How to Hold a Budgie

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Sometimes you may need to have a good hold on your budgie, such as for nail clipping, crop feeding, pulling a blood feather, assessing the body condition or catching an escapee.

Very important:

- **Never restrict your budgie's chest**. Birds do not have a diaphragm and rely completely on their chest muscles to move air through their lungs. **If a bird cannot expand its chest, it cannot breathe.**
- Never squeeze your budgie. Use minimal pressure, just enough to hold the budgie and never a bit more. If your budgie is really struggling and your gentle hold is not enough, DO NOT squeeze harder, it is best to let go and try again.

To catch the budgie in its cage, some people use a small handtowel and place it over the bird. This blocks its escape routes and calms it down (no sudden vision of a giant hand grabbing at it). The owner then transfers it into a free hand to hold it properly. Others find it easier to herd the bird into a corner/on the floor and to gently envelop the bird, without using a towel, which to them may be a terrifyingly large foreign object. Of course, it is much simpler if your budgie is tame. Use whatever you find quick/comfortable and you believe to be less stressful for your budgie.

There are three main ways to hold a budgie, based on how the head is held: two fingers, thumb and finger, thumb and two fingers.

Two-finger hold

This is generally used for quickly moving birds (like an escapee or from cage to cage). It is also good for initially catching your budgie before changing to a different hold. Of the three holds this one has the least head control, so the budgie may give you a good nip on the fingers. The wings may also be able to flap.

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The head rests between the bones of your index and ring fingers, the rest of the body sits snugly in the palm of your hand. The thumb and ring finger can help push the legs back.

Thumb/finger head restraint

This gives you more control of the head, and is good for biters, crop feeding or examining the body in detail. With this hold you can lift the middle, ring and pinky fingers and gently extend one wing for examination.

The tips of the thumb and index finger are placed on the cheeks. Always place the head-controlling fingers gently onto a bony area of the head, not the flesh part of the neck. The body is in the palm of the hand. The inside of the thumb restrains one wing, the remaining fingers restrain the other. The pinky can be used to restrain the legs.

Thumb/two finger head restraint
A variation of the finger/thumb restraint. This hold is intended to gain maximum control of the head and is most useful for beak trimming or examining the head in detail.

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The thumb and middle fingers rest on the cheeks. The index finger is placed on top of the crown and can be used to direct the motion of the head.

Tips -
-I have found that my budgies hate being upside-down. I believe it is uncomfortable on their lungs, as birds were not made to be upside-down especially if they are stressed from being held. For that reason, I hold them the right way up as much as I can, especially when I'm not immediately doing something.
-When I think my budgie is freaking out too much or kicking around making it difficult for me to get a hold, I often sit the her in one hand. I form a circle with my index finger and thumb, and gently place the her head into it from the palm side. She cannot go forward because of the ring I made with my fingers, and cannot back out because I gently push her towards the ring she tries.
-For biters, a towel or Q-tip can be used to distract them from your fingers
-For kickers, a pencil or a finger can be used as a perch for gripping
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With thanks to my gorgeous assistant, Squee. Please excuse the piece of fluff in her beak, I didn't notice it at the time, and she was getting quite fed up with it all so I haven't retaken them.

Feel free to discuss and add by clicking here to see full post with replies

Unique solution ID: #1145
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