

# How to Perform a Wing Trim



**The amount to trim depends on the strength and body weight of the bird.**

Have someone assist you in restraining the bird.

Hold the back of her head and neck gently with thumb and forefinger;

Take special care not to apply pressure to the bird's chest; birds do not have diaphragms, so their breathing can be seriously impeded if chest expansion is restricted.

Also make sure that the bird is held upright, not lying on its back as this will make it difficult to breathe.

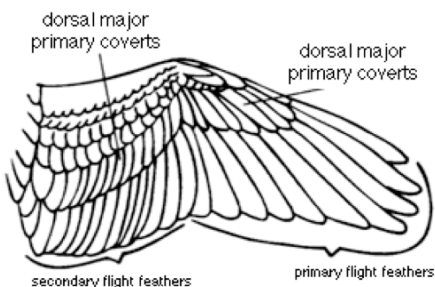
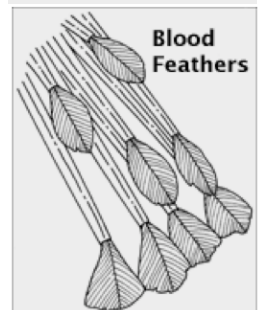
The trimmer can now extend the wing by grasping the front of the wing at the joint.

Examine all feathers of the wing.

Newly emerging feathers, called 'blood feathers,' have soft, dark shafts that contain a nourishing blood supply. These feathers should never be cut.

When the feather is completely grown in, the blood supply is closed off and the shaft turns hard and clear. These are the feathers you can trim.

Healthy birds will grow blood feathers (molt) about every 8-12 months. This is how you can determine when the wing trim should be performed.



**Before**

Locate the primary feathers on each wing. These feathers start at the leading edge of the wing and are followed by secondary and tertiary groups of feathers.

Use scissors or nail trimmers to cut the primary feathers on each wing, just behind the protective coverts (small feathers) overlying the flight feathers. Feathers should be trimmed one at a time so that each follicle is adequately visualized. You may want to cut just one or two feathers a day until you see a sufficient reduction in flying ability.

Make sure the feathers are trimmed short enough so that the cut edges are not extending beyond the covert tips. This will avoid any discomfort to the bird from those feathers rubbing against the side of the body.

Be sure to clip both wings evenly, as clipping only one may leave the bird unbalanced.

Having wings clipped is painless for the bird, much like having your hair or fingernails cut.

Cutting secondary feathers may cause the bird to fall straight down rather than flutter to the floor. This can result in keel, beak, or leg injury and can potentially be fatal.

**\*\*If a blood feather is accidentally cut, try to stop the bleeding using styptic powder or surgical glue. DO NOT PULL THE FEATHER IF THIS CAN BE AVOIDED. Blood feathers attach directly to bone. It is very painful to have the feather pulled and can result in permanent follicle damage. The feather may not re-grow, may re-grow abnormally, or may become embedded under the skin resulting in a feather cyst.**

