



Swaddling Guide



THE ULTIMATE SWADDLING GUIDE

SWADDLING

Recreates the tight 'womb' environment where baby has spent past 9 months cocooned.



The Ultimate Swaddling Guide

Newborns have a hard time controlling their little bodies and tend to startle in their sleep. Babies were kept nice and snug in the womb for nine months, and birth doesn't mean they are ready for the outside world so swaddling gives them time to adapt by recreating a soothing, womb-like environment that a bassinet alone cannot offer (just remember you should never bedshare with a swaddled infant as this is a safety risk).

There are ongoing debates over whether babies should be swaddled, but we know that wrapping them can stop flailing limbs from whacking and waking them and this is often a good enough reason to swaddle! Often babies will initially sleep well with no swaddle - they may do this for up to 3 weeks, but then suddenly that dream baby you have, 'wakes up' and is no longer such a sleepy newborn, and they require help getting to sleep.

Swaddling your baby may also prevent SIDS or suffocation by keeping him from flipping onto his stomach. The back is, in fact, the safest sleep position and the number-one defence against SIDS, but it's also the worst position to calm a fussy baby. It makes Newborns feel insecure and unsupported, like they're falling so instead, we look to wrap your wee darling like a burrito which can help him feel snug and he will then sleep better on his back. Always remember, place baby on their back to sleep.

Swaddling also adds an extra layer of insulation, which increases the risk of overheating, so ensure he is not sweaty and in a room temperature of between 18-20 degrees. Your baby's swaddle should be firm, but ensure its not too tight (two fingers between the swaddle and chest is a good indicator) and not too loose as we don't want it to ride up around his face which increases the risk of suffocation. Baby's legs need room to bend up and out - like a frog, to prevent hip dislocation or hip dysplasia.

Finally, ensure your baby is not swaddled all day long. While swaddling for sleep is fine, especially during the newborn stage, babies need time to move freely as well, so that they can grow stronger and develop their gross motor skills. If your baby spends all his sleep AND awake time swaddled, it might be time to gradually stop swaddling during his awake time.

Why is Swaddling so Great?

- ✓ Positive sleep association.
- ✓ Doesn't require your help to link sleep cycles every 20-45mins.
- ✓ Transferrable from person to person - Mum, Dad, Grandpa...anyone can learn the technique.
- ✓ Easily replaced by sleeping bag between 4-7 months.
- ✓ An option to suit all - arms up? arms down? Thumb suck? Hold dummy? thumb suck? eczema?
- ✓ Different sizes.
- ✓ Houdini proof options.
- ✓ Cheap and easy to use.
- ✓ Eliminates catnapping.
- ✓ Recreates the tight 'womb' environment where baby has spent past 9 months cocooned.
- ✓ Curbs the startle reflex where baby's limbs jerk like a popcorn kernel.

Baby Hates the Swaddle and Fights it?

If your baby appears to fight the swaddle when you lay her down, again this is not because she hates it. They are probably already over tired when you lay them down to swaddle them, so try bringing their nap time forward by 10 minutes. Or perhaps your baby has eczema and its getting too hot being fully wrapped in a warm room and so you need to use a swaddle that controls their arms, but keeps their body cool as well as stripping them down to a nappy and singlet and popping an oscillating fan in their room.

Baby Breaking Out?

If your baby is under 4 months and sleeping well swaddled except they keep waking whenever they break out of their swaddle, you need a better technique or a better style of swaddle. This is not usually a sign your baby is ready to be un-swaddled. Check out our client's recommendations below for a 'break free' swaddle for your little Houdini. A baby who is ready to be un-swaddled won't wake when they bust out, you will find them happily sleeping in the morning with their sneaky arms free. They carried on sleeping un-swaddled!

If you feel like your baby is trying to suck her hand to soothe, but is under 4 months of age, she probably not quite ready to suck their hands independently to soothe, as she can't control her hands when over tired and guide her own thumb or hand to her mouth, so you are best to try a dummy instead, try a one arm out swaddle and/or see the hand sucking swaddle technique below.

