



The Complete Bird Training Guide

Step-by-step techniques for building trust,
teaching commands, and raising a happy, well-trained bird

By **Samantha Khela**

Founder, Bird Sitting Toronto

birdsittingtoronto.ca

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Welcome from BST & About This Guide

Welcome to **The Complete Bird Training Guide** by Bird Sitting Toronto! My name is **Samantha Khela**, and I've spent years caring for parrots of every size — from tiny budgies to magnificent cockatoos. Through BST's boarding, grooming, and avian shuttle services, I've worked with hundreds of birds and their families across the Greater Toronto Area.

This guide distills everything I've learned into practical, step-by-step training advice that any bird owner can follow at home. Whether you're a first-time bird parent or a seasoned companion parrot enthusiast, you'll find techniques here to strengthen the bond with your feathered friend.

How to Use This Guide

- **Beginners:** Start with Chapters 2–5 to build your foundation before moving on.
- **Intermediate trainers:** Jump to Chapters 6–9 for specific commands and tricks.
- **Problem-solving:** Chapter 10 addresses common behavioral issues head-on.
- **Health & wellness:** Chapters 12–13 cover grooming cooperation and nutrition.
- **Quick reference:** Chapter 14 has an FAQ for common training roadblocks.

Core Training Principles

- **Positive reinforcement only.** Reward desired behaviors; never punish.
- **Short sessions.** 5–15 minutes, 2–3 times daily is ideal.
- **Consistency.** Use the same cues, hand signals, and rewards every time.
- **Patience.** Every bird learns at its own pace — celebrate small wins.
- **Read your bird.** Stop if your bird shows stress. Training should be fun for both of you.

★ *BST offers professional bird boarding where trained staff reinforce positive behaviors daily. Ask about our training-friendly boarding options at birdsittingtoronto.ca*

Chapter 2

Understanding Your Bird: Species & Personality

Every bird species has its own temperament, learning style, and motivators. Understanding your bird's natural tendencies is the first step to effective training. Below is a reference table covering the species we most commonly see at BST, organized by size category.

Species	Size	Training Temperament
Budgies	Small	Eager learners, respond well to millet treats. Can learn extensive vocabulary.
Lovebird	Small	Bonding-focused, may be nippy at first. Pair-bonded birds harder to train.
Parrotlet	Small	Bold personality in a tiny body. Very food-motivated, learn tricks quickly.
Finches	Small	Limited trick training but can be tamed with patience. Best trained solo.
Canaries	Small	Song-focused birds. Respond to repetition and calm environments.
Cockatiel	Medium	Gentle, whistling-focused. Great for beginner trainers. Love head scratches.
Conure	Medium	High energy and playful. Very treat-motivated. Prone to screaming if bored.
Quaker	Medium	Intelligent and vocal. Can learn many words. Territorial around cage.
Senegal	Large	Calm and independent. Bond strongly to one person. Reward-responsive.
Caique	Large	Clownish and energetic. Love physical tricks (hopping, rolling). Need variety.
Indian Ring Neck	Large	Excellent talkers. Need consistent daily sessions. Can be standoffish.
Pionus	Large	Quiet and gentle. Slower to warm up but very loyal once bonded.
Lorikeets	Large	Playful and messy. Liquid diet complicates treat-training. Use praise heavily.
Congo African Grey	XL	Highly intelligent, sensitive. Need mental stimulation. Champion talkers.
Amazon	XL	Dramatic and vocal. Strong-willed; need firm, positive boundaries.
Cockatoo	XL	Extremely affectionate, prone to over-bonding. Training prevents behavioral issues.
Eclectus	XL	Calm, diet-sensitive. Respond well to routine. Males often easier to train.

Pro Tip: Food motivation varies by species. Budgies love spray millet, conures go crazy for sunflower seeds, and African Greys often prefer nuts. Discover what makes YOUR bird light up — that's your training currency.

