

What is an X-bu/Blanketless Onbu?

(Tutorial starts on page 3)

An x-bu is also called an x-onbuhimo or blanketless onbuhimo. Functionally, they work the same as an onbuhimo or reverse onbu (ruck-bu) but the construction is vastly simplified. A regular onbu is made up of a multi-layered body panel, two wrap straps, and two loops (with or without sling rings.) These are all attached and secured with bar tacking or x boxes.

An x-bu is constructed simply by crossing two narrow strips of fabric. The two “short arms” of the x are either sewn into fabric loops or sewn around rings (like a ring sling.) The two “long arms” of the x become the wrap straps. Where the two cross becomes the body panel.

If you need visuals, there is an [album](#) in the DIY Babywearing Group photo albums with several members’ x-bu creations.

They can be made with short fabric loops or short loops with single rings and worn like a traditional onbuhimo, or with longer loops with double rings and worn like a reverse onbu. Despite the similarities, functionally you cannot make a reverse x-bu and simply flip it upside down to wear it as a traditional. Several members have tried and, since the strap lengths are different, it will only function well as one and be very uncomfortable/unusable as the opposite.

Like a regular onbu, they are most suited towards babies who are sitting unassisted already and really only designed for arms-out back carries. A child may ride arms-in if they prefer but the carrier should be adjusted so that they can get arms in and out as they wish. The panel should not come up above their shoulders, since the open sides present a fall hazard, just like a regular onbu.

Because of the unique “V” shape at the top of the “body panel,” it is extremely important to ensure that the x-bu is worn at the correct height. The top of the carrier should come up as high as possible on the child’s back (right under their armpits) while still allowing an arms out carry. Any lower and baby risks being able to lean back out of the carrier.

Front carries can be done with a traditional x-bu, but it’s just slightly more awkward to thread the straps through the rings behind your back. For front carries, especially if you are using it with a smaller baby who cannot fit arms out, the wrap straps should be crossed behind your back and should be tied off in a way that closes off the open sides of the carrier.

X-bu Variations

(Tutorial starts on page 3)

Traditional X-Bu with rings

Compare to:

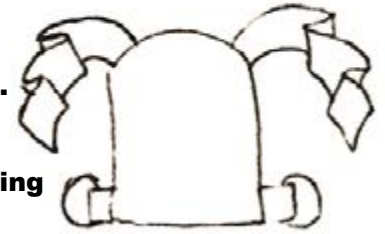
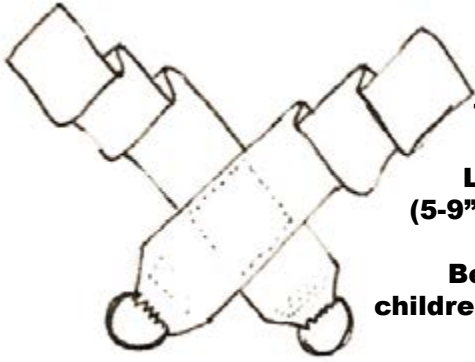
Traditional Onbuhimo w/ single rings

Long wrap straps on top. Short straps (5-9") on bottom with single small sling rings.

Best for back carries with strong sitting children. Can be used for front carries by crossing wrap straps behind wearer's back.

Must be tied off with a double knot for safety.

[Video Instructions](#) for traditional onbu carry.



Traditional X-Bu with fabric loops

Compare to:

Traditional Onbuhimo w/ loops

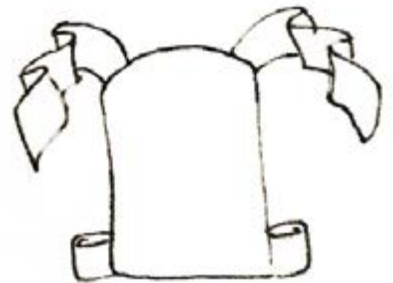
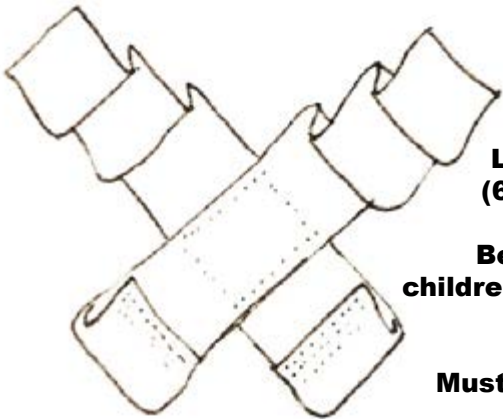
Long wrap straps on top. Short straps (6-12") on bottom with sewn into loops.

