

Beat Boredom: From Lethargic to Lively

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Does your usually lively parrot seem less perky? Has he become disinterested in activities or items that he once enjoyed? When a bird is ill, you may notice changes in his behavior, droppings, eating habits, sleep patterns, and his mood. For any such observations, you must determine if anything is wrong medically. If your veterinarian has ruled out illness, these changes may simply be the result of boredom.

Birds are intelligent creatures and can easily become bored when their routine or scenery does not change, or if they are not being stimulated mentally or physically. The best thing you can do is to make uplifting changes in your bird's routine, activity level and environment – before his boredom manifests in feather picking, screaming and other undesirable behaviors. Some birds are easily scared by change. If your bird is one, make changes gradually. The following ideas can help.

EVOLVE HIS EXERCISE

Establish unique new play areas around the house. If your bird enjoys children, use the [Sandy Shower Perch](#) on a window so your bird can view the neighborhood children at play. Take the playgym out onto a screened porch when weather permits so he can play while serenaded by the sounds of wild birds. Set out [bird ladders](#) in safe play areas throughout your home to encourage healthy climbing when your bird is outside the cage. Rotate your bird's cage toys and ladders weekly. Plan a monthly budget for new bird toys, and split between durable toys and those meant to be destroyed, like [Parrot Piñatas](#).

REV UP ROUTINE CARE

Make hygiene tasks, like misting, bathing, cage cleanup or clipping his nails, more fun. Turn on some fun music during these sessions, and make sure to show him some of your dance moves. He may join you by bobbing his head along to the music.

SCRATCH, FORAGE, REWARD

A bird spends a lot of his time in the wild foraging for food, which requires physical activities like digging and scratching – with the reward being the uncovering of a tasty nut or seed. Your bird prefers this method of eating, so try new dinner rituals rather than feed the same food in the same dish each day. Mix a variety of pellet types, instead of using just one, and place the pellets in a bowl with small toy pieces so your bird has to work out the food bits. We suggest AvianMaintenance FruitBlend and Natural varieties along with Fruit Flavored Toy Pieces. Roll up a piece of nontoxic paper into a dowel shape, sprinkle some pellets inside, and then twist the ends like a candy wrapper. Hang this “candy” in his cage to give your bird a foraging challenge that ends in a reward. Offer small pieces of fresh vegetables on a stainless steel [Kabob](#) and alternate vegetables with larger toy pieces. Hang the skewer outside your

bird's cage so he has to work to access the skewer and to find the food among the toys.

SWITCH UP HIS SURROUNDINGS

Relocate his cage occasionally. Try a near-window location out of direct sunlight and just indoors from your wild bird feeder, so he can revel in the activities of wild songbirds. Place a [portable playstand](#) anywhere in your home to change your bird's view. How about a walk in the park when weather permits? Or, try taking him on your next long weekend away. Flight Suits and a safe carrier like the [Fold 'n Go Travel Cage](#) will keep your bird safe while he enjoys the exciting new sights. Remember to take along fresh water and his regular

diet.

INDEPENDENCE vs INTERACTION

In the wild, a bird's time is meted out in a delicate balance between solitude and social interaction. The same balance is required for your pet bird in your home.

- Provide places to seek refuge or hide because your bird needs solitude from time to time – rather than always feeling exposed and subject to interaction.
- Keep his cage dark and quiet when it's time to sleep.
- On the other hand, make sure to give him attention and interaction every day, so he feels part of your family "flock." The secret to keeping your bird happy is the frequency of attention, not the duration.
- Educational toys are ideal for your human/avian interaction and can also teach your bird skills that keep him mentally alert. We suggest [Rings Game](#) and [Teach Box & Bank](#) or an audio CD that builds his vocabulary. Remember to verbally praise your bird during play sessions.