Individual Personality Matters

Beyond species tendencies, every bird is an individual. Some cockatiels are bold and outgoing; others are shy and cautious. Pay attention to what your specific bird enjoys and what makes them uncomfortable. A good trainer adapts their approach to the individual, not just the species.

Consider factors like your bird's age (younger birds often learn faster), history (rescued birds may need extra trust-building), and daily routine (birds are often most alert in the morning). Tailor your training schedule around when your bird is naturally most engaged and receptive.

Setting Up for Training Success

Before you begin training, set up an environment that helps your bird focus and feel safe. The right preparation makes a significant difference in how quickly your bird learns.

Choose a Training Area

- A quiet room with minimal distractions (no TV, other pets, or loud noises).
- Remove mirrors — birds may focus on their reflection instead of you.
- Good lighting so your bird can clearly see your hand signals.
- A stable perch or T-stand at chest height for comfortable eye-level interaction.

Gather Your Supplies

- **High-value treats:** Small pieces of their favorite food (millet, nuts, seeds).
- **Target stick:** A chopstick or dowel with a colored tip (for target training).
- **Clicker (optional):** A consistent marker sound for precise timing.
- **Perch or T-stand:** A neutral training perch away from the cage.
- **Towel (nearby):** For safety, not for restraining — only in emergencies.

★ *The BST Gift Shop carries spray millet holders, perches, and food accessories perfect for training. Visit mybird.birdsittingtoronto.ca/gift_shop_new to browse our collection.*

Training Session Guidelines

- Keep sessions **5–15 minutes**. End on a positive note before your bird loses interest.
- Train **2–3 times per day** with breaks in between.
- Always start with a warm-up — a known command your bird can succeed at easily.
- Use a consistent **bridge word** (like “Good!”) or clicker when your bird does the desired behavior.
- Deliver treats **within 1–2 seconds** of the correct behavior for clear association.

Pro Tip: Train before meals when your bird is slightly hungry — they’ll be more motivated by food rewards. Never withhold food to force motivation; a mildly hungry bird is ideal.

Chapter 4

Building Trust & Bonding

Trust is the foundation of all training. Without it, your bird will be too stressed or fearful to learn. This chapter covers how to read your bird's body language and build a trusting relationship step by step.

Reading Bird Body Language

Birds communicate constantly through posture, feathers, eyes, and vocalizations. Learning to read these signals will help you know when to push forward and when to back off.

Behavior	What It Means	What to Do
Pinning eyes (pupils rapidly dilating/contracting)	Excitement or agitation	Observe context — if agitated, give space
Fluffed feathers, relaxed posture	Content and comfortable	Good time to interact or train
Flattened feathers, leaning away	Fear or discomfort	Stop and give the bird space
Beak grinding	Relaxed, sleepy, content	Bird is settling in — let them rest
One foot tucked up	Relaxed and comfortable	Bird feels safe in your presence
Head bobbing	Excitement, wants attention or food	Good moment to offer a treat or engage
Tail fanning	Agitation, overstimulation, or display	Slow down, reduce stimulation
Wing flapping (while perched)	Exercise or excitement	Normal behavior — ensure enough space
Crouching with wings slightly out	Wants to be picked up (often)	Try offering a step-up
Lunging or hissing	Warning — feeling threatened	Back away, reassess your approach
Regurgitating toward you	Showing affection/bonding	Acknowledge gently, do not encourage excessively

Trust-Building Steps

Step 1: Sit quietly near the cage for 10–15 minutes daily. Read aloud or talk softly so your bird gets used to your voice.

Step 2: Offer treats through the bars. Hold a treat near the cage and let your bird approach. Don't push your hand inside yet.

Step 3: Open the cage door and rest your hand near the opening with a treat. Let your bird decide when to approach.

Step 4: Hand-feed inside the cage. Once comfortable, offer treats from your open palm inside the cage.

Step 5: Slowly introduce touch. Offer gentle head scratches only when your bird solicits them by lowering their head.

