

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RAISING CHICKENS

With

Beth O'Neil

Has the thought of having your own chicken coop in your backyard always intrigued you? Do you look forward of the prospect of waking up every morning to a fresh egg or two for breakfast?

Then it's time to stop dreaming and build your own chicken coop.

This guide is full of helpful information that will make the process of raising chickens accessible for anyone.

OK, let's get started!

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Introduction

Welcome to my beginner's guide to raising chickens. Now that you've begun investigating how to build a chicken coop, there is something you should know. And that is what to expect when you begin raising chickens. This guide will help you properly pick out the size and style of chicken coop you will need. And I will cover some of the pitfalls you will need to watch out for.

Since I realize how difficult it can be to read things on the computer screen I encourage you to print out the book. It will make reading it more enjoyable and you will have it at hand when you want to go back over some of the material.

I have placed links in the book to various resources which you may find helpful either in the process of raising chickens or when you begin building the coop. These links will be written next to the content that is referencing them so that you can type them into your browser's address bar to view the web page. Example Build-A-Chicken-Coop.iqbanq.com If you don't print the book out you can simply click on the links and they will take you to the page.

Furthermore, I invite you to share this book with family and friends. Feel free to email it to them or send them the link to the book so that they can download it:

<http://ChickenGuide.iqbanq.com>

The only request that I make is that you do not alter the contents of the book or claim it as your work. Other than that, share it with as many people as you want. There can never be too many people interested in learning how to build a chicken coop, so enjoy!



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Choosing What Type of Coop You Require

Probably one of the decisions you're struggling with right now at this point is determining which type of chicken coop you need. There are a variety of different chicken coops that you can build, but understanding which one is going to best fit your needs is important for getting optimal results. If you spend the money on a chicken house, it only makes sense that it needs to match your individual needs, so getting started on the right foot is important.

There are some main factors that you should take into consideration before deciding what type of coop to build. The following guidelines will lead you down the right path to choosing wisely and being fully satisfied with your new chicken coop once it's built.

Size

Possibly one of the most important factors that will need to be looked at is the size of chicken coop you want to build. There's small, medium, and large plans for the chicken coops, each which accommodates a certain number of chickens.

The biggest mistake you can make is trying to cram too many chickens into your coop. Because each chicken requires so much area to feel comfortable and lay eggs properly, you'll really want to make sure you're choosing your size wisely.

It's always better to error on the size of being too big than being too small, plus then you can always add more birds to the chicken coop if you want later on.

Portable Versus Fixed

The next question you should ask yourself is whether you want your chicken coop to be portable or if you preferred one that's fixed instead. Portable chicken coops give you the advantage of being able to move it around to wherever you are, so if you're someone who likes to keep the chickens as pets, this makes for a very attractive option.

Also, having a mobile chicken coop allows for easier maintenance since you can simply move the chicken coop to wherever you need to clean it.

On the other hand, if you're looking for something with a little more structural integrity than you'll

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likely be better off choosing a fixed chicken house since these will be built sturdier so that they are able to withstand wear and tear.

Protection

Factor in protection from predators as you make your decision what type of chicken coop to make as well. Ideally you should have a very solid fencing system to keep all varieties of predators out. This will have to be built to match the size of the coop you're building as well.

Appearance

Finally, think about the overall appearance of what you want your chicken coop to look like. There are a number of different ways you can build the chicken coop which will impact the overall design of the chicken coop. This will also likely influence the cost of the building process, so it's something to think about and work within your budget.

There are definitely cheaper methods to build your chicken coop so understanding the different things that will influence the cost is the first step to making a smart decision.

So, be sure you're factoring these points in as you decide which type of chicken coop you wish to build. Getting the information up front before you start to build will help save you hundreds of dollars over the long run.

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Keeping Your Costs Down

Next I'd like to talk a little more specifically about the building materials for your chicken coop. This is going to make a big impact on how much money you spend on the chicken coop in total so understanding the different types of materials will be vital to making an informed decision.

This is covered in much greater detail in the guide [Building A Chicken Coop](http://ChickenCoopPlans.iqbanq.com) (<http://ChickenCoopPlans.iqbanq.com>), but here is some of the basics to get you started.

Many individuals do have a tendency to think you need a lot of expensive materials to successfully build a chicken coop, however this is not the case at all. Chicken coops can be made from a variety of different materials including such things as an old shed, scrap lumber, PVC pipes, 50 gallon barrels, or other recycled materials you may have around the house already.

