

The Do's and Don'ts for New Bird/Parrot Owners

These are only a few of the very basic needs when purchasing a larger parrot. Research and common sense are a necessity when bringing any parrot into your family.



Don't Forget To Bookmark

- Do have vet checked within the first 3 days (no more than 10 days) of purchase
 - **Don't assume parrot is healthy**

Most breeders have a guarantee health policy. This is for everyone's protection. Your best guarantee is purchasing from a clean well kept breeder. If the cages are dirty with droppings and food (especially large amounts) chances are they are not cleaned on a regular basis. Make sure you have baby checked by vet within the 3 day period most breeders or pet stores offer. If they are reputable they themselves will suggest a thorough checkup.

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- Do give birds time to adjust in a quiet area of home
 - **Don't put in main traffic area with other pets or small children**

Until the new parrot has time to adjust to the new surroundings it's best to keep her in a quiet less traveled area. Put the cage where she can see the family (she doesn't want to be an outcast), allowing her time to know the sounds and movements without the fear of being trampled.

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- Do handle with loving care sharing with other family members
 - **Don't hold for long periods of time especially the first few days**

Baby birds (or any for that matter) are easily frightened by quick movements or loud noises. It's only natural that all family members want to be a part in the homecoming. To do this safely have them enter one at a time in a slow non aggressive manner. Offer a pet to the head or even the foot in a soft steady movement. Never use quick movements or jerking away motion. The parrot might see this as aggression or a threat to its safety. Never move in an upward movement (strokes) of feathers. This is painful to a bird jamming the feather shafts into its body.

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- Do have a play area away from the cage
 - **Don't leave birds inside cages or only on cage top play set**

Making sure your bird has a play area away from the cage is a big step in keeping her from becoming cage bound. Don't let her sit inside the cage even if she won't come out. If she is *not* tame coax her with a special treat or toy. If you are afraid to reach for her, use a wooden perch. Gently put the perch under her chest and say "up". Using a soft towel is the best way to get a cage bound bird from the cage without injury, but if you have purchased a baby this problem should not arise if she has a play area to spend some time to play on during the day.

Each time you pick up your parrot (from anywhere) always say up. as "Step Up". This will be one of the most important things you can teach your bird, "down" being the second thing... "Step Down" when placing them down on their play set or perch. A happy well adjusted bird will not usually have a cage bound problem. On the contrary, getting them to go in will be a greater problem as they become part of the family.

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- Do offer veggies and fruits along with their pellet or seed diet everyday
 - **Don't feed only seed and nuts**

Even if the parrot is not interested in the fruits and veggies offer them daily. This is especially true for the larger parrots. Corn seems to be a hit with almost all of the birds so it might be a good start for your birds. Make sure the food is fresh...rule of thumb for me...if I would not eat it I would not give it to my birds. Don't give up they will learn to accept the food and look forward to their fruits and veggies.

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- Do make sure all food and water dishes are washed everyday
 - **Don't leave food or droppings in cage. Clean cage every night**

Please make sure to clean out, with soap and water, all dishes or bowls every night. When leaving dirty food or water dishes you are only asking for problems for your bird and your peace of mind not to mention your pocketbook. Mold, bacteria and bugs can lurk behind dirty bowls if left unattended. This will cause your bird to eventually be ill. Make sure cage is also cleaned and disinfected at least once a week. Removing ALL signs of food or seeds from bars. A daily cleaning should be made of cage bottom replacing soiled liners and wiping down of cage with wet cloth. I use white paper towels which also helps to keep an eye on their droppings. Once you get into a routine it's hardly noticeable and well worth the extra time for all.

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- Do check water and food for droppings during the day
 - **Don't mix fresh foods with the seed or pellets keep them separated**

Take time to check food and water dishes for bird droppings. Droppings in food or water can make your bird extremely ill. Make sure droppings are out of food dishes...add fresh pellets or seed along with fresh water. Remove fruits and veggies after 2 hours (one hour in hot weather) especially if they are not eating them. If they are eating, don't rip them from their face give them a few more minutes then when they take a break remove the dishes. Fruit and veggies will spoil quickly in hot weather.

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- Do show your bird love and affection praising often
 - **Don't allow your bird to become totally bonded to only you**

This is not really a subject that you need to hear because more than likely you are giving your bird plenty of love and affection. The important thing to remember is NOT to give it anymore affection or time than you will be able to give it in the future. So often we get a new baby make over it night and day. then without warning our schedule changes making it impossible to spend as much time with our baby. As humans it's difficult and hard to accept but to the bird it's rejection, which in some species can lead to feather plucking.

It is a huge compliment to be bonded to a baby bird. By the same token it's a curse for the baby if your not able to spend the time with her. She wants the attention but won't accept it from someone else. This is why I personally feel socializing with all members of the family is very important during the first few weeks at home. Leaving the bird to spend quality time on her own will build her confidence and security in her surroundings. If its with toys or just playing on her play area. encourage her to entertain herself. This will help ease the time when human companions are unavailable.

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- Do allow your bird to realize he can depend on you if needed
 - **Don't run at the first sound of his call especially to pick him up**

After awhile in the home your baby becomes very perceptive on how to get your attention. Yelling, screaming, calling your name, they learn which one works best . How do they do this?

By our returning to the scene of the crime. What crime? The crime that baby is bored and wants attention. Because she wasn't one of the lucky ones that learned to entertain herself with the toys and play area. If you here a scream of pain or any other sound that would alert a potential problem by all means go immediately. Otherwise, don't rush to your babies first call or maybe even the second. If he's bored he may quiet down after realizing your not coming at that exact moment.

If he does indeed want something (like a treat or maybe a toy that fell) he will call again (trust me on this one). Birds are very smart and I feel they do understand what we tell them. If you are busy explain this to the bird. "Mommy will be there in a minute...play with your toys" sometimes works. They will let you know one way or the other.

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- Do hold bird on extended arm, lap or hand
 - **Don't hold bird on shoulder**

We all like the idea of little birdie riding our shoulder. Could this come from Long John Silver in Treasure Island that we saw as a child? Or is it a place to stick the parrot where we can keep an eye on them. Maybe to keep them quiet while we go through our normal routine.

Or perhaps just because we love them so much we want them with us. Whatever the reason I personally feel this is the wrong place to put any large parrot. By large I mean anything over the size of a cockatiel. No matter how tame a bird is he will try to alert or protect his family the only way he knows how. Biting!!!!

If you are holding your bird on your shoulder and something alerts her to what she perceives as danger she will most undoubtedly bite you....on your neck...cheek...ear...nose...or lip. She is not doing this to be mean.

There have been many injuries caused from birds riding on the shoulders of their owners. You have more control if they are on your arm or hand.

If you are outside I feel ALL birds should not be on your shoulders. Even the slightest disturbance could scare a bird to take flight leaving you with the fear of losing your baby.

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- Do have beaks, feathers, and toenails trimmed regularly
 - **Don't wait until an injury arises before taking for checkup**

This is a VERY important fact to remember. Always have feathers trimmed as often as needed. Some people prefer only one side of wings clipped. This has been found to be a big problem.
HAVE BOTH SIDES CLIPPED. NOT JUST ONE

Birdies with wings have a tendency to fly out opened doors by unsuspecting visitors. This is one reason why people are looking for their birds, and why people have them landing on their heads.

Long toenails can cause the bird to get their foot caught in toys or play area. Remember beaks and feet are parrots silverware if they are not taken care of it could make it difficult to pick up their food.