Step 6: Move to out-of-cage interaction. Let your bird come out on their own terms before attempting step-up training.

Did You Know?: For rescued or rehomed birds, this process may take weeks or even months. That's completely normal. Rushing trust-building almost always backfires. Celebrate every small step forward.

★ *When you board your bird with BST, our experienced staff continue building trust through gentle, consistent interaction. Many owners notice improved tameness after a BST stay!*

Step-Up Training: The Foundation

The “step up” command is the single most important behavior your bird can learn. It’s the foundation for all other training and essential for safe, daily handling. Every bird — regardless of species — should learn a reliable step-up.

Teaching Step-Up

Step 1: Position your hand. Hold your index finger (or flat hand for larger birds) just above your bird’s feet, gently pressing against the lower belly/chest.

Step 2: Give the cue. Say “Step up” in a clear, cheerful tone. Use the same phrase every time.

Step 3: Guide gently. The slight pressure against the belly naturally encourages the bird to lift a foot and step onto your finger.

Step 4: Mark and reward. The instant your bird steps up, say “Good!” and offer a treat with your other hand.

Step 5: Practice in short sets. Repeat 3–5 times per session. Step up, reward, place bird back, repeat.

Step 6: Generalize the behavior. Once reliable, practice from different perches, in different rooms, and with different people.

Do's	Don'ts
✓ Use a calm, encouraging voice	✗ Chase your bird with your hand
✓ Offer the treat immediately after stepping up	✗ Force your bird onto your hand
✓ Keep your hand steady and still	✗ Pull your hand away if the bird goes to bite
✓ Practice in a familiar, quiet space first	✗ Yell, blow at, or punish your bird
✓ End on a success — even a partial step counts	✗ Practice when your bird is tired or stressed

Troubleshooting Step-Up

Bird bites instead of stepping up: Your bird may be scared or territorial. Go back to trust-building (Chapter 4). Try using a perch or dowel instead of your finger at first, then transition to your hand once the bird is comfortable.

Bird steps up but immediately flies away: This is normal early on. Keep sessions short and reward even a 2-second step-up. Gradually increase the duration before offering the treat.

Recall Training (Come When Called)

Recall training teaches your bird to fly or walk to you on command. This is not just a fun trick — it's a safety skill. A reliable recall can prevent escapes and help in emergency situations.

Prerequisites

- Your bird must have a reliable step-up (Chapter 5).
- Your bird should be comfortable being out of the cage with you.
- Have high-value treats ready — recall training needs the BEST rewards.

Teaching Recall: Step by Step

Step 1: Start close. With your bird on a perch just 6 inches away, hold out your hand with a treat visible and say "Come!" (or use your bird's name).

Step 2: Reward the approach. When your bird steps or leans toward you, mark ("Good!") and reward immediately.

Step 3: Increase distance gradually. Move to 1 foot, then 2 feet, then across the room. Only increase distance when your bird succeeds 8 out of 10 times at the current distance.

Step 4: Add flight recall. For flighted birds, once walking recall is solid at 3+ feet, your bird will naturally begin short flights to reach you. Reward generously!

Step 5: Practice in different rooms. Generalize the behavior so your bird responds regardless of location.

Step 6: Add mild distractions. Gradually practice with the TV on, other people present, etc.

Warning: Never call your bird to you for something unpleasant (like nail clipping or going back in the cage). The recall command must ALWAYS predict something wonderful. If you need to return your bird to the cage, walk over and use step-up instead.

Pro Tip: Use a unique word or whistle for recall — something you don't say in everyday conversation. This prevents your bird from getting confused by hearing the cue accidentally.

Target Training

Target training teaches your bird to touch a specific object (usually a stick or your fingertip) with their beak on command. It's one of the most versatile skills — once your bird understands targeting, you can use it to guide them anywhere: onto a scale, into a carrier, through an obstacle course, and more.