Usually wood is the most common material used to build the chicken coop however it's also the priciest, so you'll have to weight the pros versus the cons. If you want your chicken coop to last for years and years to come, it may be a good idea to invest in a wooden coop to ensure that it does withstand various climate changes.

Keep in mind with this though that wood varieties will also vary in price and that will influence your decision, so looking at the different types of wood is also important.

If you are thinking about just building a smaller coop, you might even be able to get away with using recycled timber instead. Asking around for scrap pieces of wood can also be one way to locate some materials to use, but bear in mind if you're going to go this route there is a higher chance you'll have to pull some nails and may wind up with a chicken coop that isn't exactly matching. If you're really looking for the absolute most cost effective method though, then it's likely something that you will want to think about and consider.

Many times you can save over half the price of the coop just by looking carefully for building materials that will meet your needs effectively.

So, before you rush out to buy whatever you think you need for building supplies, give some careful consideration to this first. It's important that you have a firm understanding about building

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materials for your chicken house before you even get going. In some cases it can get hard to start with a certain type of material and then switch over halfway through, even between the different types of woods, therefore getting it all figured out before you begin will be your best bet.

In the next step, we'll take a closer look at what you can do to make sure you're building a chicken coop that will last for years to come, so make sure you pay attention to that one so the money you do invest, endures the test of time.

How To Build A Coop That Will Last

Now that we've covered the types of chicken coops you can build and the different building supplies that you should think about, it's time to look at what you should be doing in order to maintain the structural integrity of your chicken coop.

One problem that many people do run into is that they build their chicken coop and do a decent job at it, but the only problem is that the way they have built it does not stand up over the long run.

Gaining a better understanding of the construction process and exactly what's needed to build a coop that lasts and will ensure that the money you spend is worth it.

Proper Landscaping

Before starting to build the coop, you need to make sure the land you want to build on is level and landscaped properly. You have two options here, you can either landscape an area of land that you really want to build the chicken coop on or you can look for a piece of land that will already work well to build on without having to landscape at all.

The latter option is going to be cheaper than the former, but again this will come down to your personal preference.

By doing this first though, you'll build a chicken coop that lasts for a longer period of time since it'll have a more sturdy foundation that you built it upon.

Spend Money On The Base Structure

Next, one area that you will want to invest a little more on is the structural base. In the building plans you'll see exactly what types of materials are going to be best for this so it makes the decision easy.

Choosing to forgo and opt for very cheap building materials here could come back to haunt you in the long run. There are still definitely cheap options that you can certainly consider and that will work well, but there still are limits. Knowing which cost-effective materials stand the test of time will help.

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Make Good Use of Windows

Windows are a critical element within the chicken coop because they are going to allow for enough light so your chickens continue to lay eggs as they should. When they are not getting enough light, that's when you're more likely to run into problems, so making use of windows in the coop not only helps ensure the chickens stay happy over the long haul, but can also reduce your building costs if you're using proper materials.

It's important that you consider the structural design with the windows though because placing them in the wrong position on the coop could cause the walls to be less sturdy, so again, having a proper plan to guide you is critical.

Choose Your Feeders Wisely

Finally, you should choose your feeder position wisely. When the feeders are at an incorrect height level the chickens will either not be able to get to their food comfortably, or they may start to scatter the food all around the floor.

When that happens they're bound to start picking at the floor and potentially other areas of the house, which could lead to damage over time. Don't underestimate a chicken's determination once they start picking!

By taking the time to properly plan your chicken coop so it lasts over the years you will prevent yourself from having to spend more money down the road fixing up issues that you run into.

Protecting Your Chickens

By now you should have some basic information on the ‘musts’ for building a chicken coop. This includes choosing the best type of coop for your preferences in the first place, choosing the correct materials that will enable you to keep costs down, and then how to build a chicken coop that will last for years to come.

All of these are vital so that you’re fully satisfied with the chicken house you build and don’t spend any more money than you absolutely have to.

Now it’s time to move on and take a look at what you must do in order to keep your chickens protected. Again this is a key element that must be taken care of if you want to keep your chickens for the long term because without protection, there is a very high chance that at some point or another, a predator is going to come around.

