

## Independent Bird Play

**Provide your bird with ways to exercise and stay active when you're not playing together**

*By Rebecca Sweat*

Make sure your bird has toys to keep it entertained and moving when your gone. Courtesy Luda Kravchun, Washington

Make sure your bird receives much-needed exercise — set aside time each day to “work out.” To do this, you need to be home to physically take your bird out of the cage and do activities with it to get it moving. Realistically, though, life gets busy and sometimes you just don’t have a lot of free time to hang out with your bird and play games. If that’s the case, here are still steps you can take to motivate your bird to be more physically active, even when all alone in its cage.

**Play Tip 1:** Provide a free-hanging coil rope, ring toy, dancing perch or swing in your bird’s cage. Your bird will hop on, bounce around, and have to use its wings and legs to grip and hang on — which serves as a great workout.

**Play Tip 2:** If your parrot’s cage has vertical cage bars, place ladders inside to encourage crawling. Or, provide a “climbing tree” or a large, natural branch inside the cage for your bird to crawl up and down.

**Play Tip 3:** Put the food dish on one side of the cage and the water bowl on the other so that your bird has to move back and forth in its cage to get food and water.

**Play Tip 4:** Place the perches far enough apart in the cage so your bird has to slightly stretch or hop to get from one to another.

**Play Tip 5:** Provide a wide variety of interesting toys from one end of the cage to the other to give your bird many reasons to not just sit in one spot on the perch all day.

**Play Tip 6:** Put broccoli, carrots and other raw vegetables inside a treat holder or on a birdie skewer. Your bird will have to use its feet to pull out the food and eat it — and probably burn up more energy than consumed.

**What Pet Birds Are Most Likely To Become Overweight?**

Amazon parrots  
Rose-breasted cockatoos  
cockatiels  
canaries  
Quaker parrots  
Budgerigars