# How to Encourage Avian Exercise
## *with bird perches, playstands, ladders & swings*

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

When conjuring up an image of our bird at play, we likely envision his beak gripped tightly around a chew toy with chunks of wood, cotton, or sisal. He just can't resist. But to ensure proper physical exercise, our birds must also have access to toys that challenge other parts of the body.

Swings, ladders, and playstands are an inexpensive, practical way to encourage total body exercise. They engage your bird's legs, torso, and neck to work off excess energy and strengthen and tone several muscle groups. They also keep your bird mentally alert as he shifts and balances his weight.

Swings and perches feature a wide assortment of perching textures to massage and condition muscles in the feet and legs. And, as birds adjust to the swinging motion, they improve their coordination and balance.

Birds also enjoy ladders. When using one, their heart rates climb right along with their bodies, ensuring valuable aerobic benefits. Whether you connect them, arrange them side-to-side, or drape them vertically, it's a good idea to teach your bird to use them through a game of "step-up."

Adequate exercise is crucial for birds; it keeps boredom, obesity, and mental

disorders at bay. Avian caretakers know all too well the pitfalls of a life of boredom. Birds succumb to feather picking, screaming, and in extreme cases, depression. Similarly, obesity opens the door to a number of secondary medical conditions.

Birds need daily doses of love and one-on-one attention from their human companions, but their physical and mental health also depends on their ability to amuse and entertain themselves through exercise and play.

It is our job to provide opportunities for exercise and play by offering toys that challenge, stimulate, and exercise our birds – from head to foot – and to change and update those toys on a regular basis. Take a look inside your bird's cage and ask



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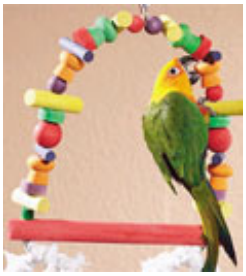
yourself whether his environment inspires apathy – or active participation.

## WE RECOMMEND



Jumbo Perch Swing

Promotes much needed play and exercise, and its bright colors are visually stimulating.

Cable Comfy Perch

Made of specially woven, multi-colored cotton that will soothe and exercise tender feet.



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