

Bird Toys For All Types Of Play

Release your bird's inner child with toys and play.

By the Editors of Birds USA

Provide your bird with bird toys from the different toy groups for playtime. Courtesy Judy Mosley, Texas

Playing with toys is an important part of a bird's development. Interacting with flock members (you, the owner and your family) and playing with toys helps birds gain independence and interest in their environment. Without appropriate interaction or stimulating playtime, birds can develop behavioral problems such as constant attention seeking, excessive screaming, biting and destructive problems like feather plucking. The different types of toys include:

Destroy Toys

Destroy toys help birds work out their natural chewing ability. These range from colorful wooden blocks to twigs to shreddable paper piñatas. Destroy toys are often made from bark, milled wood, chipped wood, raffia, straw, cholla, cork, hemp, leather, jute, cotton and other natural materials. Some destroys are made from paper, twigs and cardboard for easy shreddability. Birds with stronger beaks might require harder toys made from sturdier wood such as manzanita.

Noise Toys

Birds are natural communicators and noise toys help their social skills. Bells made from bird-safe metals are popular choices. A recent innovation in noise toys includes a music box that plays when the bird pushes a button. When you are out of the house, you can leave music on for your bird to enjoy and sing along to. There are CDs specifically designed for parrots to listen to and to develop and expand their vocabulary.

Interactive Toys

Interactive toys provide your bird with intellectual stimulation. These include beads, puzzle toys, foraging toys, snugly toys, surrogate enemy toys, foot toys and mirrors.

Puzzle toys keep a bird busy as it moves parts around and tries to figure out ways to remove parts. Foraging toys appeal to a bird's natural instinct to search for food. Food can be hidden in puzzle toy compartments for foraging.

Snugly toys play to a bird's flock instincts as a nestling buddy. Sole birds in households will also enjoy mirror toys, but under careful supervision. Mirror toys can attribute to behavioral problems if a bird becomes obsessed with looking at itself.

Exercise Toys

Exercise toys are necessary for a bird's physical health and mental well-being. These include swings, boings, grippable perches and grippable cage bars. Grippable perches and cage bars allow a bird to hold on and flap its wings. Likewise, birds enjoy getting a workout by energetically swinging and climbing on their swings and boings.

Adding a playgym further enriches your bird's environment with playtime out of the cage, and it allows your bird to better interact with you and other flock members.

Rotate a variety of toys daily. Even if your bird flings the toy across its cage or bites right into it, it is showing off its natural instincts and simply enjoying playtime.

Safety First

Use these tips to keep your bird safe during play.

Safety Tip 1: Select toys that are appropriately-sized for your bird. Most manufacturers provide guidelines for which toys are sized correctly for your bird.

Safety Tip 2: Hang toys with quick clips. Spring-loaded clips or splint ring can cause injuries to toes and beaks.

Safety Tip 3: Be aware of metal toys that can contain toxins such as zinc.

Safety Tip 4: Discard a toy once it shows signs of deterioration such as splinters, cracks, loose strings or loops. Inspect frays or loops on rope toys to see if they can be trimmed down to prevent your bird can't get entangled in them.

Safety Tip 5: Watch out for bell toys with clappers that may be swallowed by a larger bird. Remove the clapper from the bell before giving it to your bird to avoid any potential injury.