



# Gypsy Mama

**carriers for infants and toddlers**

*safety information and carrying instructions*





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BW benefits on back of booklet

Glossary of Acronyms:

*WaW -- Water Wrap*

*BBS -- BaliBaby Stretch*

*Wool -- Wool Wrap*

*BBB -- BaliBaby Breeze*



## using these instructions

Congratulations on purchasing a baby carrier by Gypsy Mama! Keeping your little one close to your body is the best thing possible for both of you, and you will find that babywearing makes mothering an easier, richer experience. Before using your wrap, please read the safety instructions at the beginning of this book.

The instructions that follow are only a few suggestions for using your wrap. Once you get the hang of safely and securely tying your baby to your body, experiment a bit. The possibilities are endless! Just remember to ask another adult to spot you whenever you are trying out a new carry. For more ideas visit the forums at The Babywearer, attend a local babywearing meeting, or watch the videos at the Mamatoto Project website. For more information see the resources at the end.

Not all carries are suited to all wraps, so you'll find a note on each page of instructions to let you know which carries are suited to which wraps. Please take careful note of this.

Also, you will notice three methods shown for getting a baby on your back. You can use these interchangeably -- use the hip-scoot to do the rucksack, for example. At the end of the booklet, you'll find a few ideas for nursing hands-free or carrying two. These things are possible with practice and patience!

Don't feel overwhelmed! You only need to learn ONE method for carrying your baby. You may enjoy having many options, but you don't need to learn them all. And don't forget, babywearing should be fun for both baby and caregiver. Enjoy yourself! Sing while you wrap, laugh, smile. Happy babywearing!

Warm regards,

Kristi Hayes  
Owner, Gypsy Mama, LLC

# babywearing safety

- ∞ Above all else, use common sense! If at any time you feel that your baby is unsafe, uncomfortable, or improperly secured, unwrap and try again. The safety of your baby is your responsibility, and it is important to continue to attend him/her while using your wrap. Get help from an experienced babywearer if you are having trouble learning to use your wrap - see the resources at the end for more information.

Like almost every aspect of parenting, babywearing takes practice. Here are some things to keep in mind as you learn:

- ∞ Check with your physician if you have any concerns about your physical fitness or the suitability of this carrier for yourself or your baby. Gypsy Mama wraps are designed to carry children until about 35-40 pounds or as long as the carrying adult and child both feel comfortable and secure.
- ∞ Carefully check your wrap for signs of wear before each use.
- ∞ NEVER leave an infant or child unattended with a baby carrier.
- ∞ Choose a safe space for wrapping your baby where you will not be jostled by passers-by, tripped up on uneven ground, or otherwise interrupted.
- ∞ Do not allow more than 6 inches of the wrap to dangle below the knot. If necessary, tuck the ends up or wrap around your waist to take up the extra. Be especially vigilant if you are near moving equipment or an open flame.
- ∞ When you are learning any new carry, ask a competent adult to spot you and double-check your work for security.
- ∞ Be aware of your baby's body in relation to your surroundings - shield your baby from doorways, passers-by, and other obstacles.
- ∞ Do not cover your baby's face with cloth. Ensure the baby is getting good air flow at all times.
- ∞ Do not force the baby into unnatural positions inside the carrier. Babies' airways are tiny, and it is possible to press the chin into the chest in a way that restricts breathing. You should be able to comfortably tuck your thumb under baby's chin at all time. Be aware of your child's breathing patterns and ensure you are carrying him in a position similar to the one you would use in arms. This is especially important when using the cradle hold position.
- ∞ Be conscious of your baby's comfort. Do not cut off your child's circulation by tying the cloth too tightly under the arms, over the legs, or otherwise.
- ∞ Use mirrors, car windows, other adults, or your hands to periodically check the position of both your baby and your cloth.

DO NOT carry your baby in a carrier when cooking, using a lawnmower, cleaning with noxious chemicals, while under the influence of alcohol, or in other conditions in which you would not ordinarily carry a baby.

# front carries

The front carries shown here are *cross carry variations*. They can be used to carry your baby in a variety of positions depending on how you put your baby into the carrier. The instructions that follow will get you started, and the photos on this page can offer you inspiration, but you'll find that the possible variations are almost endless. The front carries shown here are all good for use with any Gypsy Mama products.

