

Bird Behavior, Encourage Activity and Exercise

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How much does your bird exercise and play? Unlike wild birds, many captive companions do not get the exercise they need to promote physical and mental health. After all, we keep our pet bird's food close and home comfortable – the two main reasons their wild cousins are always on the move. But there are simple ways to encourage your bird to be active and healthy.

A DANGEROUS LIFESTYLE

Though it may seem relaxing, a sedentary lifestyle is equally as dangerous for your bird as it is for you. In fact, inactivity often weakens muscles, decreases blood circulation and respiratory capacity, and contributes to avian foot injuries. Inactive birds also often demonstrate abnormal behaviors, including self-mutilation, screaming, and feather picking. These behaviors occur in an attempt to combat the boredom that accompanies a non-active lifestyle.

Worse, sedentary birds are also susceptible to many of the same conditions and ailments as inactive humans. These include obesity, heart disease, fatty liver disease, high cholesterol, kidney disease, arthritis, hardened arteries (that often lead to heart attacks and strokes), and other potentially deadly conditions.

EASY WAYS TO EXERCISE

A healthy, low-fat [diet](#) is essential to your bird's physical and mental health. But regular, daily exercise is also a key to keeping your bird active and fit. Unlike humans, however, your bird's exercise regimen doesn't include an expensive membership to the local gym. In fact, the simplest way to promote activity with your bird is to offer him inexpensive and hassle free toys and accessories. These include:

Swings: Whether strategically placed inside or carefully suspended outside your bird's cage, [swings](#) are an inexpensive way to keep your bird's total body exercised. They help strengthen legs, torsos, and necks, and tone muscles, in addition to helping keep your bird mentally alert as he shifts and balances his weight.

Ladders: When connected together, arranged side-by-side, or hung vertically inside or outside your bird's cage, [ladders](#) benefit a wide range of your bird's body. As he climbs, his heart rate increases, foot muscles flex, and coordination strengthens. In fact, many birds would benefit from a required climb up a [ladder](#) into their open cage each night as a final aerobic workout before bed.

Play Gyms: Available in a range of styles, play gyms create an out-of-the-cage entertainment area in any home. Many feature hooks to hang your bird's favorite [toys](#) and encourage play. Plus, most have [perches](#) of varied textures and diameters to promote fun climbing and foot health.

Toys: Whether specialized or simple, toys are the easiest way to encourage play and exercise. Problem-solving toys engage your bird's mind and muscles. Sound toys tempt vocal play and encourage your bird to sing. Chew and shred toys help satisfy your bird's instincts to forage and play.

WE RECOMMEND

[Talk 'N Play Bird Toy](#)

Buttons on bird toy activate fun phrases to help teach birds to talk.

[Parrot Playground](#)

A customizable wooden playstand for an ever-changing activity center.

[Block Knots Hanging Bird Toy](#)

Thick, colorful wood blocks are strung with sisal and cotton rope for an avian beak workout.