When to Stop Swaddling is the Million Dollar Question!

Leaving the cosiness of a good wrap can take time and perseverance, and often a gradual approach will give your baby the gentlest transition with the least sleep disruption.

If your baby starts to roll back-tummy you need to either un-swaddle immediately or invest in a safety sleep for a few months to prevent baby rolling back to tummy in their swaddle in bed.

Fortunately, most babies don't do this until closer to 6 months when they can easily cope with no swaddle, but some little clever bubba's do this as early as 3-4 months!

If baby is on the cusp of wanting to be snug in a firm swaddle and wanting to be free, he may benefit from a slower transition.

If your baby isn't rolling but is over 4 months and you think they might be ready to un-swaddle, try one arm out for a few days to ascertain if your baby is ready.

If they cope well, then you can remove the second arm and transfer to a sleeping bag. Taking your time, about 1-3 weeks for the whole unswaddling process is common.

Have a look at some of our transitional swaddles in the recommendations below as these are very effective in helping wee ones "unwrap."

Sleeping Bags

Fitted sheet aside, your baby's cot should be free of bedding - that includes blankets, pillows, sheets and bumpers. So how do you ensure that baby stays toasty in his cot? You make him 'wear' his blanket (this is referred to as a sleeping bag). Whether you choose to skip swaddling altogether or looking to understand that your baby is ready to make the switch, sleeping bags are a safe way to keep baby warm at night. As with swaddling, you want to check the room temperature and layers baby is wearing per the tog rating of the sleeping bag.

If baby is overheating (sweating, red and hot to the touch) even with just a onesie underneath, it's ok to strip him down to his singlet/nappy - especially for that midday Summer nap when his room may be warm. At Baby Sleep Consultant, we love Merino Kids Go Go Sleeping bags - these are the world's #1 selling merino sleep bag which regulate body temperature by capturing and circulating air to insulate child when the room temperature falls, and releasing excess body heat and moisture as the room temperature rises. No extra covers are required and they come in different weights and sizes so there is one to suit infants through to toddlers.

Here are Some Swaddles that Baby Sleep Consultant Team and Our Clients Love:

Love to Dream

<https://members.babysleepconsultant.co.nz/newborns/newborn-case-studies/>



Things to love	Things to consider
Great for babies who enjoy freedom	Doesn't protect against the startle reflex
Very easy to use	Babies can knock their dummies out
Fitted – no loose ends to worry about!	Tight around hips so less freedom to frog legs out
Baby has access to hands	
Useful for babies who are weaning off swaddling, as they get used to having more movement and access to their hands.	
Quick to put on a wriggly baby	
Additional 50:50 option to allow for transition to arms free. Zip off one wing at a time so baby has access to hands slowly.	
Double end zip to allow for nappy change without unswaddling.	

WILL IT SUIT MY BABY?

- This type of swaddle is useful for a baby who wants to suck, but hasn't quite got the co-ordination developed to put their hand in their mouth and keep it there. You use the swaddle to hold their hand near their mouth, but also to prevent them startling or smacking themselves in the face, or scratching their face, so great for babies prone to skin conditions.

Love to Dream swaddles are only suitable from 3kg (make sure you buy the size suitable for your baby's current weight). It is not unusual to find they work well for your newborn, but then from around 3 weeks, when your baby 'wakes up', she begins to have shorter sleeps in the day and becomes overtired more quickly and her hands are now disturbing her during the transition from one sleep cycle to the next (that 'jumpy' startle reflex called the Moro Reflex). You may then need to change to an arms-down swaddle and re-attempt the arms up swaddle after 8-10 weeks of age when she has better control of her arms. An overtired baby will be more difficult to settle in an arms-up swaddle unless your baby sucks their hand to soothe.

How do I Use the Love to Dream Swaddle?