What You Need

- A target stick: a chopstick, dowel, or pencil with a colored ball or tape on the end.
- Small, high-value treats.
- A quiet training space.

Teaching Target Touch

Step 1: Present the target. Hold the stick 1–2 inches from your bird's beak. Most birds will naturally investigate and touch it out of curiosity.

Step 2: Mark and reward. The instant your bird's beak touches the target, say "Good!" and give a treat.

Step 3: Add the cue. Once your bird reliably touches the target, add the verbal cue "Touch" just before presenting the stick.

Step 4: Move the target. Gradually hold the target further away — to the side, above, below — so your bird has to move to touch it.

Step 5: Guide movement. Use the target to lead your bird along a path — across a perch, onto your hand, into a carrier, or onto a scale.

Pro Tip: Target training is the secret weapon for teaching complex tricks. Once your bird follows the target reliably, you can shape spins, waves, and even agility courses by guiding them with the stick.

Practical Applications

- **Carrier training:** Guide your bird into a travel carrier using the target — no chasing!
- **Scale training:** Target onto a gram scale for easy weight monitoring.
- **Vet cooperation:** Target to position your bird for examinations.
- **Trick training:** The foundation for spin, wave, and more (see Chapter 8).

★ *BST's Avian Shuttle service transports your bird safely across the GTA. Carrier-trained birds travel with less stress! Learn more at birdsittingtoronto.ca*

Teaching Tricks: Spin, Wave, & More

Tricks aren't just entertaining — they provide mental stimulation, strengthen your bond, and build your bird's confidence. Here are four popular tricks with step-by-step instructions.

Trick Difficulty Chart

Trick	Difficulty	Prerequisites	Avg. Time to Learn
Wave	Easy	Step-up	3–7 days
Spin	Easy–Medium	Target training	5–10 days
Shake Hands	Medium	Step-up, comfortable with hand	7–14 days
Wings Out (Eagle)	Medium–Hard	Trust, touch tolerance	14–28 days

1. Wave

Step 1: Cue a step-up by presenting your finger, but pull back slightly before the bird's foot lands.

Step 2: Your bird's foot will lift and hang in the air briefly — that's the wave!

Step 3: Mark ("Good!") and reward the instant the foot lifts.

Step 4: Add the verbal cue "Wave!" once the motion is consistent.

Step 5: Gradually delay the reward so the bird holds the wave longer.

2. Spin

Step 1: Hold a treat or target stick near your bird's beak.

Step 2: Slowly guide it in a circle around your bird's body so they turn to follow it.

Step 3: Initially reward a quarter turn, then a half turn, then a full 360° spin.

Step 4: Add the cue "Spin!" once your bird completes full rotations.

Step 5: Fade the lure — use a smaller hand motion, then just the verbal cue.

3. Shake Hands

Step 1: Present your fingertip at foot level (not for step-up — just one finger, low).

Step 2: When your bird lifts a foot to investigate or grip, gently hold the foot for 1 second.

Step 3: Mark and reward immediately.

Step 4: Add the cue "Shake!" and gradually shape a gentle foot-to-finger grip.

Step 5: Keep it brief and gentle — birds don't naturally enjoy foot restraint.

4. Wings Out (Eagle Pose)

Step 1: Wait for your bird to naturally stretch their wings (often after preening or waking up).

Step 2: The instant they spread their wings, say “Good!” and reward.

Step 3: This is called “capturing” — you’re marking a natural behavior.

Step 4: Add the cue “Big bird!” or “Eagle!” just before they tend to stretch.

Step 5: With repetition, your bird will learn to spread wings on cue.

Pro Tip: Keep trick training sessions to ONE trick at a time. Introducing too many tricks simultaneously confuses your bird. Master one before moving to the next.

Speech & Vocalization Training

Many parrot species can learn to mimic human speech, but not all will — and that’s okay! Even non-talking species can learn to communicate through specific sounds and contact calls.

