

EXOTICS VET with Alex Rosenwax BVSc MACVSc

Dr Alex Rosenwax - BVSc MACVSc
(Avian Health)

Bird & Exotics Veterinarian, Green Square.

Alex graduated from the University of Sydney in 1991.

He achieved Membership of the Avian Health Chapter of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists in 1996. In November 1996 he opened the first and only Sydney all bird and exotic pet practice. The Clinic moved to 1 Hunter St, Waterloo in 2003 and sees approximately 80% birds, and 20% fish, reptiles and other exotic pets. Alex is the current President of the Australian Veterinary Association Avian Group.

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them nice and trimmed and now they're really long and scratchy. Pappy is a young Conure and likes to hop on our shoulders around home. The kids are complaining

that her toes hurt and scratch them. It doesn't bother me as I always wear a towel on my shoulder when she's on me so I don't feel it.

MICHAEL CHANCE
CREMORNE



Dear Dr. Rosenwax,

I'm confused about perches for our parrot as I can't seem to get conflicting advice from pet store people and what I find to read. We used to have some sandy-type perches that we were told would not be good for the health of our parrot Pappy's toes. A lot of people said these were too rough and scratched the feet.

We replaced them but now Pappy's claws or nails are really long and sharp. The previous perches seems to keep

Dear Michael,

The sandpaper perches can be great for keeping nails shortened and blunt.

However, it is also true that they can lead to very sore feet and are uncomfortable for most birds in the long-term. Some of these birds' feet can become so scratched on the

underside that they can become infected, a condition commonly called bumblefoot.

We therefore generally recommend only using a small piece of sandpaper attached around one small area of the wire on the cage side for the birds to scratch their beaks or claws on, and not using them on the perches.

Toenails that are long and sharp can definitely be uncomfortable. These birds have naturally sharp nails in order to cling on to the sides of branches whilst eating. If you find these nails painful or annoying there are several methods to solve this problem. Putting one of the newer cement-roughened half-length perches seems to keep most nails shortened, usually without the painful side effects of bumblefoot.

Do not have more than one of these perches in the cage and have natural Australian wood perches for the rest of the cage. Clipping the nails can also be performed by your veterinarian or at home use an emery board to file the nails. Some birds hate this being done but many medium-to-larger birds can be trained to hold out their feet for nail filing. If the nails continue to grow there may be other more serious problems. In these cases consult your avian veterinarian.

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