It's important you buy the correct size for safety. If the wrap is too big, it will not be effective and it may be unsafe if it is loose fitting and can stretch up over your baby's face. Like baby clothing, a wrap needs to be the correct size to fit well and be safe. The Love to Dream baby swaddle can be the simple answer to safely wrapping your baby perfectly every time without needing to be tight.

Love to Dream baby swaddle has an ergonomic shape and stretch fabric that's perfect for promoting your baby's circulation... and you'll never risk wrapping too tight again. Just lay baby down on top of the swaddle, place her hands in the wings and zip her up.

Love to Dream is designed to have a womb-like fit which follows the babies natural silhouette, so even pressure is applied all the way down the body, not too tight in one spot or too loose in another, just perfect!

How to Use the Love to Swaddle UP 50/50?

The 'next step' once your baby is a minimum of 6kg is to transition his hands out in three easy steps:

1. Use your 50/50 just like the Love to Dream swaddle (so 2 wings attached)
2. When your baby is ready to transition remove one wing. One arm is free and one arm is still swaddled.
3. After about three weeks its time to let the other arms loose! Simply remove the wing and now your baby has graduated to a soft summer weight sleeping bag!

Jennifer from Auckland says "I loved the ease of getting this onto a wriggly baby! In comparison to months of using muslin wraps, this was a breeze. I would recommend this to mums whose little ones are needing to start selfsoothing, but not yet ready to be unswaddled as this is still nice and snug. Used from around 3-6 months."

Miracle Blanket

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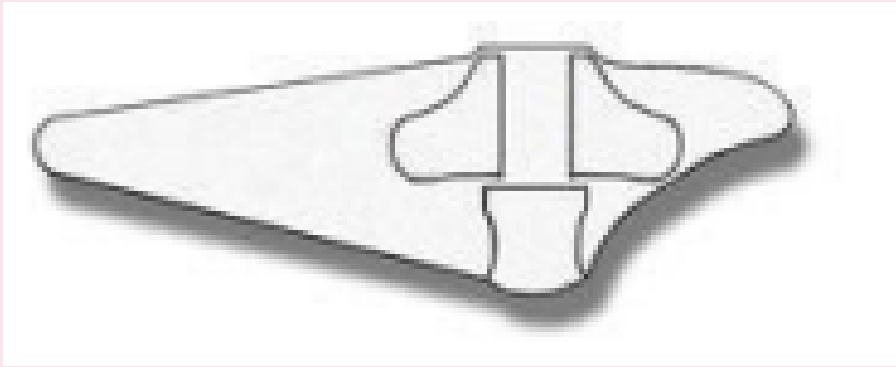
Things to love	Things to consider
Houdini proof	Babies can outgrow it quickly by 16 weeks (though can remove baby's legs from the pocket and continue use)
Easy to use	Wing flaps not big enough
Arms tightly at side	With baby's arms at the side, can be difficult to side settle in bassinet
No startle reflex	Can be tricky to get the hang of it, but worth the effort if you can preserve!
Hips in natural position	
Easy to wean to one arm out	
Easy to transition to sleeping bag	
Can't impede development of hips and knees. As baby grows, her legs extend beyond the tight portion of the wrap for free movement and joint development.	
Easy to re-adjust as no Velcro etc. to disturb baby	

WILL IT SUIT MY BABY?

The Miracle Blanket is a firm 'fan favourite' with our Mums. It allows a newborn to settle by recreating the feeling of being firmly held (or in the womb) with her arms snug. Newborns are used to being in a very 'tight' space and if you find your baby is waking after 20-45mins for a nap, chances are she is becoming overtired and then startling herself awake with her arms knocking her face, fingers scratching her nose or hands accidentally knocking her dummy out as she enters the shallow part of her sleep cycle. The miracle blanket is an arms down swaddle that prevents these things happening yet so your baby isn't stimulated awake by her uncoordinated limbs!

