



WING CLIPPING

Should I have my bird's wings clipped?

The purpose for clipping a bird's wings is not to prevent flight completely but to ensure the bird is unable to achieve or sustain upward flight and to prevent escape. It is not desirable to produce a bird who will free fall and potentially cause harm to itself. Birds allowed out of the cage and especially those left unsupervised may come across many dangers in the house or simply get to places they are not welcome. After a wing clip, birds may initially flutter to the floor but quickly learn they are unable to go anywhere. Some individuals are less brazen, cauky or cheeky with clipped wings. They tend to be more reliant on the owner and less aggressive.

Is wing clipping cruel?

No. *Safety for the bird in its environment must be the prime consideration.* A clipped bird will still flap its wings while holding onto the perch or cage for exercise and they are capable of walking anywhere. Flights into ceiling fans, windows, and mirrors or escaping may be more devastating than a wing clip.

How are wings clipped?

There are many ways to clip a bird's wings and numerous opinions about the pros and cons of each method. There are techniques that involve one wing or both wings, clipping the feathers at the end of the wing or leaving 2 - 3 at the end for better appearance. Some small birds like budgies and cockatiels may fly with feathers left at the end. Some methods alter the appearance of the bird more than others do. One of the most accepted ways to trim bird's wings is to cut the last 6-7 long flight feathers at the end of each wing. It is very important that you *discuss wing clipping with your veterinarian* and establish a method that is functional and aesthetically appealing for you and your bird.

Can I do it myself?

Yes, but care must be taken and it is advised that you have your veterinarian show you exactly how to clip and which feathers to cut. Always be mindful that new pin or blood feathers will bleed quite badly if accidentally cut. You may ask your veterinarian to clip the wings during regular health check-ups.

How often do I need to clip my bird's wings?

Wings need to be clipped again 6 - 10 weeks after the start of a molt cycle as new feathers grow back. It is advised to constantly check the wings of your pet since even a couple of new feathers in the right place may give the bird the lift it needs to soar. NEVER assume your bird cannot fly. ALWAYS check or test fly.