Best for back carries with strong sitting children. Can be used for front carries by crossing wrap straps behind wearer's back.

Must be tied off with a double knot for safety.

[Video Instructions](#) for traditional onbu carry.

Simply treat the loops of fabric like rings.



Reverse X-Bu with double rings

Compare to:

Reverse Onbu/Ruck-Bu

Long wrap straps on bottom. Short straps (10-12") on top with double small sling rings.

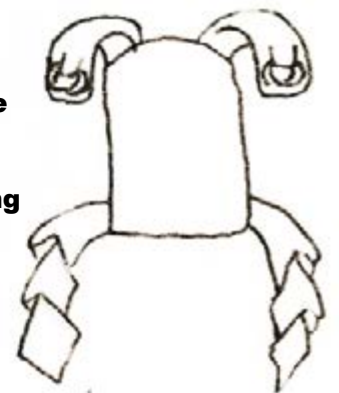
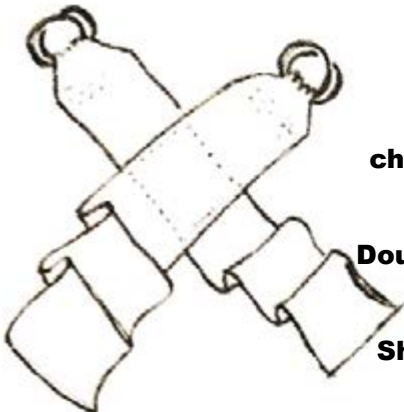
Best for back carries with strong sitting children. Not good for front carries, since the double rings are not easy to thread behind your back.

Double rings "lock" the straps in place like a ring sling so the straps do not need to be tied off (similar to wearing a buckle-bu.)

Short (12" minimum) tails beyond the rings are fine, or longer tails can allow for tie-offs for better weight distribution.

[Video Instructions](#) for reverse onbu carry.

[Video Examples](#) of optional tie-offs.



Tutorial: X-Bu X-Onbuhimo Blanketless Onbu

(Sewn Reverse/Ruckbu Style)

Made by Alyssa Leonard

What I Did

What I'd Do Differently

Possible Modifications

Step 1 Assemble Supplies



3 yards of 5oz denim

I am smaller and have enough for a tibetan tie-off. A reverse onbu/x-bu does not require any tie-off so for reverse I could have gone even a yard shorter. For a plus-size wearer or a traditional x-bu that requires a tie-off, longer strips might be needed. Any bottomweight woven fabric would be fine. Denim and cotton duck are both great sturdy options. For lighter (but still safe) fabrics like osnaburg, I would recommend doubling the width of each piece and sewing into a tube to double up the fabric. This is primarily personal preference erring on the side of safety.

4 small aluminum sling rings

4 rings are needed for the locking straps of a ruck-bu. For a traditional onbu, 2 rings (or none) are fine

Polyester all-purpose thread

2 bobbins worth

Fabric pencil, Yardstick/measuring tape, Fabric Scissors, Sewing Machine

Step 3 Hem 3 Sides



Hem 3 sides, leaving one short end of each strip unhemmed. I do a hem folded over twice, pinch-pressing the hem by hand as I go.

Jan from Sleeping Baby Productions has a great video for easy hems on YouTube. If you are a beginning sewer, you might be more comfortable folding, ironing, folding, ironing, and pinning before sewing.

Next time I'll have the patience to do properly mitered corners. Just kidding. I never miter my corners. Because I'm lazy.

Again, for thinner fabric like osnaburg I would have cut my strips 19" wide and, instead of hemming, folded them in half longways right-side-together and sewn them into a tube, then turned them right-side-out.

Step 2 Cut 2 Strips



After washing the fabric, I cut mine 11" wide (which hemmed to just shy of 9" wide.)

Since denim doesn't snip & rip, I folded it over neatly several times, drew a guideline with my white pencil, and cut through all the layers together. This requires good quality, sharp fabric scissors!

