



**Dr. Beth Rhyme**  
**Birdhousemobilevet.com**

## Basic Bird Care Tips

### 1) Ensure Good Nutrition.

Closely monitor everything your bird eats. Fresh foods should only be very healthy and offered every day. Emphasize colorful veggies and grains and feed at least 50 % high quality pellets.

### 2) Clean water dishes and food bowls daily; use a water bottle if possible.

Birds are extremely sensitive to chronic oral exposure to bacteria and molds/mildew. Cleaning dishes regularly dramatically reduces on-going internal damage from mold or bacteria.

### 3) Change cage paper daily.

Birds are also extremely sensitive to poor air quality, which occurs when the cage bottom material is not changed daily. In the wild, birds would never live relatively close to where food debris and their droppings collect. Changing the paper daily keeps the air free of excess dust, dander, mold spores, and bacterial toxins.

### 4) Keep away from all airborne chemicals or toxins.

Avoid using any harsh smelling chemicals in the entire house, including scented candles, incense, cleaners, perfumes, and other aerosols. Do not over heat cooking pans.

### 5) Clean cage and perches weekly with dilute bleach solution and rinse thoroughly.

Again, this ensures the bird's environment is as clean as possible, which is critical to long term health.

### 6) Monitor droppings daily.

Be familiar with the components of the dropping (urine, feces, and urates) and what changes could be abnormal- consistent changes usually warrant a trip to the vet ASAP. When cage paper is changed daily this is easy to accomplish.

### 7) Mist or bathe 2-7 times a week.

Use room temperature or luke-warm water only. Aim the misting bottle high above the bird so the water gently falls down like rain. Alternately, you can provide fresh bowls of water for bathing or take the bird into the shower with you!

8) Ensure sleep time is 10-12 hrs a night.

Birds must be kept at night in a very dark room, preferably in a cage covered in a dark cloth and away from noise. This may mean that a separate room with few windows and closed door is required. Separate sleeping cages can also be helpful in preventing cage territorialism.

9) Keep nails and wings trimmed (properly) for safety.

Abnormally long nails can become easily torn or caught in fabric or toys. If damaged, your bird may bleed when you are not home or dislocate or fracture their toes. Birds able to fly are always at risk for unexpected flying hazards such as ceiling fans, boiling water, dogs/cats, glass, or even escaping out a slightly cracked window or opening door. Consider a microchip in case your bird escapes.

10) Stimulate mentally with foraging toys and interactive games.

Limit physical petting and "cuddling".

Environmental enrichment is key to a happy, healthy bird that does not become overly bonded and "reproductive". In the wild, birds would spend most of their time either foraging for food, or raising babies with a mate. If we take away the foraging part of their day (meaning they don't have to search for food at all), it's easy for them to become consumed with the reproductive aspect. Regularly invest in a variety of "foraging" or puzzle toys that are interesting and safe, and rotate toys around the cage weekly. Most toys should be easily destroyable, with areas to stick treats inside. Homemade toys can be as simple as wrapping a treat inside of a rolled up paper towel or paper bag or a homemade piñata. Many birds can also be trained to learn colors and shapes, or do tricks. While increasing their mental stimulation, it's critical to limit the physical cuddling. Such attention often encourages the bird to feel reproductively bonded to its human caretaker, which can lead to a variety of behavioral disorders, feather picking, and egg laying problems.