

## Safe Bird Flight

### Keep your bird safe during free-flight time

By Diane Grindol

Whether your bird has a wing-feather trim or is flighted, you can include flying exercises in your bird's exercise routine. Courtesy Airine Masiongle, MO

Make your bird's free-flight time safe by taking these precautions:

**Plants:** A free-flighted bird at liberty in a room could start nibbling on plants. Don't keep potentially harmful plants. For a list of toxic and nontoxic plants, visit [Birdchannel.com](http://Birdchannel.com)

**Water:** Small birds are attracted to water. Cover pots in the kitchen, close the toilet seat lid and don't wash dishes in a dishpan while your birds have free flight in a room.

**Tall Glasses:** Don't leave tall glasses filled with liquid out on the table. A small bird can get into the glass but not out again.

**Windows and Mirrors:** Cover windows and mirrors because your bird might fly into them and get hurt; or if the window is open, your bird might fly out and become lost.

**Doors:** If your bird flies after you, be careful when closing doors behind you.

**Floors and Chairs:** Notice where your bird is in a room before walking through it or before sitting down. You don't want to step on or sit on your bird.

Carefully weigh the pros and cons of allowing your small bird to be fully flighted indoors. Flying is great way for your bird to exercise, but it also increases the likelihood of injury or accidental escape. Also keep in mind, that even cockatiels with trimmed wing feathers are never really grounded with their aerodynamic bodies, long tails and ability to glide, so don't let a wing feather trim give you a false sense of security.

#### Aviary Safety

1. Use a carrier to take your bird from the house to an outside aviary.
2. Make sure your outside aviary has a safety entrance, a place you enter with doors to the outside and to the aviary. Use the doors properly so they are never both open at the same time! Enter from the outside. Close the outside door. Open the aviary door, enter, close the door, and release your bird into the aviary.
3. If your outside aviary does not have a safety porch, its door should be short and as small as possible, not giving birds in an aviary a chance to fly out over your head.
4. Keep rodent and pest control as well as cleanup management in mind when building an aviary.

#### Entice Your Bird to Fly:

1. Hang perches in various places in a room.
2. Place cotton rope in the corners of the room or aviary.
3. Create bird-friendly stations in a room or aviary complete with water, food cups, mirrors, toys, and a solid perch with something placed underneath it to catch droppings.

**Tip:** If your small bird is breaking its tail feathers, let it grow out its wing feathers and learn to land safely and handle its body before trimming its wing feathers again.

\*\*Did you enjoy this information on bird free-flight time? Learn more in the January 2008 special

Diet & Fitness issue of BIRD TALK\*\*