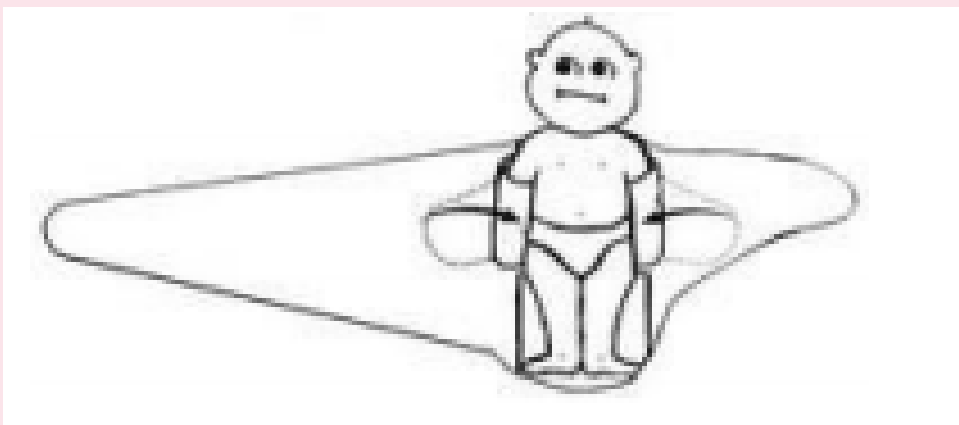
The Miracle blanket is also great to use when transitioning your baby to having one arm out (ensure the non-dominant arm is released first once your baby begins to show signs of rolling back to tummy). And you can also continue use of the Miracle Blanket when you move to the next stage of introducing a sleeping bag to your infant by popping her into her sleeping bag and then wrapping her with one arm out over her sleeping bag (do not pop her legs in the pocket as per step three below, but keep her legs on top).

How to use the Miracle Blanket Swaddle:



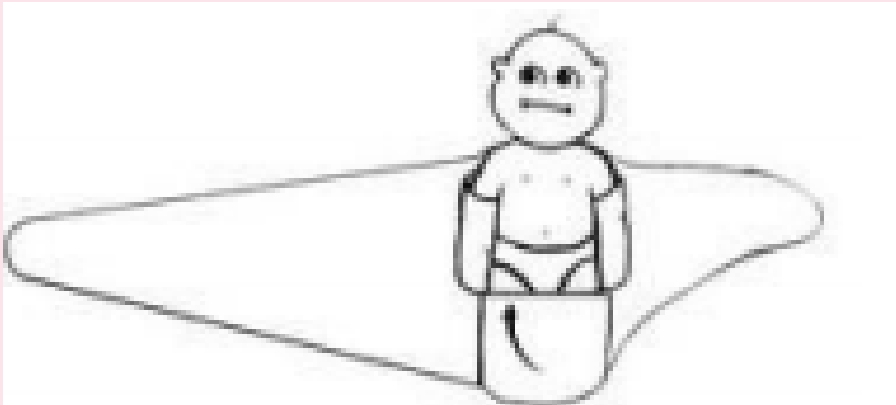
Lay the blanket on a flat surface with the foot pouch at the bottom and lay baby between arm flaps with tops of shoulders slightly above top of blanket.

STEP TWO



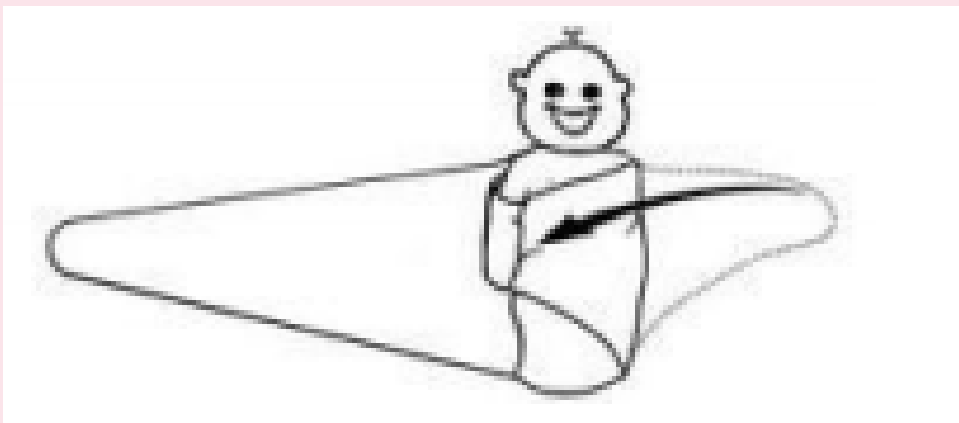
Fold the armflaps over the outside of your baby's arms and tuck them snugly under her back on each side. You should lift the baby's bottom to be sure the arm flaps are flat and snug under baby's back.

