

DIGITAL SCALES

WHERE TO GET ONE AND WHY YOU NEED IT

Reasons to get a digital scale:

There are 3 main reasons to get a digital scale.

- 1 Weighing your bird regularly will give you a way to monitor your bird's overall health. In addition to monitoring for weight LOSS, routine weighing of your bird will allow you to monitor for weight GAIN; this is helpful since pet birds are prone to obesity.
- 2 Weight loss may be the first indicator that your bird is getting sick. Many pet birds are prey animals in the wild. They are more likely to get eaten if they look sick; therefore, they hide their illnesses well.
- 3 If your bird is currently sick, your veterinarian may ask you to get a scale to help monitor your bird's recovery. When your bird is in the hospital it is weighed once or twice a day to make sure it is getting enough nutrition. Once it goes home with you, it is equally important to monitor your bird's weight in addition to its appetite and amount of droppings. If your bird is not maintaining its weight then it probably needs to be hospitalized again so that your veterinarian can provide additional supportive care as needed.

Regardless of why you are getting a scale, it is a good idea to keep a chart of your bird's weight.

Types of Scales

It is essential that you purchase the right kind of scale so that you can weigh your bird easily and accurately.

- The scale should be a digital scale, as spring scales are not as accurate.
- The scale should read in grams, not ounces.
- The smaller the bird, the more accurate the scale must be.

For example, for a macaw, a scale with 2 gram measuring increments might be fine but for a budgie the increments would ideally be tenths of a gram.

- You must also pay attention to the maximum capacity of the scale and make sure it is appropriate for your bird.
- Some scales can be purchased with a perch to make weighing your bird easier.



- You can also build a perch for the scale if your bird is reluctant to stand on the scale without one.

Wooden dowels can be glued to the scale to form a perch.

PCV pipes or dowels with tongue-depressors or popsicle sticks taped to the bottom to keep the perch from rolling can be placed on the top of the scale.

- Alternatively, if your bird will not stand on the scale, you can place your bird in a small box or travel container to weigh it; you will need to tare (reset to zero) the scale with the box on it prior to weighing the bird. Another option is to weigh the bird in the box, then weigh the box alone, and subtract the weight of the box from the weight of the bird in the box.



Places to purchase a scale

If you need a scale immediately: Cooking scales can be used to weigh birds. You can purchase these at places like Walmart (in the cooking section, usually about \$30) or cooking stores like Williams Sonoma or Bed, Bath and Beyond (usually about \$50). Postage scales can also be purchased at places like OfficeMax. Some bird stores sell scales with perches.

If you do not need a scale immediately: Scales can be purchased online (e.g. Amazon.com, drsfostersmith.com). The Amazon and Drs Foster and Smith scales can be purchased with perches but they are more expensive (\$70-100) than those at Walmart.

Please call your veterinarian if:

- Your bird loses 10% or more of its body weight unexpectedly.
- Your bird is sick and its body weight is on a steady downward trend, even if it has lost less than 10% of its body weight.
- Your bird has a poor appetite, reduced droppings, or any other signs of illness.



Association of
Avian Veterinarians

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