Best Talkers by Species

Talking Ability	Species
Excellent	African Greys, Amazons, Indian Ring Necks, Quakers
Good	Budgies, Eclectus, Cockatoos
Moderate	Conures, Cockatiels (better at whistling), Caiques
Minimal	Lovebirds, Parrotlets, Finches, Canaries, Pionus

Tips for Teaching Words

Step 1: Choose a simple first word. Start with a clear, two-syllable word said with enthusiasm. Your bird’s name is a great first word.

Step 2: Repeat with emotion. Say the word clearly and enthusiastically 10–15 times in a row during a quiet moment. Birds learn words that are said with energy and feeling.

Step 3: Associate words with actions. Say “Hello!” when you enter the room and “Bye bye!” when you leave. Context helps birds use words appropriately.

Step 4: Reward any attempt. If your bird mumbles or approximates the word, treat it as a success! Refine pronunciation over time.

Step 5: Be patient. It can take weeks or months for a bird to produce their first word. Continue daily repetition.

Did You Know?: Birds are most likely to pick up words they hear repeatedly in emotional contexts. This is why parrots often learn exclamations, laughter, and phone ringtones — these sounds carry energy and are repeated often!

Managing Unwanted Vocalizations

If your bird has picked up unwanted sounds (beeping, screaming, alarm noises), the best approach is to **ignore the unwanted sound completely** and enthusiastically reward quiet or preferred sounds. Never yell at a screaming bird — your bird will interpret your yelling as you joining in the “flock call,” which reinforces the behavior.

Building a Vocabulary Over Time

Once your bird says their first word, new words tend to come faster. Keep a running list of your bird’s vocabulary — many owners are surprised to discover their bird knows 20–50+ words and phrases once they start paying attention. Tips for expanding vocabulary:

- **Label daily routines.** Say “Good morning!” when you uncover the cage, “Dinner time!” at meals, “Night night!” at bedtime.
- **Narrate your actions.** “I’m getting water,” “Time to go outside.” Birds pick up phrases they hear in context.

- **Use music and singing.** Many birds learn songs faster than speech. Try short, repetitive melodies.
- **Play audio recordings** of words you want your bird to learn during quiet times. Keep volume moderate.
- **Celebrate every attempt.** Even unclear mumbling is your bird trying — reinforce it enthusiastically.

Did You Know?: Cockatiels are natural whistlers and often prefer learning melodies over words. Try teaching your cockatiel the “Andy Griffith” theme or a simple tune — they may never say a word but can become impressive musicians!

Addressing Problem Behaviors

Problem behaviors in pet birds almost always stem from unmet needs — boredom, fear, hormonal changes, or lack of socialization. Punishment never works with birds and will only damage your relationship. Here’s how to address the most common issues.

Biting

Biting is the #1 complaint from bird owners. Birds bite for many reasons: fear, territorial defense, overstimulation, hormones, or because they’ve learned that biting makes the scary thing go away.

Do's	Don'ts
✓ Stay calm — give a neutral “no” and set the bird down	✗ Yell, flick, blow at, or shake your bird
✓ Identify the trigger (what happened right before the bite?)	✗ Drop your bird as punishment
✓ Respect body language warnings (lunging, pinning eyes)	✗ Put your bird in the cage as a “time-out”
✓ Reward gentle beak contact and calm behavior	✗ Pull your hand away quickly (teaches bird that biting works)
✓ Use a perch instead of your hand if the bird is cage-territorial	✗ Force interaction when your bird is clearly upset

Excessive Screaming

Some vocalization is natural — birds are loud animals, especially at dawn and dusk (flock calling times). However, excessive screaming usually indicates boredom, attention-seeking, or anxiety.

