

The Ultimate Backyard Chicken Setup Guide

Raising backyard chickens is rewarding, but getting set up properly is **key to happy, healthy hens**. Use this checklist to ensure you have everything covered!

1. Choose the Right Chicken Coop

- ✓ **Size Matters** – 2-4 sq. ft. per bird inside, 8-10 sq. ft. in the run.
 - ✓ **Ventilation & Airflow** – Windows, vents, or wire panels to prevent moisture buildup.
 - ✓ **Nesting Boxes** – One box per 3-4 hens, lined with straw or wood shavings.
 - ✓ **Roosting Bars** – At least **8-12 inches of perch space per chicken**.
 - ✓ **Easy to Clean** – Removable trays, access doors, or droppings boards save time.
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2. Secure the Run & Predator-Proofing

- ✓ **Fencing**: ½-inch hardware cloth (not chicken wire) to keep predators out.
 - ✓ **Buried Wire**: Extend wire fencing **at least 12 inches underground** to stop digging predators.
 - ✓ **Covered Run**: A roof or netting protects from hawks and climbing predators.
 - ✓ **Automatic Door**: Helps secure the coop at night for added protection.
 - ✓ **Motion Sensor Lights & Decoys**: Deter raccoons, foxes, and owls.
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3. Choose the Best Feed & Watering System

- ✓ **Layer Feed**: Essential nutrients for egg-laying hens.
 - ✓ **Grit & Calcium**: Helps digestion and strengthens eggshells.
 - ✓ **Fresh Water Supply**: Automatic waterers or hanging water systems work best.
 - ✓ **Treats & Scraps**: Mealworms, vegetables, and scratch grains (in moderation).
 - ✓ **DIY Fermented Feed**: Boosts gut health and nutrient absorption.
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4. Maintain a Clean & Healthy Coop

- ✓ **Deep Bedding Method**: Thick layers of pine shavings or straw absorb moisture.
- ✓ **Regular Cleaning**: Remove droppings and refresh bedding weekly.
- ✓ **Diatomaceous Earth**: Helps control mites and parasites naturally.

- ✓ **Herbs in Nesting Boxes:** Lavender, mint, and rosemary deter pests.
 - ✓ **Check for Illness:** Monitor for signs of respiratory issues or parasites.
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5. Plan for Egg Collection & Storage

- ✓ **Check Nesting Boxes Daily:** Prevents broken or dirty eggs.
 - ✓ **Egg Basket or Carton:** Store eggs at room temp (**unwashed**) or refrigerated (**washed**).
 - ✓ **Label & Rotate Stock:** Use the oldest eggs first.
 - ✓ **Water Float Test:** Fresh eggs sink, old eggs float—easy quality check!
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Final Thoughts

Starting a backyard flock requires **planning and care**, but once set up, your chickens will provide **fresh eggs, pest control, and endless entertainment!**

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