



Birds are truly pets of a different feather, but they still benefit greatly from loving homes that actively provide enrichment which supports their physical and mental well-being by allowing them to express their natural behaviours in the safety of our enclosed environments.

Note: While this guide is applicable to most pet birds, it was developed with Budgies and Cockatiels in mind. Please speak to your veterinarian for recommendations best suited to your bird's specific needs.

Physical Needs:

Exercise: Birds need physical activity and exercise just like people and other pets! Allowing room and time for them to spread their wings outside of the cage daily in a bird-proofed safe space is beneficial to their well-being and can be an enjoyable activity for you to see your bird flying freely. You can also make or purchase a perch stand for your bird to perch on outside of their cage.

Chewing: Your birds may chew on things you don't want them to (such as their perches) if not given appropriate outlets or toys to help keep them busy. Giving your bird a cuttlebone and mineral block can help them redirect some chewing behaviour and helps with maintaining their beak health. Providing toys in a variety of materials, like pet-safe woods, rope, and paper, can also give your bird stimulation through exploring different textures.

Grooming: To keep your bird looking their best, provide them with bathing bowl daily or try giving them a gentle misting using a spray bottle once or twice a week. Some birds enjoy bathing daily while others may prefer to bathe less often.

Regular Vet Care: Yearly vet examinations (at minimum) are recommended to maintain health and prevent any future concerns. It is recommended you find an avian veterinarian and follow their advice if your bird's health requires more frequent examinations.

Mental Stimulation:

Toys/Activities: Rotate toys weekly to ensure your bird doesn't become bored or wear out toys too quickly. Having a variety of toys that encourage different activities, like climbing, swinging, or working to find a reward help challenge your bird. If your bird spends most of their day inside their cage, it is recommended to provide toys that promote moving, such as ladders, swings, rings, and vines.

Foraging: In the wild, budgies and cockatiels forage for food on the ground, and although your bird likely wasn't raised in the wild, this behaviour is still something they will benefit from doing. Giving your bird food in a puzzle toy lets them forage, expend energy, and prevents boredom. Some ways you can make your bird forage for their meals or treats are by wrapping their food bowls or treats with some newspaper, purchasing some bird puzzle toys at your local pet store, or build your very own [Bird Foraging Box](#) using [this guide](#) on our website.



Small Animal Behaviour Guide

Basics of Bird Enrichment



Sights and Sounds: Placing your bird's cage near a window (with protection from direct sunlight) and playing music can give them some activity to pay attention to during the day. This is especially beneficial to birds who will be left home alone and may become bored. Your bird may also enjoy music and dance or sing along with it.

Training & Socialization: Birds are highly intelligent and can learn a variety of tricks! Some trick ideas you can work on with your bird include:

- Stepping up onto your finger or a stick
- Touching a target
- Walking through a hoop.

Teaching your bird to do things like step onto your finger also helps make things like vet visits or being taken out of their cage easier, in addition to being a bonding activity for both of you. They are very social animals and benefit from time spent with you, even when not working on tricks. Time spent on the play gym while you are in the room and interacting with the bird is also a great chance to socialize and bond with your bird. Whether you are socializing or training, be sure to use healthy treats as a reward to make it a positive experience and have fun with your bird!

Additional Resources:

Looking for additional resources for your bird or other pets in your home? Please visit our website and check out our Behavioural Resources page:

<https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com/what-we-do/education-training/behaviour-resources/>

For great enrichment you can make for your bird check out our free Small Animal Enrichment when you visit the Connect with Pets Page and learn **How to Build a Bird Foraging Box:**

<https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com/humane-education/>

Did You Know?

You can also ask us general behaviour questions by emailing:

askthespecialist@edmontonhumanesociety.com

It takes approximately \$7 million to keep the Edmonton Humane Society operational for one year and 40% of these funds come from generous donations made by supporters like you. Please [Donate](#).