STEP THREE



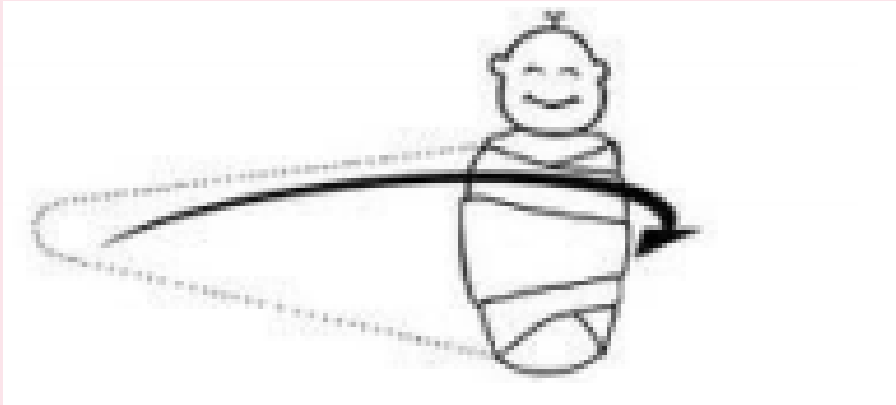
Pull the foot pocket up over the feet. NOTE: Some babies' feet may not reach the foot pocket yet which is fine, it means that it will be there for them as they grow.

STEP FOUR



Fold the right side of the blanket over your baby's tummy and tuck it under the left arm pit (her right). This flap should wrap all the way under the baby's back.

