

# Evergreen Avian & Exotic Animal Hospital

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## Feather Care

Adapted from information sheet by Dr. Brian Speer, [www.medicalcenterforbirds.com](http://www.medicalcenterforbirds.com)

Feather care is part of your bird's daily maintenance activity schedule. Any effort to enhance or modify feather care has a very solid influence on this daily schedule. For birds that are not preening normally (either too much or too little), listed are some ways for feather care to be enhanced and guided more towards normalcy.

1. Mist your bird lightly every day, and sometimes even multiple times per day. Unless your bird is sick or your house is very cold (less than 55 degrees F), you do not need to be concerned about cold-stress, particularly if it is just lightly misted. A light misting merely superficially dampens the feathers enough to guide the bird in its feather care towards more normal preening activity for a short time period.
2. Misting can be combined with time that is shared with your bird out on a training perch. This combines flock interaction with feather care. The combination of these two behavioral groups can enhance the lifestyle of your parrot. It may modify undesired behaviors.
3. Offer materials for your bird to "groom" that can be destroyed if the bird desires. These may include a straw whisk broom, a feather duster, or similar materials that can be located in the cage or on the side of the bird's cage. Take some time and groom or preen these while your bird observes. These types of items may provide something other than the bird's own feathers to preen and groom (or damage), and can have great value as a part of or adjunct to behavioral modification for some feather damaging behaviors.
4. Over-the-counter products: There are considerable numbers of products marketed to enhance the feather appearance of your bird. These often have ingredients that are far from "natural" to be applied to the feathers. Some are really geared for mammals only, not birds. Overall, most of these products will not help, and some can actually cause harm. In general, we recommend tap water as your misting agent, and the money you save by not purchasing these products can be better applied towards toys or other environmentally enriching products.