First you need to assess what potential predators you have in your area. This would include animals such as coyotes, foxes, larger dogs, or rodents that may try and dig underneath the fence and get into the coop in that manner.

If you have no idea what types of predators are present in your surrounding area, you may want to consult with your neighbours and check and see if they’ve ever encountered a predator. This will give you a more precise idea of exactly what you’re dealing with so you can take proper precautionary measures.

Location

It’s important that you also identify the best location to place your coop. As we’ve already discussed location is partially going to be determined by land forms already, but having the coop within a close distance (eye’s range is even better) will help you keep a closer eye on your chickens and ensure they are safe.

This is where having a mobile chicken coop comes in really handy since you can easily transport it to wherever you are going to be to really keep a watchful eye on them.

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Type of Fence

It's also vital that you factor in the type of fence that would be best to build with your chicken coop. Consider the type of predator you're looking at and then research the different types of fences that are available to choose the best fit.

As mentioned above, if you're going to encounter digging animals, it will be most important that you build the house low enough into the ground that it's difficult for them to burrow underneath it.

If you are looking at the possibility of larger predatory animals, then you're going to need a fence that's incredibly sturdy in order to keep them out effectively. This is why having a good guide to follow will help – it's vital that you pair your needs with the variety of fence. If you don't, you may think you're protecting your chickens, but you really haven't done much but added a bit of decoration to your chicken coop.

So be sure you're keeping fencing and protection in mind. You could build a perfect chicken coop, but if another animal decides to venture in, that perfect chicken coop could be no more.

Positioning Your Coop

The next topic is another very important one you must pay attention to because like the others, it will have a direct influence over how many eggs your chickens lay and therefore, how happy you are overall with the results of your chicken coop.

This topic is where you should be placing your chicken coop. Selecting the perfect spot on your yard to place your chicken coop will be important so that you're happy with it for years to come. Consider it from a variety of angles because many things are going to be impacted by where the coop is located.

Here are just a few to consider.

For Protection

First up you should think about predatory animals. If you didn't read the [chapter on protecting your chickens](#) this was talked about to a much greater depth, so you may want to go back and read that now. Basically, the general idea is that the closer you can place your chicken coop to where you are going to be, the easier it will be to keep an eye on the chicken coop.

Also, if you happen to have a very large farm, you may only have certain areas of your yard that encounter animals, so choosing to place the coop as far away from that would be a very smart move.

Climate

Another factor that needs to be considered with the location of your chicken coop is the climate. Do you live in a very hot area? Or do you get a lot of rain regularly? If you get rain frequently, you may consider building the chicken coop in an area that is more protected by nearby trees, helping to reduce the amount of direct rain that hits the house.

Also, if you do get a lot of rain, you'll want to build the coop away from an area of the yard where water typically runs, since if that happens, you're likely to have a flood chicken coop on your

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hands. And I can ensure you, neither you or your chickens will be very happy!

Finally, if it gets very windy where you live, this is another reason to consider building the chicken coop in an area that's near a decent amount of trees or other buildings to help shield the chickens from the wind. While you do definitely want good ventilation in the coop, you don't want gusts of wind on a regular basis.

Sunlight

Lastly, since your chickens are going to really require a good amount of natural sunlight in order to lay eggs effectively, try and build your chicken coop in an area that's well lit and faces the sun. You want to always maximize this otherwise you'll have to run electrical light to the chicken coop which can become a very costly venture over time.

So, keep these factors in mind as you go about deciding exactly where to place your chicken coop. If you do, you'll be happy with it for the long term and you'll definitely notice a big difference in the amount of fresh eggs you get daily.

Chicken Coop Accessories Ideas

After you've figured out the basics for constructing your actual chicken coop, then comes thinking about the accessories you can add to the coop to increase the chances of a high amount of fresh eggs every morning and enhance your chicken's comfort level.

There are a number of different accessories you can add to your chicken coop, and the decision of which you will add will be a personal preference. It's important to get the basics covered however since they will be vital for your coop's health.

Here are some of the main ones to consider.

Feeders

Choosing a good chicken feeder to include in your chicken coop will give them easy access to food to ensure they're eating properly. This will be important for their overall growth and egg development, so make sure you're building a good quality feeder.

Also look at the specific height you place the feeder in the house as this too can influence how comfortably they're able to get at their food.

