

CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET

BASIC TRAINING FOR MY PET PARROT

Why is it important that I train my pet bird?

Providing basic training is important for your pet parrot. This will include, but not be limited to, being able to step up; step down; stay on a perch for period of time; and allow hand entry into an enclosure. Training your pet bird will improve behavioural development and provide social enrichment. When done correctly it will improve the human-avian bond, allow easier handling of your pet bird and preventing the development of undesired or even self-damaging behaviours such as feather plucking.

When should I start training my pet bird?

Training can start a week after collecting your pet bird provided that they have developed adult confirmation and normal body coordination. Ideally training begins with young birds, however if you have a newly acquired adult bird you can still start training with them.

Where should I train my bird and for how long each day?

If possible, training should take place by the same person every day. The bird should be taken to a separate room, so away from their cage, as they will be more likely to perform tasks.

The ideal room would be small and have no open windows or doors. They should also be kept below eye level when training and in front of the trainer.

Initial training should take place for no more than 3-5 mins once or twice a day for a minimum of 3 weeks. Maintenance reinforcement should then be continued as well as introducing novel enrichment for your pet bird.

How do I reinforce my bird's behaviour?

We NEVER advise using punishment such as tapping the beak or physical force. Positive reinforcement is the preferred RECOMMENDATION. This may include verbal praise, food treats or time spent with your bird's favourite toy. Remember that the reinforcement needs to be immediate and consistent once the desired behaviour is performed.

A bird should never be forced into being compliant as this would become negative reinforcement and may result in undesired behaviours. If a bird refuses to perform training after 2 attempts, you should stop training for the day. If the bird continues to refuse to perform after several days a different reward should be considered. If you would like to discuss training further or if would like to discuss a problem behaviour in your pet bird please contact Stanhope Park Veterinary Hospital to book an appointment.