

Starting With Chickens – A beginners Guide

4 Reasons To Start Raising Chickens

There are so many reasons why someone would want or wouldn't want a chicken in their backyard. There are debates about it and here are some:

Pros

1. Costs incredibly cheap.

When we say cheap, not only does the chicken itself count but also the maintenance of it all. Compared to keeping a dog or a cat for a pet, it is much cheaper to take care of a number of chickens most likely because they are not choosy when it comes to food. You can feed them scraps and table leftovers and they will happily gobble it up. With as little as \$2 a day, you can spend on a bunch of layer mash.

2. You can get something from them.

Eggs. Meat. Ornament. Who wouldn't want it? In terms of eggs, it is seldom that you encounter a chicken that can't lay eggs. It is a good source of iron, which is good for the brain. You could either sell these eggs or keep them in your fridge. With meat, every part of a chicken can be eaten. Yes, every. In cases of those who don't want to see their chickens go bye-bye, they raise them as pets and for exhibition purposes.

3. Low maintenance.

Unlike dogs who need everyday grooming and cats who need your undivided attention, chickens need none of those. You don't have to bring them to your vet every once in a while to take shots and doses of vaccines. All you have to do is feed them and supply clean water every day. Their coops must be cleaned at least once a week or twice every month depending on the number of chickens that you own.

4. Fertilizers for free and an instant pest control agent.



These are the two things that chicken raisers love about owning a chicken. When you allow your chickens to roam around your backyard, it is in their nature to peck on whatever it is that catches their interest and their hunger. Chickens love anything that came from the ground most especially the ones that are moving. They eat insects, bugs, worms and the like. For them, these are special treats. Furthermore, it is in their nature to eradicate their internal wastes anywhere they please. But their poops are considered as natural fertilizers that the ground needs to grow plants and root crops in a healthy state.

Cons

1. They are not the best guard pets to have.

While chickens can coo and make familiar sounds, it is not in their nature to bite or coo on anyone they see who looks suspicious. All they can do is growl, eat, and lay eggs. They are also not the ideal pets you would want to have especially if you need a response like wagging of the tail or a purring sound.

2. Chickens are messy.

Indeed. Plus, their poop smells terrible that it can reach certain areas in your house. If you're the type of person who doesn't want to go through enduring hours of cleaning, chickens aren't really the pets for you.

3. One for all, all for one.

Well, in terms of getting sick this is a con. Because when one catches flu, everyone gets it too. And if one dies because of that flu, it is expected that every single chicken living with that infected chicken who also got that flu is also going to die after a few days.



45 Chicken Raising Terms You Need To Know

Familiarize yourself with these terms to get a hold of chicken raising.

Bantam – chicken variety that is about half the size of the standard breed of chickens. These breeds are usually bred for ornamental reasons.

Bedding – can either be shavings of wood, haystack pile, or newspaper that are added to the floor of the coop and inside a nest box. The purpose of this is for absorption of droppings and odour of chicken poop. It also provides as cushion for eggs to be safely ejected from its mother without the worry of breaking it.

Brood – this could either mean the hens incubating their chicks or a flock of baby chickens.

Broodiness – a chicken's desire to incubate their babies – unfertilized or fertilized. Broodiness can make an egg hatch or spoil it. There are a lot of factors that may arise in being broody. And the mother is a bit moody when she is manifesting broodiness.

Candling – is a procedure wherein a candle or a light bulb is used. It is the process letting light shine through an egg to determine if it is fertilized or not. Candling can be useful especially if you are planning to separate the eggs with growing embryo and those that you wanted to sell.

Capon – a rooster that has been castrated.

Clutch – fertilized egg groups that hens tend to incubate.

Cockerel – a juvenile or young rooster.

Comb – this is the rubbery, red flat piece of flesh hanging on top of a chicken's head. Roosters have a more prominent comb than hens. Some who are engaged in cock fighting preferred to cut the rooster's comb so as not to interfere with the fight.

Coop – house of chickens.

Crop – Part of a chicken's digestive system that can be found in the oesophagus wherein food is first digested before entering the stomach.