- **Ignore screaming.** Do not enter the room, look at, or talk to your bird while they scream.
- **Reward quiet moments.** The instant there is a pause in screaming, immediately praise and treat.
- **Provide enrichment.** Foraging toys, shreddable toys, and background music reduce boredom.
- **Establish a routine.** Birds scream less when they know what to expect from their day.
- **Teach a replacement.** Train a contact call — a specific whistle your bird can use instead of screaming.

Feather Picking / Plucking

Feather destructive behavior is complex and can be medical or behavioral. **Always consult an avian vet first** to rule out infections, allergies, or nutritional deficiencies.

Do's	Don'ts
✓ Get a full avian veterinary exam first	✗ Use anti-picking sprays (they mask symptoms)
✓ Increase foraging opportunities and enrichment	✗ Use an e-collar unless vet-directed
✓ Ensure proper humidity (40–60%)	✗ Draw attention to the plucking behavior
✓ Provide 10–12 hours of uninterrupted sleep	✗ Assume it's "just behavioral" without vet check
✓ Improve diet with fresh fruits and vegetables	✗ Rehome the bird hoping it will stop (it rarely does)

BST Tip: If your bird has developed problem behaviors, BST's boarding environment with social interaction, enrichment, and routine can often help. Many birds show behavioral improvement after a structured BST stay.

Socialization & Travel Prep

A well-socialized bird is calmer, more adaptable, and easier to handle in new situations — whether that's a vet visit, a boarding stay, or meeting new people at home.

Socializing with People

- Step 1: Start with observation.** Have visitors sit quietly in the same room as your bird without approaching.
- Step 2: Parallel treats.** Have the new person toss treats near the bird (not hand-feed yet).
- Step 3: Direct interaction.** Once the bird is relaxed, the visitor can offer treats from their palm.
- Step 4: Step-up with others.** Practice step-up with trusted friends and family members.
- Step 5: Regular exposure.** Consistent, positive exposure to different people prevents single-person bonding.

Travel & Carrier Training

Many birds are terrified of travel carriers because their only experience with one is the annual vet visit. Carrier training should start long before you actually need to transport your bird.

- Step 1: Make the carrier a fun place.** Leave it open in the bird room with treats and toys inside.
- Step 2: Feed meals near the carrier.** Gradually move the food dish closer to, then inside, the carrier.
- Step 3: Target into the carrier.** Use target training (Chapter 7) to guide your bird inside on cue.
- Step 4: Close the door briefly.** Start with 5 seconds, reward, open. Gradually increase duration.
- Step 5: Short car rides.** Once comfortable, take a short drive around the block. Reward after.
- Step 6: Practice regularly.** Monthly carrier practice keeps the skill fresh and stress-free.

★ *BST's Avian Shuttle provides professional door-to-door bird transport across the GTA. For birds who are too stressed to travel by car, or for owners without a vehicle, our shuttle is the safe, comfortable solution. Visit birdsittingtoronto.ca to book.*

Warning: Never place a carrier in direct sunlight or near a car heater vent. Birds overheat easily and cannot sweat. Keep the carrier partially covered for security while allowing airflow.

Socializing with Other Pets

Birds can coexist with cats, dogs, and other pets, but **direct interaction should always be supervised**. Even a gentle pet can cause fatal injuries to a bird with one swipe or nip. Safety guidelines:

- Never leave your bird unsupervised outside the cage when cats or dogs are present.
- Keep the cage in a room that can be closed off from other pets when you are away.
- Watch for predatory body language in dogs/cats: staring, stalking, tail twitching.
- Allow visual exposure at a safe distance so all animals can adjust to each other.
- A bird's cage should be positioned high enough that ground-level pets cannot reach it.

Preparing for Vet Visits

Every bird needs an avian vet check at least once a year. Vet visits are less stressful when your bird is carrier-trained and socialized with handling. Before your appointment:

- Practice carrier entry 2–3 times the week before the appointment.
- Bring a favorite treat to reward after the examination.
- Ask your vet to move slowly and narrate what they are doing.
- Keep the carrier covered during transport to reduce visual stress.
- After the visit, give your bird quiet time to decompress — no training that day.