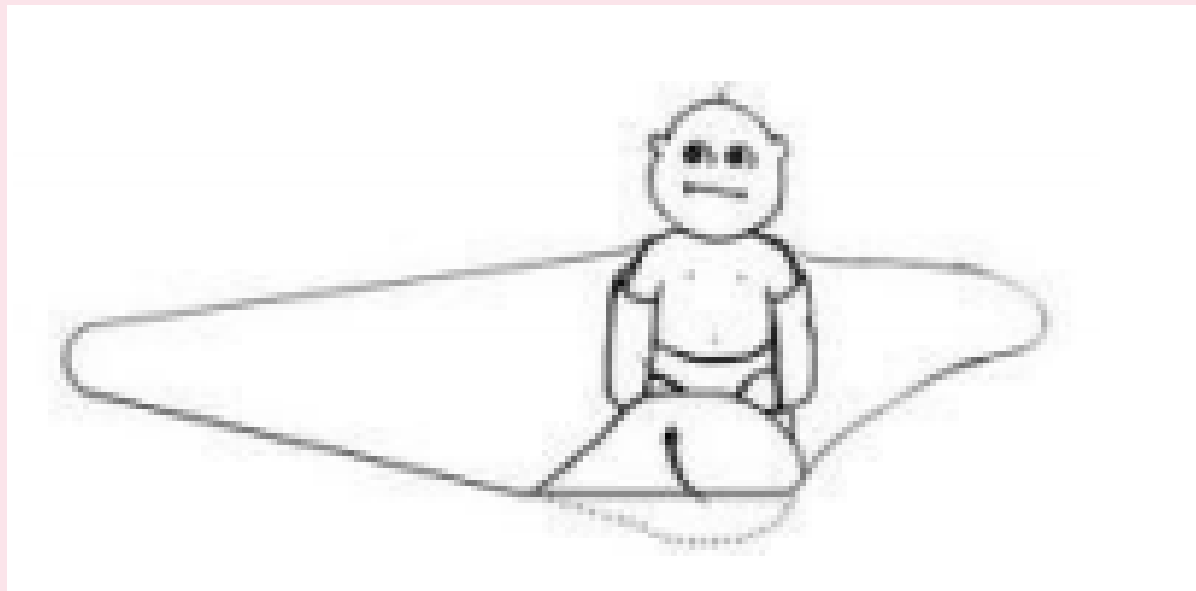
STEP FIVE



Wrap the left side of the blanket over the top of her tummy and all the way around her until you run out of blanket. This is where it is important to pull the blanket snug. This is really important for safe sleep.

IMPORTANT: BE SURE THE TOP OF THE BLANKET IS SLIGHTLY BELOW THE TOPS OF THE SHOULDERS.

For Newborns and Smaller Babies



After wrapping the arms (Step 2), fold the bottom of the foot pocket up so the feet touch the bottom of the wrap. This will create a more perfect, custom swaddle then continue to follow steps 4-5.

Kiri says “Loved the miracle blanket! Slowly transitioned off it just before 4months- 1 arm at a time, then just wrapped it around her tummy so she still had pressure, then finally off- no trouble at all”

Mum2Mum Swaddle

<https://members.babysleepconsultant.co.nz/newborns/newborn-case-studies/>



Things to love	Things to consider
Houdini proof	Hot in summer although a summer mesh style available (see image above)
Easy to use	Wing flaps not big enough
Arms tightly at side	Big zip around the face which can trigger rooting reflex (urge to suckle)
No startle reflex	Can be difficult to wean off
Zip up and down for easy nappy change without needing to fully reswaddle baby	No transition option available for arms out
	Not great for tall babies as outgrows length of swaddle quickly but the larger size isn't safe as too loose if baby still under 7.5kg

WILL IT SUIT MY BABY?

The Mum2Mum is great for parents who have strong babies that get out of even the 'best' wrapping technique.

Because of the double wrap system, even the strongest baby will stay swaddled provided your baby is in the appropriate size for his weight.

Great for parents (and Dads!) who are sick of reswaddling every sleep cycle as baby continues to 'break free' and this swaddle allows you to wrap once and be confident he won't escape.

How to Use the Mum2Mum Dream Swaddle:

Step 1: First lay baby on his back and tuck his feet into the bottom of the swaddle

Step 2: Use the inner wrap (which uses two simple wings to hold and cover baby's shoulder and arm), and then tuck these under his torso (his body weight pinning his arms to the side).

Step 3: Then just zip up the pouch.

Step 4: Two outer wings then swaddle around your baby also and are secured by Velcro. Then sleep!!

ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ



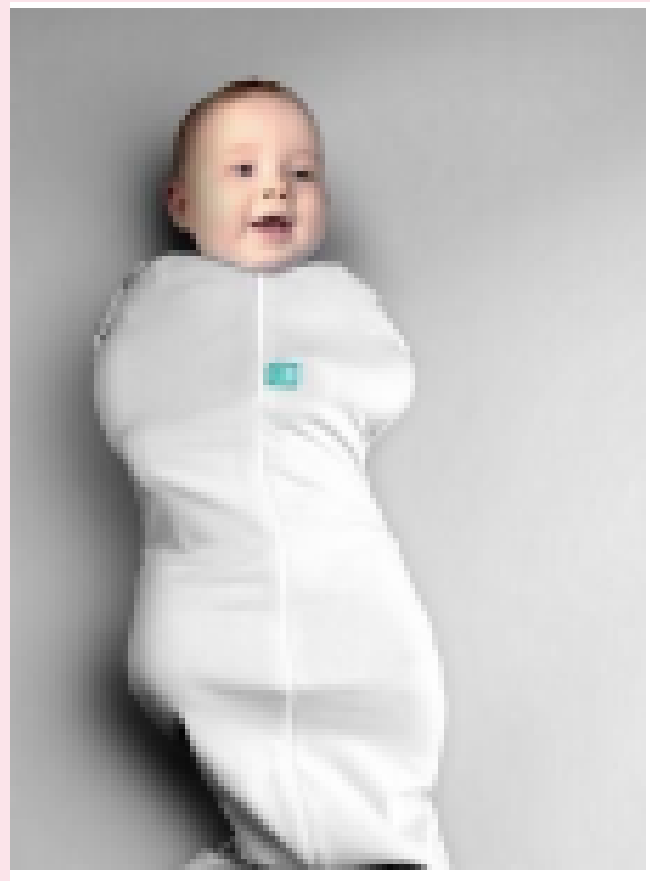
Kayla says “Mum2mum swaddle all the way, my escape artist can't escape!!!”