The **Cross Carry** is the best carry for beginners to learn. It is easy to take your child in and out without retying it.

The **Hip Cross Carry** is also easy to take your child in and out of without retying.

The **Wrap Cross Carry** is the most frequently used carrying method for front carries. You may find this more comfortable than other carries, especially with stretchy wraps or as your child grows, as it has an extra layer of support across your child's body.

**To tighten any carry**, untie the knot, keeping firm hold of both ends of fabric. Pull the untied ends of fabric slightly away from your body and jump a bit as you pull. You will feel the whole wrap tighten up. You can also tighten only the top edge, bottom edge, or middle of the fabric by tugging only on the edge or middle while you jump.

**For comfort** keep the fabric well-spread, even when bunched or folded for aesthetic reasons. Your child's weight should be concentrated on the balls of your shoulders, NOT on your neck.



# The cross carry

(also called Simple Cross Carry)

*WaW, Wool, BBB, BBS*

1. Hold the fabric by the top edge with the center of the wrap at the center of your back and take it forward under your arms.



2. Cross the fabric from your left hip over your right shoulder and the fabric from your right hip over your left shoulder, taking up any slack. Let the long ends hang down behind your back.



3. Reach behind you and pull the fabric forward so that it makes an X at your back. Pull it taut so the fabric in front makes a snug X (the baby sits in the X). Tie the ends in a square knot at your belly or hip.



4. Settle baby first into the inner cross, then the outer. Spread each cross completely under baby's bum (from knee to knee).



5. With a small baby you may leave his legs tucked up; older children will poke one leg out each side of the X so the fabric crosses under their bum. They should be settled comfortably, as in a hammock swing. You may leave your child's arms out or tuck them in. If baby is too low, take up the fabric at the knot; if baby is too high, let out the fabric at the knot.



# hip cross carry

WaW, Wool, BBB, BBS



1. Find the center of your wrap and fold it in half lengthwise. Settle the wrap so the center is at or just behind the ball of your shoulder.

2. Take the front of the fabric across your body to the opposite hip. Continue so the fabric follows the belt-line at your back and bring it around to your navel.



3. Follow the same pattern with the fabric hanging behind you, taking it to the opposite hip and around to your navel. Leave enough space in the wrap for a baby to sit inside, and tie the ends in a square knot (tucking up any excess fabric).



4. The x formed by the two crosses will make a seat for your child. Settle her in so that one leg goes into the front of the x and the other slides into the back of the x. Carefully spread both crosses under her bottom, making a wide, deep seat, bringing the fabric up under her armpits. Tighten or loosen the wrap at the knot as necessary.



5. Alternatively, you can settle your smaller baby into the cross at the front of the sling as shown. Be sure he is settled securely into the fabric pocket and that you can fit your thumb's width between his chin and his chest.



# wrap cross carry

WaW, Wool, BBB, BBS



1. Center the wrap in front of you. Hold the top edge of the fabric away from you with your left hand.

2. Take the fabric under your armpit, and cross it behind you, bringing it over your right shoulder. Repeat this with the other side of the fabric, using your right hand to bring the fabric over your left shoulder from behind so that both ends are hanging down in front of you.



3. Pull the pocket you have made at your belly open and settle your child into this, spreading the fabric from his knees to his armpits or up over his shoulders.

4. Keeping the fabric well-spread to distribute your child's weight, cross the fabric on your left over baby's back and between his legs, then cross the fabric from your right over baby and between his legs. Remember that until the fabric is knotted you must support your child's weight at all times with your hand or by tightly holding the cloth!



5. Bring the ends behind you and tie a secure square knot. If your child seems a bit low, it helps to pull the ends of the fabric out and jump once or twice before tying. You can tuck your child's legs and arms into the fabric or leave them out, and depending on temperature, your baby's state of alertness, and your child's weight, you may decide to bunch one or both of the crosses a bit.

# back carries

When you are first learning to carry your child on your back, it is best to work in a kneeling position or over a soft surface (such as a bed). Use a mirror and another adult to check your work. If you have not had prior experience with baby wearing, it is best to wait until your baby is three months or older to begin back carries.