Nesting Boxes

You can get chicken nesting boxes in a variety of different shapes and sizes and can build them out of many common materials you have around the house such as a large plastic pale or an old wooden box. You should use one nesting box for 2-4 hens that you have and they should be relatively dark inside.

It's also smart to build the top of the nesting box on a bit of an angle to discourage them from sleeping on top of the box.

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Waterier

Having a good chicken waterier inside the coop will help ensure your chickens have a good supply of fresh water on a regular basis. Again you can use many items you have right around the house to help cut down on the cost and make it more convenient for you.

If you are building a larger sized chicken coop it will be a good idea to include two wateriers if you can to give your chickens a bit more access to fresh water when they need it.

Perches

Finally, the last thing you should think about is adding a good chicken perch to your coop. This will help ensure your chickens are getting a comfortable night's sleep so they are better able to lay their eggs.

Like the waterier, be sure you're providing enough perches for the chickens so they don't have to fight for room. Also make sure your perches are wide enough to comfortably fit the chickens since as they grow they will likely need a bit more room to sleep comfortably.

So, keep these accessories in mind. You always want to make sure you're building your chicken house with enough room to add these accessories while still allowing for plenty of space to move around. Having an overcrowded chicken coop will severely limit the total eggs you produce so this isn't something to take lightly.

Maintaining Your Coop

Now that we've gone over a great deal of the information you need to successfully build a chicken coop, it's time to talk about one last factor, maintenance. Since you've put in a good effort getting your coop up and running, it would be a shame to let it start to disintegrate over time due to lack of care. Fortunately, maintaining and repairing a chicken coop isn't all that difficult provided you stay on top of things regularly.

Here are some of the main things you should know about.

Pay Attention To The Door

Since the door is one area of the coop that's going to be constantly moving as you go in and out to feed the chickens, it's something you'll want to watch and maintain regularly. If the latch is becoming loose, be sure you fix this immediately so your chickens don't find a way to escape out.

If you find that you're regularly having issues with it, you may want to consider either replacing the door altogether or else just finding a more secure latch and being sure it's bolted to the door properly.

Everyone will have their own preference when it comes to the opening door so figure out what works best for you.

Regularly Check Your Fence

Another aspect of the chicken house that should be monitored at least once a month is the structure of the fence. If you do have predators that come around frequently, they may attempt to get in which can impact the stableness of your fence, calling for some rebuilding if necessary.

Some fences are also quite prone to falling over after time, so walk around and test various areas of the fence to see how well it's standing up still.

Check The Feeders

Keeping a close eye on the feeders located in the chicken coop is also vital since these will be used on a daily basis. In some cases if the feeders are very beat up it could be a signal you should consider installing another one into the coop as the chickens may be constantly fighting over food and picking at the feeder.

You also want to watch how your chickens are responding to the feeder height. In some cases you'll get chickens who prefer a feeder to be slightly lower or higher than how you placed it, so adjusting this as time goes in is important for the overall comport of your chickens.

Usually it just needs to be adjusted an inch or two, but this makes a huge difference in how easily they can access their food.

So, don't neglect the maintenance of your chicken coop. If you decided to go with a mobile chicken coop you'll find that maintenance does tend to be quite a bit easier since you can just move the coop to wherever you need it to preform repairs. If you didn't, than that just means regularly planning maintenance into your weekly or monthly schedule as you see fit.

The Next Step

Now that you have a rich understanding of what you need to do to build a chicken coop, protect and care for your birds, and maintain their home it is time to get out the hammer.

As I have said before building a chicken coop is not hard. If you can tackle simple household projects and know how to use your tools without loosing your fingers you can build a chicken coop. Another important aspect of any project is your access to the building plans. You wouldn't try and build a house without blue prints and you shouldn't build a chicken coop without them either.

[Here is a set of complete plans](http://ChickenCoopPlans.iqbanq.com) (<http://ChickenCoopPlans.iqbanq.com>) that cover just about every style of chicken coop you could possibly imagine. They also go into much more detail about selecting, raising and caring for your birds once you've built the coop.

A final consideration. If you decide to wing it (no pun intended) and build your chicken coop

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without the plans you run the risk of threatening your chicken's lives. Ammonia and carbon dioxide buildup can be deadly if your chicken coop isn't properly designed and ventilated.

If on the other hand your chicken coop is too well ventilated your chickens may run the risk of getting too much wind. Both of these scenarios would lead to health problems for your birds and negatively impact the egg production.

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