

BABY CARRIER

5 This invention relates to baby carriers of the type designed principally for carrying a baby in a sitting position adjacent the back or front of a user's torso.

10 One type of known baby carrier includes an upright box frame supporting a fabric seat upon which a baby sits. Shoulder straps with their opposite ends connected, respectively, to the top and the bottom of the frame are used to hold the frame in position on the user, much like a rigid-frame rucksack.

15 In another type of known baby carrier there is no rigid frame but instead the baby is held in a fabric bag which provides a flexible seat at its closed, bottom end. Laterally spaced holes are provided at the
20 bottom end of the bag to receive the baby's legs. Shoulder straps are connected at respective laterally spaced locations towards the top and bottom of the bag and the baby may generally be carried at the front of the user's torso.

25 Baby carriers such as those described suffer from certain disadvantages. For instance, known baby carriers provide insufficient support for the baby to be fully safe and secure, and the position in which
30 the baby must be carried while supported in the device may be inconvenient and restrictive for the baby and for the user. Moreover, known baby carriers such as those described above are somewhat complex, having in various cases a back cloth, a bag, holes for the
35 baby's legs, and a rigid frame. This complexity makes

the baby carrier difficult to use and to handle, and of course increases its production cost.

The principal object of this invention is to overcome or at least to mitigate these and other disadvantages.

- 5 With this object in view and in accordance with this invention, we propose a baby carrier including a first strap for extending in use around at least a portion of a user's waist, a pair of shoulder straps for passing over the user's shoulders and connected to the first strap, a strap portion
10 associated with the shoulder straps for passing under the crotch of a baby carried in the baby carrier, and a pair of second straps each of which is linked at one end to the first strap and at the other end to at least one of the shoulder straps, to define a cradle for the baby's waist or hips.
- 15 The invention provides a simple structure which is easy to handle, which can be folded readily when not in use, and which can be quickly shaped into a baby carrying mode.

In preferred embodiments, the strap portion is a portion of the shoulder straps, and the shoulder straps are connected
20 directly to the first strap. Conveniently, each second strap is linked to a respective one of the pair of shoulder straps. It is also preferred that the two shoulder straps are arranged in diagonally crossing relation to form a crossover portion, at which the shoulder straps are suitably joined to one
25 another.

Conveniently, each shoulder strap is attached at one end to the first strap and the other end has an adjustable-length portion, whereby the length of the shoulder strap can be adjusted to suit the user and to cater for differently-sized
30 babies. The adjustable-length portion may comprise looped adjustment straps which are adjustable by a slidable buckle. Each adjustable-length portion suitably carries

a buckle portion whereby the baby carrier may be secured to the user.

5 A further preferred feature is an upper-body support member, such as a shoulder support, which is attached to the shoulder straps and which is advantageously removable.

10 In order that this invention may be more readily understood, reference will now be made, by way of example, to the accompanying drawings in which:

15 Figure 1 is a front elevational view of a baby carrier constructed in accordance with this invention, in a baby carrying mode;

Figure 2 is a rear elevational view corresponding to Figure 1;

20 Figure 3 is a perspective view corresponding to Figure 1;

25 Figure 4 is a front elevational view corresponding to Figure 1 but showing the baby carrier in a flat, non-operational mode;

30 Figure 5 is a front elevational view showing another form of baby carrier constructed in accordance with this invention, showing the baby carrier in a flat, non-operational mode;

35 Figure 6 is a perspective view corresponding to Figure 5 but showing the baby carrier in a baby carrying mode.

Referring firstly to Figures 1 to 4 of the drawings, a baby carrier constructed in accordance with this

invention comprises a first support strap (a) and a pair of second support straps (e1,e2). One end of each support strap (e1,e2) is linked to the first support strap (a) by rings (b1,b2) and the other end is sewed to a respective one of a pair of shoulder straps (c1,c2), thereby forming an inverted L shape.

One end of each shoulder strap (c1,c2) is sewed to the central portion of the first support strap (a). The other end of each shoulder strap (c1,c2) has a respective variable-length strap portion comprising a looped adjustment strap (i1,i2) and a slidable buckle (l1,l2) attached to an end thereof. One looped adjustment strap (i1) carries a male buckle portion (k) and the other looped adjustment strap (i2) carries a female buckle portion (j).

The shoulder straps (c1,c2) are in mutually crossing diagonal relationship and are sewed together at a crossover portion (d) adjacent the first support strap (a). The crossover portion (d), the first support strap (a) and the second support straps (e1,e2) define two openings which in use receive a baby's legs.

