Relieve Boredom

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Cooler weather and more leisure time is the perfect occasion to teach tricks like "step up", plus teaching brings you and your bird closer together:

1. Gently push on the bird's breast right above his legs with your finger or dowel. Either should be placed ABOVE whatever the bird is currently perching on.

2. When the bird starts to step onto your finger, say "step up" or "up". Choose only one of these commands.

3. When the bird steps up, praise him and give him a very small treat - something he really likes, but only gets when he obeys a command.

Cooler weather may not seem like a time for activity, but if you think about it creatively, weather that prevents you from being out and about provides you with multiple opportunities to get closer to your feathered friend.

Birds are highly intelligent pets that respond well to frequent physical and mental stimulation. This includes spending time with you, which he adores.

- Remember that the frequency of attention time is what he craves, not necessarily the length of time you spend with him.

- Enrich your bird's environment with plenty of stimulating toys. Rotate them every few days to present a fresh look and challenge for your pet and to ensure he doesn't get bored. Playing with your bird using interactive toys such as the Teach Box & Bank teaches your bird to recognize and name colors and shapes.

- When your bird tires of entertaining items, simply stroke his plumage, talk to him softly, or just let him be with you.

- Give him plenty of out-of-cage time. Birds need this time to alleviate boredom and flex their muscles. Plus, exercise relaxes your bird, which can help prevent negative stress reactions such as screaming, feather plucking, and biting. A play gym or playtop cage allows opportunities for self-diversion.

- Forage, forage, forage. Foraging is what makes birds happiest since they spend most of their time doing it in their wild state. Foraging toys challenge birds to make them think and work for their treats.

Keep minds active by using this time of year to strengthen that important bond you have with your feathered companion.

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4. Birds may use their beaks to help them step up. Do not pull away, since that may indicate to him that you are afraid and then he has the upper "hand." Also, he will be reluctant to obey "step up" if the finger/dowel is pulled out from under him!

5. As the bird becomes comfortable, take him out of the cage and continue the training in other quiet environments. When away from his cage or territory, he may pay more attention to you.

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