sitting on it!

To wash your sling, put it inside a pillowcase or laundry bag and wash on cold. Put a clean dry sock over the rings before tumble drying to keep the rings from banging around in the dryer.



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