

# How to Keep Chickens in a City

Three Parts: [Creating a Habitat](#) [Caring for Your Chickens](#) [Dealing with City Issues](#)

## Part 1

### Creating a Habitat



## 1

**Buy a chicken coop.** Unless you have extensive experience with building structures, you should buy a chicken coop. A coop is a vital structure for your chicken's health, so purchase a coop built by professionals. A coop can be built over dirt or grass in your backyard.<sup>[1]</sup>

- Chickens need three to four feet of space each. If you're short on space, you should only keep one to two chickens.<sup>[2]</sup>



## 2

**Create a run.** Chickens need adequate space to run outside of the coop. Make sure you provide a fenced in area for your chickens to get plenty of sunshine and exercise. If you only have a small backyard, stick to only one to two chickens. You need at least four square feet per chicken in your run.<sup>[3]</sup>

- Make sure the fence you put up is free of any cracks or gaps where a chicken could slip through. There are a lot of hazards in the city, such as cars, your chicken needs protection from.



## 3

**Provide a roost.** A roost is an area two feet off the ground. You should use a wide bar or a plank of wood as your roost. A roost is important to chickens, as it allows them to sit slightly off the ground. This can help protect them when the ground gets wet.<sup>[4]</sup>



## 4

**Add a nest.** Chickens need a nest to lay their eggs. You should have several boxes around the coop about the size of a shoebox. The chicken should be able to fit inside the box comfortably.<sup>[5]</sup>

- You should avoid pairing hens and roosters together in the city. Due to limited space, you do not want your hens laying fertilized eggs. It's best only to use eggs for food.



## 5

**Make a space for food and water.** You need to area for chickens to eat and drink in their coop. You can purchase a chicken feeder online or at a local hardware store. The feeder can stand on its own or be hung in the coop. You should have another similar container to hold water.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Part 2

## Caring for Your Chickens



## 1

**Provide enough chicken food.** You can buy chicken feed online or at a local store that sells livestock supplies. Chickens usually eat about half a cup of feed per day. Each day, measure out enough feed for all your chickens and place it in the feeder. For example, if you have three chickens, give them 1.5 cups of chicken feed.<sup>[7]</sup>



## 2

**Add grit.** Grit helps with digestion and provides extra calcium. You can buy grit online or at a local livestock supply store. Keep a small dish of grit in the coop at all times. Chickens will self regulate how to eat grit, and will do so when they need to digest food or lay eggs.<sup>[8]</sup>



## 3

**Feed them table scraps.** You should also supplement a chicken's diet with table scraps. These provide adequate vitamins and minerals that are necessary for your

chicken's health. Leftover fruits, vegetables, and grains are great for a chicken's health.<sup>[9]</sup>

- While most table scraps are safe for a chicken, there are certain foods you should not feed your chicken. Do not feed your chicken: raw potatoes, rotting food, peanuts, dried beans, chocolate, junk food (chips, candy, etc.), eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, avocados, or raw meat.<sup>[10]</sup>



## 4

**Provide water.** You should make sure the water container is full and free of debris each time you check on your chickens. Add more water as needed or replace water that's been contaminated. Chickens usually drink between 1.5 and 2.5 cups of water per day.<sup>[11]</sup>



## 5

**Remove eggs regularly.** You should check nests every night for eggs. If your hens are cackling loudly overnight, this is a sign they are laying eggs. Remove eggs in the morning. If any eggs have broken, you should remove any shells and yolk.<sup>[12]</sup>

- Prior to eating your eggs, wash them. You can wipe eggs with a dry cloth, but if you notice any manure use a wet cloth to wipe down eggs. Use warm water to wipe down eggs, as cold water can make eggs shrink.
- You should let eggs air dry before storing them in cartons for use later.

### Part 3

## Dealing with City Issues



# 1

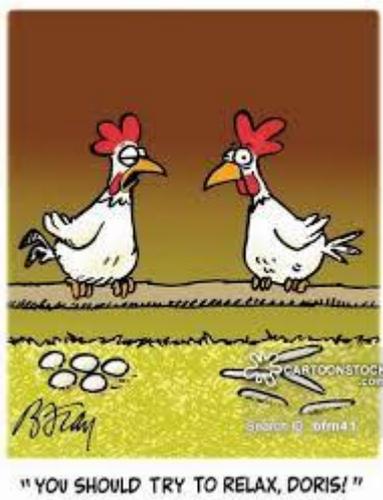
**Talk to your neighbors first.** It's a good idea to talk things over with your neighbors before getting chickens. This is especially important if you live in area where houses are close together. Your neighbors may have some concerns, which you can talk over with them. You also do not want your neighbors to be alarmed by unusual noises coming from your home.<sup>[13]</sup>

- Say something to your neighbors like, "Just a head's up, but I'm planning on getting chickens. I just wanted to let you know so you can come to me with any questions or concerns."



## 2

**Check local regulations.** You can check regulations at a courthouse or on your city's government website. There may be different rules and regulations regarding keeping livestock. You may only be allowed a set number of chickens, or you may have to keep your chickens a certain distance from your home or your neighbor's home. Unfortunately, some cities may not allow you to house livestock at all, so you may not be able to keep chickens in your city.<sup>[14]</sup>



## 4

**Keep your chickens safe from rodents.** Rodents can be a major problem in the city and may attack chickens. If your city has a rat or other rodent problem, you need to keep your chickens safe. Sweep the coop daily and keep leftover food off the ground.<sup>[16]</sup>

- A solid fence outside the coop can also keep your chickens safe from predators.



## 5

**Watch for signs of disease.** In a city, chickens may develop illnesses due to things like smog and car exhaust. Some possible symptoms to look for indicating injury/illness/disease include things like coughing, wheezing, labored and breathing. Serious illnesses may be marked by things like warts/scabs, swollen joints, loss of feathers, a lack of appetite, and blood in the stool.<sup>[17]</sup>

- If any of your chickens are showing signs of disease, consult a livestock vet.