The **Tibetan Carry** and the **Rucksack Carry** are similar and are shown together. The **Tibetan** is a wonderful, comfortable, secure carry ideal for small babies and pregnant mothers. As your child grows, you may like the extra support offered by the **Rucksack**, which distributes baby's weight over your waist as well as your shoulders.

The **Torso Cross Carry** is our favorite in hot weather and for mamas with back/shoulder problems. It works best with women's body shapes, though we know of men who have used it successfully. Take extra care to check your work and tie this carry snugly.

The **Back Wrap Cross Carry** spreads your child's weight in such a way that you hardly feel like you're carrying her! This position may not be suited to children who like to lean (try the rucksack) but it is especially comfortable and secure, even for carrying preschoolers on long walks.

**Pictured are three methods of putting children on your back.** There are other methods for getting children on the back not shown here, but these will get you started.

**For comfort, keep the fabric well-spread, even when bunched or folded for aesthetic reasons.** Your child's weight should be concentrated on the balls of your shoulders. Experiment with crossing/not crossing the straps in front and with how high/low you are carrying your child.



# rucksack carry; tibetan carry

## Shoulder Toss Method

*BBB, BBS (use extra care and practice with the BBS)*



1. Spread fabric on a bed, couch, or chair. Place baby on top, being sure the fabric is spread from baby's knees to his armpits or, for smaller babies, all the way over his shoulders and head. Gather the wrap around him, making a snug little bag.

2. Use the other hand to support his back and bottom, hoisting him high on your shoulder and turning him so that he is settled against your shoulder/back, with both ends of fabric hanging down the front of your torso.



3. Continue to support his body securely while you arrange the fabric so that the fabric on baby's left is over your left shoulder and the fabric on baby's right is over your right shoulder. Lean forward a bit and use the hand that's NOT supporting baby to tighten the fabric on both sides. Check that the fabric is still spread from baby's knees to his armpits or shoulders and pull the edges and center of the fabric to make it

snug. When it is tight enough to support the baby, stand up and hold the fabric ends in two hands, letting baby settle into a little pocket in the wrap (think of a hammock).

4. Now take the straps under your arms to the back. Reach behind you and cross them under your child's bottom (don't make it so tight you cut off his circulation) and bring to the front.





5a. **For the rucksack** simply tie the ends in a square knot at your waist.

5b. **For the Tibetan** hold securely between your knees. This keeps it secure and out of the way while you work. Take the other end under your body. Tuck the end through the shoulder strap and pull



one end of the fabric between your knees. This keeps it secure and out of the way while you work. Take the other end under your body. Tuck the end through the loop made by the snug.



6. Repeat with the other side and knot at your chest.

7. The baby's head can rest at the base of your neck, or lower, between your shoulder blades.



# Torso cross carry

## Couch Lift Method

Wool, BBB, BBS



1. Settle the center of your wrap in the corner of a couch. Sit your child on top of it, being sure the wrap is spread from his needs to his armpits or over his shoulders.

2. Kneel, squat, or sit in front of him and take the fabric under your arms, pulling it tight so that he is pressed against your back securely. Hold both ends of the wrap in one hand and use the other hand to support your child as you stand up.



3. Gather the wrap securely in two hands, and tuck one end firmly between your knees to get it out of the way and hold it in place. The fabric in your hands should be spread over your baby's back and taken to the front under your arms. Now, keeping it spread, bring it across your torso, under the opposite arm, to the back. Reach around for the top edge of the wrap and spread it across baby's back.



4. Bring under your arm to front again, and jump and snug it up. Repeat with the other side.



5. Tie at the waist in a square knot. You may like to fold or roll the top edge a bit.

# back wrap cross carry

## Hip Scoot Method

Wool, BBB, BBS



1. Center the wrap at your child's back and settle him far back on your hip. Now, pull him further back on your hip, passing him under your armpit, leaving the wrap in place. Reach around once more and slide him to the center of your back, still with the wrap spread behind him. You're ready to begin.

2. Bring both ends of the wrap to the front, under your arms, while supporting baby with one hand. Secure the wrap on your right side between your knees, keeping it taut and out of the way. Ensure the wrap is well-spread and supporting your child, then let go of your baby while firmly holding firmly the other end of the wrap. Cross it from your left hip to your right shoulder, tucking your arm under it as if it were a sleeve. Grab the bottom edge with your hand.



