

Proper Handling of Our "Sky Warriors"

By

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I have observed fanciers handle their beloved feathered friend in different ways. Some are rough handlers. Squeezing the pigeon as if it is made of steel. We should remember that a pigeon is made of a delicate pound of muscles, bones and feathers. Most fanciers do not realize that the pressure we apply to our sky warriors when handling them can cause serious aches and pains to their bodily structure. If only they can talk. "Hey there, please be gentle, your hurting every inch of my delicate bones and muscles".

In the other hand, fanciers who are one step ahead of others, specially in their gentle handling of their "sky warriors". Are the true champions. They handle them like a delicate gem. Chilo Vallejo (now residing in Hayward, California) is one of them. Just seeing how he handles each bird specially on shipping nights (SFR club) is very pleasing to an avid fanciers eyes.

I called this proper handling technique the "Inverted double C-clamp locking technique". Your left and right hand placed one after the other in an inverted C-clamp formation. And placing the bird's front in your chest area (head facing your chest). Thereby locking the bird without applying any pressure. Some birds are tremendous wringers. To properly secure a wringer, I would also gently lock the two legs in between the point finger and middle finger of your hand forming the other inverted C-clamp locking the bird's rump area.

Illustration of the inverted double C-clamp.



Illustration with a pigeon- "Old 96NL"



inverted double C-clamp technique



Illustration of clipping the legs with your point and middle fingers(for wringers)
Using the "inverted double C-clamp technique"



Len-Len is very helpful in taking this pictures. She is now Papa Toto's official photographer.



At times, it is just frustrating to see fanciers, specially loft visitors awkwardly handling the birds. Teaching them the proper handling technique is the key. Most of them will be thankful and eventually become good handlers.

Speaking of good handlers. How many times did it happened that we grab a pigeon in the loft and lost it's tail feathers or one or two of it's secondary flight feathers. Due to the fact that the birds are afraid of the fancier once he enters the loft with haste. Lets face the true fact that we are not perfect specially when we are mad and we go to the loft to handle birds and many occasions you grab the bird and missed, causing the bird's tail feathers because the fancier is "pissed off" he wasn't able to catch the bird in his first or second attempt. Our bad manners in the loft reflects the behavior of our feathered friends.

Although the loft is still my sanctuary when my day is bad. I tried not to handle the birds if I feel bad. Just merely observing their gentle ways makes me feel good again. We do wonder why a certain bird is a bad trapper or always late coming home. Maybe it is due to the bird's bad experience. He doesn't want to trap for he knows the fancier in the red cap is waiting for him to grab him and hurt his legs by hastily removing the rubber countermark in a very fast and rough way.

Nowadays, thanks to the electronic clocking system. The arriving birds are now trapping without hesitation and not losing a very valuable second. With a little luck, we now have a greater chance to win a race and nothing more.