Training for Grooming Cooperation

Grooming — nail clipping, wing clipping, and beak trimming — is stressful for most birds. With cooperative training, you can teach your bird to willingly participate in grooming, reducing stress for everyone involved.

Nail Trim Desensitization

- Step 1: Touch feet daily.** Gently handle your bird's feet during calm moments. Reward for tolerance.
- Step 2: Introduce the tool visually.** Show your bird the nail clippers from a distance. Reward calm behavior.
- Step 3: Touch feet with the tool (closed).** Tap the closed clippers against the foot. Reward.
- Step 4: Clip one nail.** Just one! Reward hugely. End the session.
- Step 5: Gradually increase.** Over multiple sessions, work up to a full nail trim in one sitting.

Wing Trim Cooperation

If you choose to clip wings (a personal decision — consult your avian vet), desensitize your bird to having their wings gently extended. Practice the wing stretch daily with treats, long before any actual trimming takes place.

Towel Training

Many grooming procedures require a towel for safe restraint. You can change your bird's negative association with towels:

- Play peek-a-boo with the towel from a distance.
- Drape the towel over your arm and offer treats.
- Let your bird walk on the towel laid flat with treats scattered on it.
- Gently wrap the towel around your bird for 2–3 seconds, reward, release.
- Gradually increase duration until your bird tolerates toweling calmly.

BST Professional Grooming Services

Not comfortable grooming at home? BST offers professional grooming by experienced handlers. Grooming can be added to any boarding stay or booked as a standalone appointment.

Service	Small	Medium	Large	XL
Nail Clipping	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$40
Wing Clipping	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$60
Beak Trimming	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$60
DNA Sexing	\$90	\$90	\$90	\$100

Prices are per bird. Contact birdsittingtoronto@gmail.com to book.

Nutrition & Health for a Trainable Bird

A healthy bird is a trainable bird. Poor nutrition leads to lethargy, irritability, and behavioral problems that no amount of training can fix. Here's what your bird needs to thrive.

The Ideal Diet

- **High-quality pellets (60–70%):** A formulated pellet diet provides balanced nutrition. Brands like Harrison's, TOP's, and Roudybush are excellent.
- **Fresh fruits and vegetables (20–30%):** Offer a variety daily. See the safe foods list below.
- **Seeds and nuts (5–10%):** Use as training treats, not a dietary staple. Seeds are high-fat.
- **Fresh water daily:** Change water at least twice daily. Consider a water bottle for cleanliness.

Safe Foods for Birds

Safe Food	Safe Food	Safe Food
Apples (no seeds)	Bananas	Blueberries
Broccoli	Carrots	Cooked sweet potato
Grapes (seedless)	Kale	Mango
Papaya	Peas	Peppers (bell or hot)
Pomegranate	Cooked brown rice	Cooked quinoa
Spinach (in moderation)	Zucchini	Strawberries
Watermelon (no seeds)	Cooked whole wheat pasta	

Toxic / Dangerous Foods — NEVER Feed These

TOXIC	TOXIC	TOXIC
Avocado	Chocolate	Caffeine (coffee, tea, soda)
Alcohol	Onions & garlic	Salt (excess)
Fruit pits & apple seeds	Mushrooms	Rhubarb
Uncooked beans		

Pro Tip: The best training treats are small (pea-sized or smaller) and quick to eat. A whole almond takes too long to chew — break it into tiny slivers. Millet spray can be given as 1–2 second nibbles between reps.

★ *The BST Gift Shop carries fruit holders, food containers, and cuttlebone accessories to make healthy feeding easy. Browse at mybird.birdsittingtoronto.ca/gift_shop_new*

Training Troubleshooting FAQ

Q: My bird was making progress but suddenly stopped responding. What happened?