Jen also agrees “Mum2mum for sure. Used for both babies and both slept through night from very early on”

And for the Dads it's perfect as **Jack** says “I couldn't ever master the flat wrap; this swaddle is so easy that even a novice can do it!”

Ergo Cocoon Zip Up

<https://members.babysleepconsultant.co.nz/newborns/newborn-case-studies/>



Things to love	Things to consider
Fitted	Not as much protection as a 'traditional' swaddle
Easy to use	Sit high on the neck so material and zip can be annoying to baby
Moderate protection from startle reflex	Only for the first 0-3 months and not over 7kg in weight
Easy to transition out of with poppers on the side to release arms	

WILL IT SUIT MY BABY?

The Ergo Cocoon Zip Up swaddle is an 'easy option' with no tricky folds or wraps to master. Pop baby in and zip him up. The snug fit and the soft, stretchy cotton of the Ergo Cocoon allows baby to move their hands into a comfortable position whilst making them feel snug and secure.

Unique press studs in the arm holes can be fastened when baby is small then opened as baby grows therefore giving baby the option of sleeping arms free or tucked in as well as providing an easy transition into a sleeping bag. The bag itself is only suitable for up to 7kg, so it is limited to the first 0-3mths generally depending on the weight of your baby.

How to Use the Ergo Cocoon Zip Up Swaddle:

How to use:



Super stretch organic cotton swaddling helps baby feel snug and secure



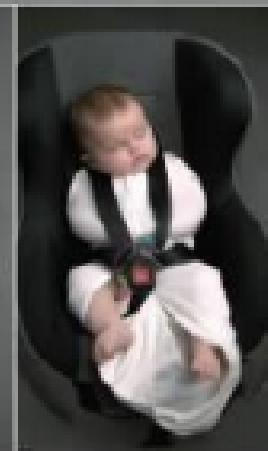
Easy transition into sleeping bag arms free start with one arm out



Converts into sleeping bag when baby is ready



2 way zipper for easy access to nappy



Place baby into car without waking. Just unzip bottom zipper

Flat Muslin

<https://members.babysleepconsultant.co.nz/newborns/newborn-case-studies/>



Things to love	Things to consider
Breathable material	Muslin can stretch which also means your baby can 'break free' once he becomes strong enough.
Easy to use – if you pick the right technique (see below)	Takes practice to get the technique right – but worth it in the long run for you have the patience.
	Often not a long-term solution for wriggly babies and should be removed if baby getting arms free and not resettling independently or if getting too loose which means your baby should end up with the muslin over his face.
No startle reflex if wrapped using the right technique for baby	Can be tricky to get the hang of it, but worth the effort if you can persevere!
Hips in natural position	
Easy to wean to one arm out	
Easy to transition to sleeping bag	
Can't impede development of hips and knees. As baby	
grows, her legs extend beyond the tight portion of the wrap for free movement and joint development.	
Easy to re-adjust as no Velcro etc. to disturb baby	

WILL IT SUIT MY BABY?

