

Best ways to hold and carry a baby

❖ Holding a newborn can be a little awkward at first. But it won't take long before you handle your baby with ease. Here are some tips.

❖ Be confident.

Handle your baby in a way that evokes the security he's felt for the past nine months inside the womb. Babies like to be held close and snugly, so use both hands and keep your baby close to your body.

❖ Touch and talk.

It's important for the baby to be aware of you before you pick him up. Gently touch him and talk to him to let him know you're there. Then rub your hand on his tummy or back for a few seconds before you lift him up. Go slowly. Never make quick movements with a newborn baby; he can be startled and upset.

Also lift a young baby slowly; never swoop him up. Always slip one hand under the baby's neck and head before picking him up—that's where your top-heavy newborn needs the most careful support.

❖ Best ways to carry a baby

❖ Once you're holding your baby there are several different ways to carry him. Try them all to find out which one is most comfortable for both of you:

❖ The cradle carry:

Used for small infants, the cradle carry lets you easily cradle your baby in one of your arms as you walk.

❖ The shoulder carry:

Some babies are more comfortable resting on a shoulder. Just make sure always to support your baby's head until he can do it himself.

❖ The hip carry:

The hip carry, which leaves one of your arms free, is for older babies who've mastered head and neck control.

❖ The front-face carry:

Place one arm under your baby's buttocks and wrap your other arm around his chest to hold him close to you. That way your baby can face the world around him.

❖ Laying your baby down

❖ When it's time to put your baby down, support his head until it touches the mattress or car seat. Hold the baby next to your body for as long as possible—the less time the baby's in the air and away from you, the happier and safer he'll feel

Quick tip

❖ Carrying your newborn in a sturdy, front-fitting pack gives him the warmth and security he needs while leaving your hands free for other activities. Be sure to read the instructions that come with the carrier to make sure that is appropriate for the size and weight of your baby.