

Babywearing - One Moms Experience With Being Hands Free and Heart Full

When I became a mom, something magical happened. An inner strength and desire to protect, love and nurture rose up within me. Desires, dreams and fears awakened in my heart that once lay dormant. I felt fit for the task and excited for the adventure of motherhood that stretched out ahead me. When my relatives went home and my husband returned to work I believe I handled the change exceptionally well. That is until our fridge containing a few leftovers and several bottles of breast milk finally forced us to venture out of the house to the grocery store. Until this point, I really felt that I was pulling off my new mommy role quite well. However, I had no idea that my little 5 pound 10 oz hunk of love could require so much extra effort for something as simple as a run to the store. Between loading and unloading the car seat, diaper bag, stroller, and to-do list I felt as though I may as well have been charting territory in a foreign land. After I returned home from that first adventure, I boldly decided that running errands alone with my baby was just too much work. The thought of pulling my Cadillac stroller and heavy car seat in and out of my car for another excursion was simply more than I could bear. Later that week, a lady at church breezed past my son and I, holding her new baby in a sling. Both she and her baby looked happy, content and close. In that moment, I knew I had to have one. I had just discovered my ticket to freedom.

Love At First Sight

I loved my first baby carrier so much that I started buying and trying other types of carriers to see how they compared. Each one seemed to offer something slightly unique and different that I loved. I was amazed at how many types, styles and variations were available. It was like a secret world opening up for me. I started learning that babywearing offered many benefits to the child including crying less, learning more, and increased IQ! I found out that babies that are “worn” also have been shown to exhibit reduced colic and spit-up with increased cardiac output and improved circulation. Not to mention the benefits for me! I could nurse with the carrier, shop without a bulky stroller and I was hands free and able to get things done around the house!

Taking it to the next level

As my collection of baby carriers grew, so did my knowledge of how to use them and the pros and cons of each style. If my son was just fussy and needing to be close on and off throughout the day or if I was making a quick run into the store I loved my pouch style slings such as the New Native Baby Carrier or The Peanut Shell. The simple tube design was quick to slip on over my arm and head to my shoulder. The way it hung on my body looked much like sash. I loved how easy it was to wear it like this throughout the day. It did not feel bulky or in the way and whenever I wanted to wear my son, I could slip him into the pouch in a matter of seconds--it was so easy to use. For days when I really needed to get work done around the house or for longer shopping trips, I often reached for my wrap style carriers. Wrap carriers, such as a Moby wrap or Moby D, are a specially designed strip of fabric. The long, (often stretchy) fabric is cleverly wrapped around your torso, over your shoulders, around your torso again and then secured at your waist with a knot or a d-ring. I found the wrap carriers to have a slight initial learning curve.

However, the clearly marked instructions quickly eased my mind and after my first few attempts I was a believer. Because their straps go over both shoulders and securely wrapped around me and my baby, he felt very close. I felt very comfortable, secure and ready to move. For long durations of wear, the wrap carriers became my staple. Finally, if I was visiting friends or family that wanted to share in the fun of baby wearing, I brought along my adjustable slings such as a Maya Wrap or Rockin Baby Sling. These adjustable carriers were very similar to the pouch style in the way that they hung from one shoulder to the opposite hip like a sash. However, they had an extra tail of fabric looped though a d-ring positioned by your shoulder. Although I did not enjoy the extra bulk created by this fabric tail when I was using the sling alone, it certainly allowed for an easy, adjustable, customized fit for all body types when I was sharing it with others. These adjustable carriers (as well as the wrap carriers) are also an economical choice for parents to share with each other rather than buying two separate sizes since they are a one size fits all option.

They each have a place in my heart

All of the carriers could be used from birth to 35 pounds and each offered a variety of carrying positions. So when I need a carrier, my question was not necessarily which carrier to use, but rather what need to fill. Each carrier was my favorite in its own special way. I feel that other moms can benefit from my experience when looking for their own ideal baby carrier. After all, just as no two mamas are alike, neither are their preferences for baby carriers. I compiled a sling comparison chart comparing a wide variety of baby carriers side by side under factors such as “reduces back strain”, “easy on, easy off”, and “discreet nursing”. Thankfully, with the myriad of choices available, and the right kind of helpful information, any mom is bound to find the baby carrier that is perfect for times when the arms give out but her heart just won't let go. Equipped with the right carrier, she can join me and venture out of her home to chart new territory in a foreign land with her hands free to record her findings for future generations.

About the Author

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