The flat muslin swaddle is the staple gift at your baby shower - but often used as a 'spill cloth' rather than a swaddle as we often struggle to know how to best use it. Flat Muslin swaddles are great from birth as if wrapped correctly, as they provide the firm pressure that your newborn likes as well as warmth and a breathable material to help prevent your baby from overheating. Your baby has just spent 9 months inside the womb with very little room to move. The womb has created a snug feeling, allowing your baby to easily fall in and out of sleep when inside you. Once outside this feeling is lost, and swaddling re-creates this snug secure feeling. Your baby also is born with a very strong startle reflex, this will wake your baby frequently as they drift off to sleep if you don't swaddle, or create that snug feeling by holding him in your arms.

Once your baby is stronger and able to break free of his muslin swaddle, you may need to move to a swaddle that is more Houdini proof or if he is over 16 weeks, you may look to transition his arms free from the swaddle. If baby has a positive sleep association to his flat muslin swaddle, you might even consider cutting it up into smaller squares (no bigger than the size of a handkerchief) and creating a 'cuddly' for him to continue to hold for naps.

How to Use a Flat Muslin Swaddle:

These techniques below are demonstrated in the picture with Aden and Anais muslin swaddles. These are nice and big - (over 1 m square) and have the right amount of stretch and right amount of restraint as well as being breathable so suitable for season changes.

This is a favorite type of swaddling for us at BSC for babies under 4 months. It's important to go down (2) then up (4), then down again (6), then up again (7), this creates little wings for the arms, and they can't slip out the top.

If your baby is ready for 1 arm out, go to stage 5, and then swaddle the body, not the arm.



Click the image above to watch my swaddling demo video.

Merino Kids® Cocooi® Babywrap



Emma to insert link to website case studies

The Cocooi® Babywrap is made from 100% superfine merino wool and has been designed specifically for the NB-3mths age group.

Things to love	Things to consider
Made from merino - Merino keeps baby WARM when it's cold and COOL when it's hot!	Babies can outgrow it quickly as small in size.
Easy to use	From newborn to 3mths only
Snug fit	
Seatbelt hole for easy transition	
Hips in frog like position so natural healthy position	
Easy to re-adjust as no Velcro etc. to disturb baby	
Hypoallergenic material for helping babies with sensitive skin & eczema problems.	

WILL IT SUIT MY BABY?

The Merino Kids Cocooi swaddle is perfect for your newborn first swaddle.

It is gentle on her delicate skin and soft enough for sensitive skin conditions such as eczema.

Once she moves past the newborn stage (post 12 weeks) you are likely to need to invest in another swaddle as she outgrows the Cocooi or begins to get her arms free too early on without her startle reflex yet under control.

How to Use the Merino Kids Cocooi Swaddle

Step 1: Lay baby down and place his feet inside the pouch.



Step 2. You then fold the shorter wing diagonally over the left shoulder and tuck under the right side. Then fold the longer wing over the right shoulder and under baby's back...wrapping all the way around. If baby wiggles a lot, try holding the fabric securely around baby as you do each step so he can't wiggle out.

The fabric has a natural elastic property that not only makes it easy to use, but also gives baby the freedom to move like how he did in the womb. It adjusts to fit his body shape and holds firmly in place without having to use Velcro or other fasteners with the added benefit that the fabric is gentle on sensitive skin.





Baby Sleep Consultant

If you want some more help with your child's sleep,
[get in touch](#)

Try our [Online Sleep Program](#)

www.babysleepconsultant.co

We would love to help you and your family get the sleep you all need and deserve!

Remember sleep is a biological necessity, not a luxury!



Emma Purdue

Emma is the owner and founder of Baby Sleep Consultant, she is a Certified Infant and Child Sleep Consultant, Lead Educator for Baby Sleep Consultant Training, Happiest Baby on the Block Educator, has a Bachelor of Science and Diploma in Education, she is a Gentle Sleep Expert and Mother of 3.