



PROCEDURE FOR CORRECT WING TRIM

Ideally, birds are happiest when they have the freedom of flight. Flight is not only a great form of aerobic exercise for your pet bird, but also provides mental stimulation and enrichment for their clever minds.

All young birds should be given the opportunity to learn to fly and to land safely - it is an essential part of young bird development, and is vital in the formation of coordination and balance in fledglings (birds leaving the nest).

Flight is very important for birds to develop confidence, fitness and strength.

One useful alternative to permanent wing trims is harness training. This will allow the bird to have safe access to the outdoors, without the risk of escape and injury.

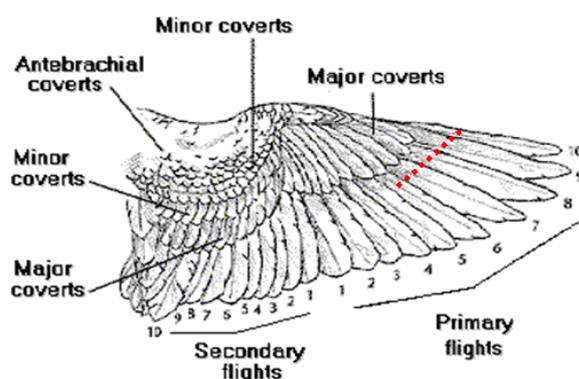
There are many reasons why you may consider wing trimming in your pet bird. Some of these include safety from escape and predation, safety in the house, and increased physiological stimulation from social interaction with owners, for training purposes.

A wing trim when properly performed should not result in a bird that cannot fly, but a bird that can safely glide to a surface for landing. The purpose of a wing trim is to prevent the bird from being able to 'gain vertical lift'.

The correct wing trimming technique

Incorrect trimming methods can lead to severe, and sometimes permanent injury. Never trim the wings of birds that rely on flying as their method to get around (i.e. songbirds such as canaries, finches and doves).

- It is safest to have 2 people perform the wing trim.
- It may help to use a towel to hold the bird while the assistant extends and supports the wing that is being clipped. If the bird is stressed, let it rest and recovery during the trimming procedure.
- Always check for blood quills prior to clipping. These can be identified as blue or red shafts at the base of the flight feather, and are new developing feathers. Blood quills cannot be trimmed as they have a profuse blood supply and cutting them will result in extensive blood loss. It is advisable to postpone wing trimming, or leave one primary feather either side of a blood quill in order to prevent it from damage and bleeding.
- Aim to clip the minimal number of feathers possible to prevent lift. Always trim equal numbers on each wing. The outer 3 - 6 primary feathers should be cut from both wings from the outside to the inside, just below the level of the major coverts.
- Use a sharp pair of scissors
- Perform a test flight after each feather is trimmed from each side. If your bird is still able to get vertical lift during a test flight, you can progressively trim one more feather from each side until no lift is achieved and only graceful flight to the ground occurs.



A few more tips

- Never trim only one wing. Never trim beyond the outer primary feathers, the secondary flight feathers have important "parachuting" abilities that allow the bird to glide to a safe landing.
- Birds will replace the trimmed feathers with each moult, usually once or twice a year (usually during late spring/ yearly summer). Time-frame depends on the stage of moult the bird is at, at the time of the trim.
- It is important to remember that birds will regain their ability to fly after each moult.
- No wing trim is a guarantee against flight. A strong gust of wind or sudden fright can still result in escape, even in a clipped bird.
- Environmental enrichment and daily exercise is a requirement of all birds, flighted or not.

We are more than happy to show you the correct wing trimming procedure, alternatively, you can book in with one of our friendly nurses who can perform the wing trim.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to call the clinic on **3269 2223**.

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