A shoulder support holder (h) and a shoulder support strap (f) extend between the shoulder straps (c1,c2) and, in use, receive and retain a shoulder support (g), which is inserted therebetween.

The baby carrier of this invention can carry a baby in either of two positions, one with the baby facing towards the user, and the other with the baby facing away from the user. Only the arrangement with the baby facing towards the user will be described, it being understood that the converse arrangement simply involves a reversal of the baby's position.

When the baby carrier is in use, the baby is seated on the crossover portion (d) with his or her back facing towards the shoulder support (g). The baby's legs extend through the openings defined by the first support strap (a), the second support straps (e1,e2) and the crossover portion (d). The baby is then lifted in the baby carrier and the shoulder straps (c1,c2) are passed over the user's shoulders. Then, the adjustment strap (i1) carrying the male connector (k) is passed through the ring (b2) and the other adjustment strap (i2) carrying the female connector (j) is passed through the ring (b1). Finally, the male (k) and female (j) connectors are pushed into engagement to secure the baby carrier in position.

As will be clear, the baby's back is supported safely by the support (g) and the baby's waist is embraced by the second support straps (e1,e2). Thus, the baby is held securely and comfortably in position adjacent the user's torso.

Referring now to Figures 5 and 6, another embodiment of the invention facilitates connection of the adjustment straps (i1,i2) to the first support strap (a). To this end, female buckle portions (j1,j2) are carried by the ends of the first support strap (a) and the adjustment straps (i1,i2) have male buckle portions (k1,k2). The adjustment straps (i1,i2) can be connected to the first support strap (a) simply by connecting the female buckle portion (j2) to the male buckle portion (k1), and the female buckle portion (j1) to the male buckle portion (k2). Thus, there is no need to pass the buckle portions or the adjustment straps through rings (b1,b2).

As will be clear to those skilled in the art, the baby carrier of this invention is simple in structure and

is easy to handle. It is adaptable to carry any size of baby by adjusting the length of the adjustment straps. Moreover, the baby carrier of this invention is considerably cheaper to manufacture than other baby carriers that are available on the
5 market at present.

It will also be clear that this invention is not limited to the preferred embodiments described herein but encompasses all variations and modifications falling within its scope as defined in the appended claims. For instance, attachment means
10 other than sewing may be employed to fix straps together, such as adhesives, rivets, or heat welding.



CLAIMS

1. A baby carrier including a first strap for extending in use around at least a portion of a user's waist, a pair of shoulder straps for passing over the user's shoulders and
5 connected to the first strap, a strap portion associated with the shoulder straps for passing under the crotch of a baby carried in the baby carrier, and a pair of second straps each of which is linked at one end to the first strap and at the other end to at least one of the shoulder straps, to define
10 a cradle for the baby's waist or hips.
2. A baby carrier according to claim 1, wherein the strap portion is a portion of the shoulder straps, and the shoulder straps are connected directly to the first strap.
3. A baby carrier according to claim 2, wherein the strap
15 portion includes a crossover portion at which the shoulder straps are in mutually crossing relation.
4. A baby carrier according to claim 3, wherein the shoulder straps are joined to one another at the crossover portion.
5. A baby carrier according to any preceding claim, further
20 including an upper-body support member positioned to support the baby's upper body.
6. A baby carrier according to claim 5, wherein the upper-body support member extends between the shoulder straps and is attached or attachable thereto.
- 25 7. A baby carrier according to claim 5 or claim 6, wherein the upper-body support member is removable.
8. A baby carrier according to any preceding claim, wherein each shoulder strap includes an adjustable-length portion.



9. A baby carrier according to claim 8, wherein the adjustable-length portion includes a sliding buckle.

10. A baby carrier according to any preceding claim, wherein the first strap has two rings, a free-end portion of one
5 shoulder strap being passable through one of the rings and being securable to a free-end portion of the other shoulder strap passed through the other of the rings to secure the baby carrier in place on a user.

11. A baby carrier according to claim 10, wherein the free-end
10 portions of the shoulder straps each have co-operable buckle means.

12. A baby carrier according to any of claims 1 to 9, wherein the first strap has two first buckle means and wherein each shoulder strap has a free-end portion provided with second
15 buckle means, the respective first and second buckle means being connectable to secure the baby carrier in place on a user.

13. A baby carrier, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to, or as illustrated in, any of the
20 accompanying drawings.
