

Train Your Pet Bird To Use A Water Bottle

Try these pet bird training tips to switch your pet bird over to a water bottle.

By Rebecca Sweat

Your pet bird needs to be shown how to use a water bottle when you are training it.

Obviously, if you've decided you'd like to switch your pet bird over to a water bottle, the pet bird must know how to drink from it. You don't want to all of sudden one day take away your bird's water bowl, put in a bottle, and assume that the pet bird is going to know how to get a drink. Most pet birds need to be shown.

"Training a bird to drink from a water bottle may take anywhere from a few minutes to a few days," said North Carolina veterinarian Gregory Burkett, DVM. "In most cases, it's very easy to switch a bird over."

The first step is to mount the water bottle in an appropriate place for the pet bird to drink from it. "It needs to be the pet bird's head height above a perch and not hanging directly over the perch but sort of off to the side, so that when the bird drinks it looks up to drink," Burkett said. (Keep the water bowl in the cage as well — at least until you know the pet bird is drinking from the water bottle.)

While your bird is watching, tap the metal ball bearing several times to demonstrate how to release the water from the tube. "Most pet birds are so curious they will immediately investigate the 'new toy' in the cage," Burkett said. "Chances are, your bird will beak the metal ball himself, water will come out, and he will immediately be on a bottle."

If that doesn't happen, then remove the water bowl the next morning, so your pet bird will only have the bottle to drink from all day. Then in the evening, put the water bowl back in the cage. "If the pet bird is thirsty, he's going to drink from the dish right then; and if he does, that means he didn't drink during the day," Burkett said. "But if he ignores it, he probably did drink." Do this for two or three consecutive days — or until you actually witness your pet bird drinking from the water bottle.

Repeat demonstrating the bottle to your pet bird until you are comfortable that your bird is drinking during the day. You may want to put the bottle up to your face, and tap it with your nose so that the pet bird can see your face touching the metal ball. Or, pick up your pet bird, and tap its beak against the metal ball to make water come out. Most pet birds don't need any more of a prod than that.

Burkett said he's never encountered a bird that wouldn't use the water bottle. "I have encountered birds that would not use the water bottle the first three or four days — and typically those are Amazon parrots, which tend to be kind of stubborn — but after a few days, they start using it."