

**Parts of a sling:****Threading your sling (or putting it together):**

Keeping your sling untwisted, feed the tail through both rings, then feed the tail back again through the lower ring. Gather the fabric between the rings so that the fabric is not overlapping and the rails (or edges) are at each end.

**Putting on your sling:**

You will probably be most comfortable with the rings worn on your dominant side. So if you are right handed, place the threaded sling over your head and your left arm, so that the rings are resting near your right shoulder. And if you are left handed, put the threaded sling over your head and over your right arm, so that the rings are resting near your left shoulder. The rings should be in the corsage or broach position, which is the hollow under the shoulder about even with the underarm. The center pleat above the rings should be at the center of the shoulder cap with the pleats fanned out on each side. Take the time to ensure that the sling is evenly spread out across your back before inserting baby.

**Newborns to 3 months old (no head control):****Cradle Carry:**

Create a pouch for your baby by raising the lower rail against your body.

Leave the top rail (the edge away from your body) slightly loose until you have your baby in place. Hold your baby in the burp position on the side opposite the rings. Slide your baby into the sling feet first, maintaining support on his head. Settle baby down into the pouch with head resting a few inches from rings. Once your baby is comfortable, tighten the top rail until he is secure enough for you to release your hands.

**Tummy to Tummy:**

Position your baby upright on your chest so that his tummy is in the burp position, his legs are bent and his bottom is lower than his knees (like a frog). Pull the top rail to his neck and the bottom rail to his knees, forming a pouch. Tighten the top rail by supporting baby with one hand and pulling the appropriate edge of the fabric through the rings. Now tighten the bottom rail the same way until baby is secure against your body. (Some babies prefer to have their feet inside the pouch you have formed.)

**Care**

Your new sling has been prewashed in a dye-free, perfume-free detergent. To wash your sling, unthread the tail from the rings and machine wash in a mesh (lingerie) bag in cold water on the delicate cycle. Hang from the rings to dry. You may iron the sling on a low heat setting, if desired.

**3 to 6 months old (good head control but not yet sitting)****Kangaroo Carry:**

Create a pouch for your baby by raising the lower rail against your body. Hold your baby with his back against your shoulder opposite the rings and cross his legs. Settle baby into the sling, keeping his legs crossed in front. Once baby is in position, tighten the top rail.

**Modified Cradle Carry:**

Create a pouch for your baby by raising the lower rail against your body. Hold your baby with his tummy against your shoulder opposite the rings. Settle baby into sling in seated position with head near the rings and feet in the opposite direction. To give extra support to baby's head, tuck the tail of the sling behind his back.

**6 months old and up (sitting up unsupported) - Hip Carry:**

Hold baby on your shoulder in the burp position. (Depending on the length of your baby, he may be held quite high on your shoulder.) Slide both of his feet through the sling by reaching your hands up from the bottom of the sling. Pull the upper rail to his shoulders and the lower rail to his knees. With the lower rail against his knees, bend the knees like a frog and make sure they are above his bottom. A pouch has been formed. Position him to the side straddling your front and hips or shift him over to straddle your hip entirely, whichever is most comfortable and secure for both of you. Tighten the lower rail just until snug. Tighten the upper rail so that baby is close to your body.

**To remove baby from sling:**

With both of your hands under both of baby's arms, lift baby up onto your shoulder in the burp position. Keep baby secure in that position with one hand and clear baby's legs (if necessary) from the sling with the other hand.

**To tuck the tail of the sling out of the way:**

There will be times when you don't want the tail hanging, you can tuck the tail back into the rings, forming a rosette, or you can slide it around the front of your body and baby and tuck it in on the opposite side.

**Troubleshooting and Best Practice Tips:**

- Your baby's legs should never hang straight. This is not safe as baby could slip through the bottom of the sling. When in the tummy-to-tummy and hip carry positions, baby's knees should be above their hips and bottom so as not to interfere with hip development and to create the safest pouch for baby to sit in.
- Monitor that your baby's chin is **not** pressed against their chest and that your baby is breathing regularly at all times.
- For comfort and security for both you and your baby, make sure your baby is close to your body by tightening the top and bottom rails as necessary.
- Wear your baby high on your body, at or above the waist, for optimal comfort. You should switch the side you wear your baby from time to time to reduce wear and tear on your back.
- The fabric should be spread out evenly across the back and shoulder. The wider the fabric, the more evenly the weight will be distributed.
- Keep an arm on your baby when bending over - remember that baby is not strapped in. It is better to squat than to bend over.
- Take into account the extra size your baby adds to you when passing through doors. You don't want to knock your precious bundle!
- Do not use your sling in dangerous situations, for instance while cooking, handling sharp or hot objects, or being near machinery in which the tail of the sling might get caught.
- A sling is not meant to be a safety restraint in the car or airplane.
- If you just can't seem to get your baby adjusted in the sling, put your baby down in a safe place, take off the sling and make sure that the rings are properly threaded and that there are no twists in the fabric. Once you are certain everything is the way it should be, try again.