

## Drafts In The Bird Room

**Prevent drafts from reaching your bird's cage with these pet bird tips.**

*By Rebecca Sweat*

One of the biggest misconceptions relating to cold temperatures has to do with drafts. Some people think a draft is just cool air from an open window. As mentioned in the article "Your Parrot's Ideal Temperature Range" cool air in and of itself is not a problem for pet birds — if they have been acclimated to it.

A better definition of a draft, according to Larry Nemetz, DVM, an exotics-only veterinarian in California, is “when the bird is feeling two temperatures in the same area, so that it is getting chilled, hot, chilled, hot, and can't escape.” True drafts can indeed cause health problems. Typically birds will experience a draft when they are just a few inches away from an open window.

“Due to convection currents, half the cage might be 30 degrees and the other half might be 70 degrees,” Dr. Nemetz explained. The end result is the bird is getting a constant temperature shock. This could lead to illness, especially if the bird is young, sick, or feather plucked.

To prevent a problem with drafts, Dr. Nemetz recommends you keep your bird's cage at least 12 to 18 inches away from any exterior window. Because of the natural curve of airflow, the cold air currents will fall to the floor at a point about 8 inches away from the window. By positioning the cage at least 12 inches away from the window, the cold air falls to the floor before it has the chance to get into the cage.

Window-style air conditioning units can also produce drafts, so you should not set your bird's cage directly in front of an air conditioner. If you have central air conditioning, you should not place your bird's cage in front of the vent. “This air flow can continually blow the feathers up and not allow birds to keep their body temperature regulated,” warned North Carolina avian veterinarian, Gregory Burkett, DVM.