

Teaching Step Down: An Activity With Many Benefits

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TEACHING the step down

To help you reinforce your higher status, every bird needs some training. Added benefits to any training include helping your bird overcome his natural fear of you and strengthening the human-bird bond.

Since stepping down isn't as natural to birds as stepping up, training your bird to step down may take a little longer, but the procedure is very similar.

When you wish to have the bird step off of your finger, perch, or dowel, place whatever you want him to step onto against his breast above the legs. You can use a special perch for training, or just take one from the bird's cage. Our [Manzanita perch](#) would be perfect because it looks just like a branch.

You'll need to use the same technique you used for a "step up;" gently push the bird's breast against the object you want him to step onto. Have the bird face you and step onto the object while you give the command "step down" or "down." Either command is fine, just be consistent.

When moving from your finger to the object, your bird may actually have to step upwards, but the command should still be "step down," which really means, "move from my finger to what I am showing you."

When training any animal, remember that sessions should be short, usually around 15 minutes. Never start a session if you are agitated, tired, or impatient. And don't forget that a [treat](#) will do wonders to help reinforce this positive experience. Make the training a positive experience for both you and your bird. Make it into a game you'll both enjoy.