3. Still holding the bottom edge with your right hand, reach behind and grab the top edge with your LEFT hand, pulling it snugly over your shoulder and up across your child's back. When it's well-spread and snug, slip it under baby's left leg, making a little sling-seat for him. Repeat with the other side (see photo), ensuring as you go that the wrap stays spread to baby's armpits.



4. It is especially important with this carry that you snug it up well, especially the upper rails/edges. You may also have a helper tuck baby's arms inside the wrap.

# nursing hands-free

Here are a few ideas for nursing hands-free; you and your child will find what works best for you! You may find it easier to wear clothes designed specifically for nursing.



Nursing in the pocket of the hip cross carry

Nursing in a cross carry tied low, baby sitting upright



Nursing in the pocket of a wrap cross carry



## carrying two

Yes, it is possible to carry more than one child at once! Our favorite for carrying two children of two different ages is to use 2 BaliBaby wraps: a longer cloth for carrying the younger child in a Wrap Cross Carry or Front Cross Carry (shown tied behind baby's back), and a size 4 Breeze for carrying the older child on the back in a Rucksack.



It is also possible to carry two children in one wrap. For this, we prefer the BaliBaby Stretch, but it's possible with the Breeze as well. Of course, many variations are possible, but here are two favorites.

### **Method one** (best for small, same-sized babies):

Using the cross carry, tuck a baby into the pocket at each hip (photo at right).



### **Method two:**

1. Tie the older child on in a wrap cross carry that's a bit too loose.

2. Slip your arms out of the shoulder straps and slide the whole wrap around, so your child's on your back. Keep it well spread-out.



3. Now slip your arms back into the shoulder straps. Tuck baby into the X at the front of your body. Spread the fabric carefully to avoid creating any uncomfortable pressure points for your little one! Be especially mindful of your baby's behavior to ensure his comfort and safety when carrying two. This takes practice, but it is a wonderful option to have available to you when you need it and it really facilitates a special sort of bonding between siblings.

# for more information on babywearing

Read *Babywearing* by Maria Blois, MD

Watch *Tummy 2 Tummy* on DVD

Visit [TheBabywearer.com](http://TheBabywearer.com), a nonprofit website best known for its forums where you can chat with other baby wearing moms and dads and get help with your baby carriers. You will also find extensive articles and reviews, including reviews for Gypsy Mama baby carriers.

Visit The Mamatoto Project at [WearYourBaby.com](http://WearYourBaby.com) for information on all aspects of baby wearing and, most notably, video and other instructions for using your wrap in lots of other ways than what are pictured here!

Visit [NineInNineOut.org](http://NineInNineOut.org), a baby wearing nonprofit best known for its baby wearing groups where you can receive in-person support for learning to use your baby carrier. There may be a group near you!

La Leche League meetings and API (Attachment Parenting International) meetings are also good places to find help with your baby wrap.

## ***You might also enjoy:***

*Dance With Me* by Elizabeth Johnston, a beautiful children's book that features a photo of the Gypsy Mama baby Isaac inside.

*Backpack Baby* board books by Miriam Cohen, a wonderful, baby-friendly series featuring the "Backpack Baby."

*Babies Celebrated* by Beatrice Fontanel, a photo art book about child-raising practices from around the world.





Wraparound Carriers are the most versatile, comfortable baby carriers on the market!

Your Water Wrap™, Wool Wrap™, and BaliBaby Breeze™ and BaliBaby Stretch™ Wraps:

- ∞ Provide unlimited carrying options
- ∞ Promote healthy development of baby's hips and spine
- ∞ Allow you to carry your baby, toddler, or preschooler in a variety of positions \*
- ∞ Allow you to carry two children at once if you choose
- ∞ Promote bonding
- ∞ Are easy to use -- no buckles, straps, or rings
- ∞ Are marked at the center for even easier tying
- ∞ Allow you to breastfeed hands-free

\* the water wrap should not be used for back carries

Studies show that babies worn in soft cloth carriers like these cry less, have higher IQ's, and form better attachments with caregivers. Shouldn't your baby have a chance to be smarter, happier, and healthier too?

# Gypsy Mama