8.5" wide panel strips gave me a 17" tall/wide panel at the diagonals. It works well for my 20lb, 12-month-sized-clothes 8 month old. It fits my friends' 28lb, 24-month-sized-clothes, but he pretty much maxes it out. Others have done 12" wide finished width for a toddler+ sized carrier.

For thinner fabric like osnaburg I would have cut my strips 19" wide and, instead of hemming, folded them in half longways right-side-together and sewn them into a tube, then turned them right-side-out.

Step 4 Mark your lines & thread your rings.



I marked my line 30" from the unhemmed ends using a fabric pencil.

This ended up giving me 15" shoulder straps for wearing reverse. In the future, I would have marked it at 24" for slightly shorter straps. I have since adjusted my shoulders to the 24" fold for 12" shoulder straps and the fit is much better. The 15" straps worked better for my Large-XL t-shirt sized husband. The 12" straps work for me - I wear a small t-shirt.

For wearing like a traditional onbu instead of a reverse, I would've done 12" for 6" straps and only done single rings. For traditional, you can also make it ringless without sling rings. The "loop" created by the fabric is used in lieu of rings. For ringless, I suggest 12" total from the body panel overlap to the fold of the loop. I would do my reinforcing stitches about 4-6" from the folded edge of the loop so that the open loop was smaller.

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Step 5

3 lines of stitching



You could zigzag the bottom of the unhemmed part, but since I was using contrasting thread I folded it under like a hem for my first line of stitching, then did the other two lines about 3/8" apart.

If you are unsure about this, look up Sleeping Baby Productions' videos on YouTube for how to sew a floating gathered ring sling.

For ringless, I would have done one line straight or zigzag at the unfinished ends, and then done my 2-3 lines of reinforcing stitches closer to the end of the loop, so that my actual loop was only 4-6" deep, not the entire length to where they will overlap.

In hindsight, I should have stitched over the hemlines between my reinforcing stitches and the rings so that the sides around the rings weren't open. In using my x-bu, I often accidentally stick my hand through this loop of fabric. I have since remedied this on mine.

Step 6

Cross at 90 degrees and pin



Cross the two slings at a right angle (90 degrees) right below the bottom of your 3 lines of stitching. Pin the corners in place.

Others have done anywhere from 45 degree to 60 degree angles at the top with success. I preferred the straight 90 both for form, function, and ease of lining up my stitches. It also keeps the V at the top of the panel from being too deep, which allows for the child to be arms out (keeping them from being able to lean out the open sides of the carrier) without the hazard of being able to lean back over the top.

Step 7

Sew along your sling hems



Sew starting outside the "body panel" and crossing over it, going over each of your slings' hem line. This will create a "box" around the outside of the sling.

On the top sling, I was able to see the hem line/edge and follow it visually. For the bottom sling I could have flipped it over and worked from the back, but I just chose to do it by feel. I kept my fingers along the "ridge" of the bottom sling that I could feel, and then stitched about 3/8" away from that.

Step 8

Secure with x-boxes



I did 2" x-boxes in each corner of the body panel. Since my thread was so contrasting to the fabric, I chalked mine out first to make sure they were neat and even, but that part is optional. I reinforced each x-box with 3 layers of stitching.

Other moms have suggested doing one big x-box over the whole panel. I chose the smaller x-boxes to focus the reinforcement where the actual stress is on the carrier.

I chose to overlap my x-boxes 2-3 times. 1 x box is sufficient; overlapping stitches is merely insurance.

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Possible Modifications

Final Product

Threaded



Final result: works great, feels great! A very easy-to-make way to back carry safely. I found the shoulders fairly comfortable even with no padding. I have since shortened the shoulders by a few inches and they fit much better (the rings are no longer in my armpits.) I could have taken half a yard off the tails and still be able to tie off in back, and taken a full yard off and still have enough tails past my double rings to be secure without a tie-off. Still, it is easier to short straps that are too long than to lengthen straps that are too short, so starting with 3 yards is a good starting point - you may need more if you are larger than me. I am about a small t-shirt, 8-10 dress size (US sizing.)

May not be as comfortably for long-term wearing as a regular panelled, padded reverse onbuhimo; but for a quick sewing project, this makes a fun carrier that is great for quick ups!

