



# RAISING CHICKENS

## INSTRUCTIONS

Check your local and city ordinances. Before buying your chicks, make sure that it is legal for you to raise them where you live. Some areas do not allow livestock in residential locations. Even if you are free and clear to begin raising chickens, you should also consider your neighbors before making a final decision.

Find a place to keep them. You really don't need a large amount of space to get started. In fact, you can create a pen to keep them together in a small section of your yard made of wood and wire, or you can allow them to roam the entire yard as free-range chickens.

You should also build a small shelter for the chickens to escape weather changes and protect them from predators. It can be a simple box construction made with inexpensive plywood and wire. Build it high off the ground in a location that dries well when it rains. Make sure the coop faces the sun, which will help it dry quickly. It's important to make sure your chicken coop is well-ventilated, especially when hot weather arrives. Adding sliding windows that can open and close will provide necessary airflow. The walls of the coop should be insulated to keep the birds warm at night and during colder months. You can also add electric light to the coop for even more warmth. It's important to keep the chicken coop clean to avoid diseases.

Baby chickens need to be kept at 92° for the first week of their lives and decrease the temperature by 2° every week until they are at room temperature. At which time they can be roomed outdoors.

Choose chickens known for laying lots of eggs. Since you are planning to raise chickens for eggs, make sure you choose the right species. Even though all chickens lay eggs, certain breeds are well-known for their ability to lay lots of eggs. Breeds known to lay eggs consistently on an almost daily basis include Leghorn, Rhode Island Reds, Black Star, Light Sussex and Plymouth Rocks. Four chickens are enough to supply eggs for an entire family.

Feed your chickens well to get the best quality eggs. Egg laying chickens have a simple diet. Newly hatched chicks are fed starter feed until they are 6 weeks old. The feed is designed to encourage maximum nutrition and growth. Adult egg laying chickens should be fed layer feed. It contains 16 percent protein and an extra boost of calcium for stronger shells. If you're raising free-range chickens, you'll find they are a cheap, chemical-free way to control insects in your yard. They also produce much larger eggs and eat less feed since they will automatically add insects and grass from your yard to their diet.



## Care & Feeding Ducklings

The information on this page is believed to be correct and is based on our own personal experience plus reading many sources on the care of ducks. If you believe something is incorrect, please let us know.

### Housing:

Ducklings need to be kept confined and warm for the first several weeks of their lives. If they are without their mother, you will have to provide artificial heat. It is possible to buy brooders, but they are expensive and not necessary if you are only brooding a small number of ducks. A nice sturdy box and a good heat lamp works well. Ducks should be kept at around 90 degrees Fahrenheit for the first week of their lives and then you can begin decreasing the temperature slowly. 85 degrees the second week, 80 degrees the third week and so forth. Their brooder must be large enough so that there is space for them to move away from the heat source if they feel like they need to. The heat source must be far enough away from them so that they cannot touch it and burn themselves.

A large plastic tote can be used as a brooder with pine shaving bedding in it. Old T-shirts can be provided for them to lay on. They seemed to like that for the first couple of weeks, but be ready to throw the old t-shirts away or do some heavy-duty laundry :)

Black lights can be used for the heat lamps so that they won't be so bright for them. Carefully monitor the temperature so that it won't be too hot or cold. The lamps should be mounted on the wall a few inches above the brooder.

### Feeding:

Ducklings should be fed some type of poultry starter food. It is okay to use chicken starter foods, but you must be careful of the chicken feeds. Some chicken feed is medicated, and this medication can be harmful or fatal to the ducklings. The first day or so, the feed should be in several shallow containers so it will be easily found by the ducklings. Within a couple days, the ducklings will be much more active. At this time, you can place one or two deeper feeders in the brooder instead of several shallow ones. If there are too many feeders, the ducklings are likely to soil their feed. The starter food can be fed up to six weeks of age.

### Water:

Ducklings need plenty of water. Make sure that you have provided enough drinking water that they cannot run out. Try to place the water so that it is somewhat close to the food, but not right next to it. The ducklings will need water after every few mouthfuls of food. But if the water is too close, they can get their food wet and spoil the food. Try to make a water container that the ducklings cannot get into. Down is not water repellent, and they can drown. However, they do need to be able to dip their beak into the water to rinse out their nostrils.