Droppings Tray – a tray that collects chicken droppings, which is located under poles for quick disposal.

Dust bath – A pattern of chicken behaviour wherein they dig a hole in the ground and immerse their bodies in earth that has been loosened. They will get down and dirty until they get satisfied. Bathing in dust is a kind of defence mechanism to protect chickens from lice and mites that may invade their feathers and feed on their blood. A dust bath can either be natural or artificial.

Feeder – a container that delivers and holds feeds for chickens.

Fertilized egg – an egg that came from mating of a rooster and a hen and is destined to become a baby.

Grit – bits of rock or sand bits that chickens tend to eat and is stored in the crop that is important for good digestion.

Hackles – chicken's neck feathers.

Hen – female chicken.

Incubation – process of egg hatching in which application of heat is required. The eggs that are incubated are those that are already fertilized. Constant heat, usual turning, and an environment that is humid are the essential needs of an egg that also comes in with the period. Incubation takes about 21 days before the eggs are expected to hatch.

Layer feed – a feed that is complete and is made for the sake of laying hens.

Molt or **molting** – this is the process of feather shedding and re-growing which happens once a year. When molting season comes, laying season is suspended.

Nest box – a box, usually improvised, that is designed for hens to lay their eggs. It is a requirement that for a number amounting to 4 to 5 hens, one nesting box is needed.

Non-setter – this is a kind of chicken breed that don't have any desire to care for their chicks, if they have one, or never wanted to incubate or hatch fertilized eggs.

Ornamental breed – a kind of chicken that is used only for ornamental purposes and nothing more. These breeds are the ones that are often seen in fairs and poultry shows. They are appreciated because of their stunning stature and appearance but not used for producing eggs and chicken meat.

Poultry show – this is a kind of show that is organized for the sake of judgement. The proudest breeds are displayed and are judged according to their standard breed. This show is organized by the APA or American Poultry Association. Not only chickens are brought to this kind of affair but also other poultries like geese, ducks, turkeys, etc.

Production breed – are the kind of breeds that are used for mass production of eggs.

Pullet – a juvenile or young hen.

Roost – the time when chickens are resting on a pole to sleep. It is also what you call the actual pole where chickens use to perch.

Rooster – male chicken.

Roosting pole – a perch that is made out of wood. It can be constructed and put inside the coop.

Rumples – a kind of chicken breed that does not have feathers on their tails.

Run – an area connected to the coop where chickens can roam around freely.

Scratch – a treat made for chickens that are composed of different kinds of grains; this is the one that is scattered on the ground. It can also be referred to as the behaviour chickens make wherein they use their claws to dig up either worms, bugs, rocks, and tiny little insects that are inside the ground.

Sexing – determining the sex of a chicken.

Sex link – a type of new chicken wherein the chicken's sex is soon indicated even before the eggs hatch. Female of the sex link kind is known for producing eggs in a massive state.

Shanks – part of the chicken's legs which can be seen at the bottom.

Sickles – what is called to the rooster's tail feathers.

Spur – this is the protrusion that is seen on the shank of a rooster that used for fighting.

Started pullet – a hen that has started laying eggs but is only on a juvenile stage.

Starter feed – it's the complete feed that is formulated and made especially for baby chicks.

Vent – part of the chicken where poop, eggs and other waste matters pass. It's like the anus of humans.

Waterer – this is the trusty partner of the feeder which delivers and holds the water supply.

Wattles – it's similar to a chicken's crow but instead of being on top of the head, it's found under the neck of the chicken. It's composition is red and has

rubber-like flaps.

Wheezer – in colloquial terms, it's what they call a chicken's butt.

Wormer – a kind of medicine that can treat or rid animals of parasites inside their intestines like worms.

It is necessary to know all the terms needed for raising chickens for you to be more equipped on what to buy or need. With this information, you can fully comprehend what needs to be done to raise chickens effectively.

Proper Construction of a Pen Suitable for Raising Chickens

Constructing a pen is easier than it seems. You need to pinpoint some important matters like the materials to buy and the tools to use. Plus, you also have to consider the area where to build the suitable pen for raising your chickens.

