



## Parrot Toys & Toy Safety

Parrots are extremely intelligent creatures; toys are one of the most important items we can purchase for our birds. Many avian behaviorists recommend four types of toys for pet birds such as the following examples:

### Climbing Toys

Ropes  
Swings

### Foot Toys

Nuts  
Corn-on-the-cob

### Chewing Toys

Natural wood branches  
Untreated safe types of wood  
Telephone book

### Puzzle Toys

Pine cones with seeds  
Dry pasta filled with treats  
PVC pipe with holes drilled for treats

When purchasing toys, the number one concern is safety. Avoid toys with small, removable parts, painted parts, or open link chain. Tighten hanging toys securely; if hanging with leather or rope, wet first to ensure the knot is tight. Other considerations include:

**Size:** Choose toys appropriate to the bird's size.

**Bells:** Clappers on bells should be securely attached.  
Remove clappers if the bird is strong enough to remove it (most birds are), using a pair of pliers.  
Large birds should never have access to small bells.  
Avoid old bells as they may be made of toxic metals such as lead or zinc.

**Beads:** Plastic beads are fine for small birds. Large birds can easily break plastic beads, creating sharp pieces; offer wood beads instead.  
Wood beads should be colored with vegetable or food grade dye; not paint.  
Recommended size of beads:

1 inch	Conure, Poicephalus, etc.
1 ½ inch	Amazon, Greys, etc.
1 ½ inch or larger	Macaws, cockatoos

**Leather:** Leather and rawhide in toys should be of domestic origin. Dyes and tanning agents used in commonplace leather objects are toxic to birds.  
Select un-tanned or vegetable tanned leather.

**Chains:** Chains should be made of stainless steel or nickel; links should be welded closed. Links should be large enough to prevent trapping of the bird's toes.

**Rope:** Always use a natural fiber rope with short fiber including untreated sisal or cotton rope specifically designed for use with birds. "Paulie" rope is the only synthetic rope material that is appropriate for smaller birds; however, if ingested can still cause intestinal blockage and death. Check rope material frequently and remove any that becomes soiled or frayed. If rope strands unravel, they can easily entangle toes, the neck or other body parts. Monitor your bird to make sure it does not eat pieces of rope.

**Hangers:** Check clips or connector pieces carefully.  
Can the bird get its beak or toes caught?  
Quick links are the safest type of hanger to use.  
Key rings, dog leach clips, shower curtain hooks or similar hardware are hazardous.  
All hardware should be made of stainless steel; zinc is toxic to birds.



Birds like to chew and many toys will be destroyed. This is good; and their intended purpose! Always inspect your bird's toys on a daily basis, remove any damaged toys and clean of any droppings or food debris. Also supervise your bird especially with new toys.

Finally, birds learn the skills needed to play with toys. If your bird doesn't know how to play with toys you may need to teach him/her using positive reinforcement training techniques.

This information was sourced from LafaberVet.com.