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When it comes to raising African Grey parrots, I strongly believe in keeping things as organic as possible. This includes their toys, and if I say natural I don't mean just made of wood. Think of the parrots in the jungle, they climb, pick things with their beak and claws, they tear at berries with their beaks and claws and in captivity these bird's get to sit on a perch all day, must be cheerful no matter how bored and miserable they are, and they must entertain us.

African Grey parrots are intelligent birds and need to constantly exercise their brains as well as their bodies. I believe that all birds are smart but don't have ways to show it as they stay in a cage every day. However, of all the bird species the African Grey is the most intelligent and has to be stimulated.

The most suitable way to stimulate your parrot when you are not there is with toys.

Having said that, toys need to be changed around so that they do not get bored with the toys. Parrot toys are expensive, for me to buy a toy that is only going to be torn apart is a waste of hard earned cash. Invest in a toy box for your parrot toys. When replacing your parrot's toys, repair the damaged one, and put it into the toy box. When you see that a toy your parrot is playing with is close to being not repairable change, fix and put it away for future use.

Don't run out and go purchase any kind of bird toy for your parrot. You ought to choose accurately making sure that it is the correct size and not made of tiny pieces that can split off. This normally happens when the wrong toys are purchased for your parrot. Buying a toy for a smaller bird can easily break and if your parrot swallows it, it could get stuck in his throat.

Make sure that the toys have no sharp sides that could cut him or even wound him. When purchasing toys on a chain check to see that the chain is strong enough for you to pull on without breaking, the power of your African Grey is grossly underestimated. Be sure that all the links are securely closed.

Don't buy toys that have varnish or urethane woods, wooden toys need to be colored with safe colorants such as food coloring. Make sure that if you buy toys with plastic, the plastic must be really tough so that your parrot won't be capable to chew through it.

When buying metals ensure that it is not coated metal, this is harmful. Ensure that there are no sharp edges. The metal toys should be made of stainless steel or aluminum as stainless steel is totally safe for birds. Lead and zinc toys are harmful to the birds and must never be bought even if the toy is cheaper.

Here is a valuable tip when going to purchase metal toys for your African Grey. If you want to ensure that you are buying stainless steel take a magnet with you. If your magnet is attracted to the item, it is not 100% stainless steel and could have an undercoating of another metal source such as iron or zinc.

Most of all and I know parrot toys are expensive; don't buy low priced toys that won't last long. Rather make your own.

Don't buy good-looking furry little toys that can be ripped apart and chewed. This is extremely dangerous, as your African Grey will swallow what is in his mouth.

There are a number of totally different toys for different functions. There is the puzzle toys intended to get your African Grey to use his brain.

They vary from solving puzzles to get a treat, such as to open a box to find the treat inside to putting coloured shapes together.

Some toys are made for foraging; this could include the puzzle toy to find a treat in a box. There are balls with treats in them and your parrot needs to find away to not only keep the ball still, but also to retrieve the treat.

Like your nails, the African Grey parrot's beak does not stop growing, so you need to make sure that it is kept at the proper length. In the wild he would be trying to crack open some really tough shells with his beak, will chew on thin twigs, and using his beak to help him climb up the bark of a tree. This keeps his beak trimmed to the correct length and strengthens the beak. You need to copy that for him at home by providing chewable toys for him.

Give him puzzles containing nuts that need to be pried open with his beak, a thick perch for him to climb up using his beak and even large wooden toys that can be taken apart.

Parrots enjoy to chew, if it looks chewable it will be chewed, if it doesn't look chewable it gets tested. Be prepared that all the toys will be chewed. Therefore, I would recommend you to have chewable toys. This strengthen the beak and wears the beak down so that it is in good shape.

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Margaret-Ann is an animal and nature lover. She fell in love with parrots while still in primary school. The African Grey is her favorite parrot. The Congo and the Timneh have grabbed her attention the most. She has done a lot of research on both these parrots and admires their intelligence. For more information you can visit her blog sitea titleAfrican Grey Toys [African Grey Toys](#).

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