All right, the easy yet crucial part begins with planning. First, the area, then the size of the pen. The pen size usually depends on how many chickens will be raised. Look at the option on what kind of birds you are dealing with.

Novice or not, it is still better to start off with the most basic pen – using the wire and post design. Here, the materials that you'll need are the posts, wire, and staples that can be used for fences. The tools are also basic namely a sledgehammer, the ordinary hammer, wire cutters, and crowbar.

Now that you have gathered all materials and tools, surveyed the area, and is assured that there is none to worry about, it's time for the construction.

To start with, look at the ground you're working on. Notice the stiffness and dryness. If it's anything like that, you have to bring in with you a bucket full of water. This will help soften the ground. Pound the ground using the pointed tip of the crowbar. By doing this, a hole is being formed.

While pounding, occasionally pour few amounts of water in the hole to soften the ground. By leaving your crowbar inside the hole, pull your body against it. By doing so, you'll widen the proximity of the hole. If the hole is prominent enough and is 20 cm deep, that will be sufficient. Make sure that the hole has a wideness that can hold a pole in place.

You can now put the post inside the hole that you have made, pointed tip first. Using the sledgehammer, pound the pole to the ground. Do the pounding until you are sure that it has remained firm. Sometimes, it is better to have someone hold the post for you to ensure better stability. Always practice caution and focus on what you're doing because you might pound your assistant instead of your post.

If your first post is standing firmly, you can now start on your second, and third, and fourth, and so on. Give about a meter from where the first post stands. That will determine elaborate spacing. To serve as a gate, let 2 posts stand about 1½ - 2 meters apart.

The moment you have firmly put all the posts in place, it's time to put the wire around it. For this to be made possible, carry the wire on one corner then using your regular hammer, pound the fence staples at the end of the wire to the post. Once the end is tightly secured, unroll the wire going to the next post then staple the wire that touches the post. Do the unrolling and stapling process till you have completed wrapping around the entire posts. If you ran out of wire, get more then start where you ended.

Making a gate is also easy. All you need to gather are hinges, latch and a particle board. Start by cutting the board to fit the two ends of the posts. Now attach it together with the hinges and the latch. There you have it. Raising chickens is easy for as long as you know the basics.

Recommended Online Resources

[Build Your Own Chicken Coop](#) – My favourite chicken coop building site

[Build A Coop In 3 Days](#)

[How to Raise Chicken](#)

Review Of How To Build A Chicken Coop Guide

This is what every product in the world should be like...straight forward, no nonsense, to the point and useful. I know some folks would think, "Why would you want to build a chicken coop yourself?" Well, if they knew how expensive these things were to buy, they wouldn't be asking the question. And besides, it really isn't hard if you have a good tutorial. And that's where "[How To Build A Chicken Coop](#)" comes in.

Okay, let me just get to the best part of this book because it is so critical. Inside, you will find cross sectional diagrams of the whole process. In other words, you don't just get one of those horrible instructional kits with your typical "insert post A into slot C" mumbo jumbo. This book is so well illustrated, that even somebody who has NEVER picked up a hammer and saw in their lives can put one of these things together. These diagrams alone are worth the price of the book. But there's more, lot's more.

The tips inside will allow you to build a chicken coop for pennies on the dollar for what it would cost to buy one ready made. And you won't be scrimping on

materials. The author shows you what to get so that you'll be building the absolute best chicken coop for your needs and it still won't cost you an arm and a leg.



But the book is more than just about building a chicken coop. There are some incredible tips inside such as the 9 daily, monthly and yearly chores that you must do in order to keep your chickens healthy, happy and laying eggs all year round.

There are also a ton of great bonus books that come with this, such as one on how to build nesting boxes for free. Yes, free. There's another book on how to best position your chicken coop and how to get the best materials.

Look, I can go on talking about this really useful (about time too) book on this subject. But why not just go to the man's site (his name is Bill Keene) and see for yourself.

Here is the link to the site >>> [How to build a Chicken Coop](#)

[More information on Building a Chicken Coop](#)