This is a normal training plateau. Birds need time to consolidate new skills. Take a 2–3 day break from that specific exercise and return to previously mastered commands. When you revisit the new skill, start one step easier than where you left off.

Q: My bird will only perform for treats. Is that okay?

Initially, yes! Food rewards are how we communicate "that was correct." Over time, you can fade food rewards by rewarding every other success, then every third, while always offering verbal praise. Some behaviors (like step-up) should still be rewarded regularly to maintain reliability.

Q: My bird is aggressive toward one family member. How can we fix this?

This is common with pair-bonded birds. Have the "rejected" person become the sole provider of high-value treats for 2–4 weeks. The preferred person should remain calm and neutral during this period. The goal is to build a positive association with the other person, not to punish the bond with the preferred one.

Q: Is it too late to train my older bird?

Absolutely not! Birds of any age can learn. Older birds may take longer to change established habits, but they are just as capable of learning new behaviors. Many rescue birds learn to step up for the first time at 10, 15, or even 20+ years old.

Q: How long should I train each day?

2–3 sessions of 5–15 minutes each. Short, frequent sessions are far more effective than one long marathon session. Always end before your bird loses interest.

Q: My bird is scared of the target stick. What do I do?

Introduce it very gradually. Lay the stick on a table far from your bird. Reward your bird for calmly looking at it. Over several sessions, move the stick closer. Only present it for touch training once your bird shows zero fear around it.

Q: Can I train two birds at the same time?

Train them individually first. Once each bird knows the behavior independently, you can work with them together. However, individual sessions are always more effective since birds distract each other.

BST Resources & Services

Bird Sitting Toronto is your one-stop resource for professional avian care in the GTA. Here's a complete directory of everything we offer.

Bird Boarding

Professional in-home boarding in a bird-safe environment. Your bird receives daily social interaction, enrichment, fresh food, and individualized care. All cage sizes welcome.

Size Category	Per Day	Per Week	Per Month
Small (Budgies, Lovebirds, Parrotlets, Finches, Canaries)	\$14.75/day	\$90/week	\$360/month
Medium (Cockatiels, Conures, Quakers)	\$19.75/day	\$120/week	\$480/month
Large (Senegals, Caiques, IRNs, Pionus, Lorikeets)	\$24.75/day	\$150/week	\$600/month
XL (African Greys, Amazons, Cockatoos, Eclectus)	\$29.75/day	\$180/week	\$720/month

Cage Rentals

Don't have a travel cage? Rent one from BST for your boarding stay.

Cage Size	Price
Small	\$4.00/day
Medium	\$6.00/day
Large	\$7.00/day
Extra Large	\$10.00/day

Grooming Services

Nail clipping, wing clipping, beak trimming, and DNA sexing. Available as standalone appointments or add-ons to any boarding stay.

Service	Small	Medium	Large	XL
Nail Clipping	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$40
Wing Clipping	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$60
Beak Trimming	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$60
DNA Sexing	\$90	\$90	\$90	\$100

Additional Services

- **Avian Shuttle:** Professional door-to-door bird transport across the GTA.
- **BST Gift Shop:** Personalized bird accessories, perches, toys, and care products.
- **Bird Portal (MyBird):** Online portal for clients to manage bookings, view updates, and access resources.

Contact Us

- **Website:** birdsittingtoronto.ca
- **Client Portal:** mybird.birdsittingtoronto.ca
- **Gift Shop:** mybird.birdsittingtoronto.ca/gift_shop_new
- **Email:** birdsittingtoronto@gmail.com
- **Instagram:** [@birdsittingtoronto](https://www.instagram.com/birdsittingtoronto)



Happy Training!

A well-trained bird is a happy bird — and a happy owner.

Need help with your bird? BST is here for you.

Book boarding, grooming, or shuttle services:

birdsittingtoronto.ca

Shop personalized bird accessories:

mybird.birdsittingtoronto.ca/gift_shop_new

birdsittingtoronto@gmail.com | @birdsittingtoronto

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