



# 21 TIPS FOR RAISING BACKYARD CHICKENS

## GUIDE

First of all, I'd like to thank you for deciding to download this short guide.

Whether you have been following [The Happy Chicken Coop](#) for a long time, or you have only recently discovered us, it's great to have you with us.

Below you will find 21 tips for raising backyard chickens- they are intended for beginners however I'm sure even if you have chicken keeping experience you will still find them helpful.

1

## COLLECT YOUR EGGS AT NOON:

Chickens normally lay eggs in the morning under normal daylight conditions- and never after around 2pm. Collect the eggs promptly to avoid issues such as egg eating and cracked shells.

### SOURCES:

[https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource001075\\_Rep1335.pdf](https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource001075_Rep1335.pdf)

2

## GRIT, GRIT, GRIT:

Chickens don't have any teeth so they need grit to break and grind down their food. A handful of crushed oyster shell every 2 weeks will be plenty for a small flock of 12 hens.

### SOURCES:

<https://www.mcmurrayhatchery.com/chickcare.html>

**3**

## LOCAL CHICKEN KEEPERS:

Find people who raise chickens in your local area- seeing their coops and setup will help you decide how to setup your own coop. Also, when you have specific problems you can chat to people who are dealing with the same issues.

**SOURCES:**

<http://ecowatch.com/2015/01/06/tips-raising-backyard-chickens/>

**4**

## CHICKEN FEED:

Make sure that you give your chickens the same brand and type of feed consistently. Constantly changing their feed will upset their egg laying rhythm.

**SOURCES:**

<http://rurallivingtoday.com/backyard-chickens-roosters/10-tips-for-raising-backyard-chickens/>

**5**

## GET READING CHICKEN BLOGS:

It's inevitable that at some point your chicken will get sick or stop laying eggs. You should prepare for this by learning from as many chicken blogs as possible!

**SOURCES:**

<http://ecowatch.com/2015/01/06/tips-raising-backyard-chickens/>

**6**

## GLASS HALF FULL:

Always make sure their water bowl is full and clean. Just an hour without water can make them stop laying eggs for a week!

**SOURCES:**

<http://melissaknorris.com/10-tips-raise-chickens-meat-part-1/>

7

## GIVE THEM SPACE:

Chickens need plenty of space otherwise they will peck and bully each other. Tip:

- 3 square foot per chicken inside the coop
- 15 square foot per chicken when roaming

### SOURCES:

<http://venus.fandm.edu/~fcrawfor/coop.html>

8

## CHOOSING THEIR FEED:

Buy the best feed you can afford. Typically the cheaper brands can contain nasty pesticides and chemicals.

### SOURCES:

[http://www.localharvest.org/blog/26992/entry/10\\_top\\_tips\\_for\\_raising/](http://www.localharvest.org/blog/26992/entry/10_top_tips_for_raising/)

9

## DO YOU KNOW NORMAL:

You should know what a healthy chicken looks like (active, alert and curious).

### SOURCES:

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/homesteading-and-livestock/raising-chickens/>

10

## COOP DESIGN:

If possible when building your coop, make sure that the roof is slanted and not flat. A flat roof will rot quickly and can cause leaking and make your chickens' life unpleasant.

### SOURCES:

<http://venus.fandm.edu/~fcrawfor/coop.html>

11

## FAMILY PETS:

Make sure that your family pets (cat/dog) get along with other animals. You don't want to end up with a mess on your hands.

**SOURCES:**

[http://www.localharvest.org/blog/26992/entry/10\\_top\\_tips\\_for\\_raising/](http://www.localharvest.org/blog/26992/entry/10_top_tips_for_raising/)

12

## ROOSTERS ≠ EGGS:

You don't need a rooster to get eggs.

**SOURCES:**

[https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource001075\\_Rep1335.pdf](https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource001075_Rep1335.pdf)

13

## KEEPING THEIR PEN CLEAN:

Make sure you keep their pen clean and free from muck. Most parasites will thrive in dirty conditions.

**SOURCES:**

<http://melissaknorris.com/10-tips-raise-chickens-meat-part-1/>

14

## CHICKEN LAWS:

Check your local city laws- most will now permit chickens but they may limit the number.

**SOURCES:**

[http://www.mercurynews.com/our-community-garden/ci\\_28245352/tips-raising-chickens/](http://www.mercurynews.com/our-community-garden/ci_28245352/tips-raising-chickens/)

15

## MOLTING:

Your chickens will molt once each year- this is completely normal and harmless. The molt will last around 10-12 weeks and during this period they will not lay eggs.

**SOURCES:**

[http://www.mercurynews.com/our-community-garden/ci\\_28245352/tips-raising-chickens/](http://www.mercurynews.com/our-community-garden/ci_28245352/tips-raising-chickens/)

16

## COOP PLACEMENT:

When deciding where to place your coop just remember to place it close enough to the house so you can easily go out to tend to the birds. But not too close if you don't want to hear them throughout the day!

**SOURCES:**

<http://commonsensehome.com/how-to-raise-chickens-cheaply/>

17

## DAILY EGG COLLECTION:

Eggs should be collected twice a day.

**SOURCES:**

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/small-farms/livestock/poultry/backyard-chicken-basics/>

18

## PREPARING FOR WINTER:

Making sure your hens are ready to not just survive, but thrive in the cold winter weather is an important part of maintaining your flock. Make sure you prepare properly using our free winter guide.

**SOURCES:**

<http://www.thehappychickencoop.com/the-definitive-guide-to-keeping-chickens-in-winter/>



19

## GET THEIR DIET RIGHT:

Their diet needs to be well balanced for vitamins, minerals, and protein. The simplest way to achieve this is to purchase high quality, layer chicken feed.

**SOURCES:**

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/small-farms/livestock/poultry/backyard-chicken-basics/>

20

## CLIP THEIR FEATHERS:

Keeping your hen's feathers trimmed will keep them from escaping or flying into trouble! You should aim to do this at least twice a year.

**SOURCES:**

<http://www.denverext.colostate.edu/backyardchickens.html>

21

## THE CORRECT BEDDING:

The nesting material/bedding used in the coop should be absorbent and not prone to molding. Pine shavings are one of the most popular litter materials.

**SOURCES:**

<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C969/>

-----

Hopefully you are feeling more knowledgeable about raising chickens now! I'd love to see photos of your chickens when you get them, send me an email to: [contact@thehappychickencoop.com](mailto:contact@thehappychickencoop.com)

Finally, I'd like to thank you for being part of the best online community for Chicken Keepers, [thehappychickencoop.com](http://thehappychickencoop.com)!

Wishing you all your success,

