

How To Make Hens Lay More Eggs In The Summer

Unless you live in the far Northern United States (and sometimes even then), summer can be absolutely sweltering.

When temperatures soar to the high eighties or above, nobody really wants to do anything that doesn't involve a pool or river, a grill, and a cold drink. So it's no surprise your chickens may not lay as many eggs, either.

Let's take a minute to think about what summer means. Family time, fun-in-the-sun time, picnics, and grilling. That means deviled eggs, macaroni and potato salads, cupcakes, ice cream, and custard pies.

Well, you're gonna need eggs, so maybe we should talk about what it's going to take to keep your feathery ladies laying.

Chickens have a tough time when it gets hot for a couple of reasons. Obviously, they're wearing a feather-tick coat all year round. Also, they have a higher body temperature than we do, about 103 degrees, so they're more heat-sensitive than we are, and thus more prone to heat stroke. If you notice your hens becoming lethargic, or even worse, panting, they're overheated and you need to take care of that quickly.

Unfortunately, chickens don't come with instruction manuals, and there's a [learning curve](#), Fortunately, there are many ways that you can help your hens stay happy – and [happy hens](#) make yummy eggs.

[This golden days' practice will provide all you can eat food without buying from the supermarket!](#)

Water

Just like us, chickens need plenty of water in the summer – it takes ten ounces of water to make one egg. Par for the course, they're a little pickier about it than we are. They don't care for warm water and they won't come out of the shade to get it. Change out their water in the morning and the evening, and even at noon if you can and make sure that it's in the shade and readily accessible to your girls.

And just a tip – add a tablespoon or two of unpasteurized apple cider vinegar to their water. It has much of the same benefits for them as it does for us, and it also helps them retain calcium, which will make the eggshells stronger.

Bonus tip – have a couple back-up waterers and fill them halfway with water, then freeze it. When you're ready to use it, fill it up with water, and you're good to go – poof – ice water for the ladies.

Provide Shade for Your Chickens



Your girls will likely want to get out of the coop but they won't want to hang out in the sun for long.

Provide plenty of shady areas by using tarps or even the picnic tents. They'll appreciate it.

Oh, and if you have a barn and your girls are loose, don't be surprised to find them in there – it's cool and there's likely both grain and a place to take a dirt bath!

It's hen summer heaven!

Add a Fan to Keep Chickens Cool

Your coop is kind of tough – it's critical that it's warm and cozy in the winter, but it needs to be cool in the summer. Open up the vents and set up a fan so that it's blowing through and keeping a breeze going.

This will also help keep the coop ventilated and smelling a little less chicken-y. Even if your coop is cleaned well on a regular basis, it doesn't take long for the ammonia to smell in the heat.

Hose Down the Coop

Running cold hose water over the roof of the coop will help cool it down. You can use a mister, too.

Remember that chickens aren't fans of being wet. Shade such as trees is a good thing to keep in mind when you [build your coop](#) because it will help keep your coop cool in the summer and will shield it a bit from the weather in the summer.

Dirt Bath

Chickens love to roll around in the dirt – it's actually how they bathe. It keeps their skin and feathers clean and helps prevent parasites. [Diatomaceous earth](#) and sand make a great combination, so put it in the shade so that they can cool down while bathing.

Feed Your Hens Correctly

Just as with any other time of year, if you want your hens to lay, you have to adapt to meet their feeding needs in the summer.

Since they have a harder time maintaining their body temperatures that we do, we need to give them a little help by eliminating corn from their scratch. They need it in the summer because the extra energy helps keep them warm, but skip it in the summer.

Also, make sure that they have plenty of oyster shells or crushed egg shells and grit in addition to good quality layer feed. Make it as easy for them as you can. You [don't have to spend a fortune](#), but you do want to make sure they have what they need.

One tip – if your hens get fat, they may quit laying, so keep an eye out for that too.

ARE YOUR CHICKENS { READY TO } LAY EGGS?

Generally, young hens (pullets) begin laying between 16-24 weeks. 16 weeks is the time to switch them to a Nutrena® layer feed—laying hens need special nutrition!

YOUR CHICKEN CHECKLIST:



- ☒ Chickens are between 16-24 weeks old
- ☒ Pullets look full grown with clean, new feathers
- ☒ Combs and wattles are swollen and a deep red color
- ☒ Hen's pelvis bones will begin to separate

PRO TIP

Now's a good time to sprinkle oyster shell on the coop floor for hens to discover and eat for extra calcium.



CHICKENS LIKE PRIVACY!

It's important to have nest boxes in place before the first egg arrives (approx: 10-12" square by 18" deep). Provide one nest for every two hens, placed 1-3' off the floor. Line nests with straw, dried grass, wood chips or shredded paper to help keep the eggs clean.

28

Hours between chickens laying another egg.

THE TRUE TEST

Cradle the hen under your arm, facing backwards (hold its feet so it can't kick). Place your other hand gently under the hen's rear end. If the three prominent bones are close together, you've got a few more weeks. If they've separated, expect eggs soon!



For more info on raising chickens, check out: www.scoopfromthecoop.com

At Nutrena®, we take the guesswork out of feeding chickens. In fact, there's over 90 years of research in every bag. So dig in! Visit nutrenaworld.com



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Decrease Stress in Your Hens

We all know that hens can be a bit scattered and that they like things a certain way.

Summer is hot and it's a time when the kids, along with the neighbor kids, are outside playing, we may be doing more outside such as mowing the grass, barbequing, or just enjoying summer, and then of course it's hot. All of this amounts to a ton of stress for your hens.

And what happens when hens get stressed? That's right – they take it out on us by withholding our deviled eggs. Therefore, we need to make sure that we remove as many stressors as possible. Make sure their water is cool, try to keep the noise down in the yard, or at least keep them fenced off from it and give them a place to go (probably the coop) to relax.

Refreshing Treats and Scratch

Summer is a time for delicious salads, juicy melons, and barbeques. Don't leave the girls out! Throw them the leftovers – there's very little that humans eat that chickens can't. For some reason, people are often surprised that we throw the steak and burger scraps to them, but they do love meat, and will often choose it first.

And then there are the fruits and veggies – cucumbers and watermelon are two good ones, but leave them whole to keep the water in longer. Oh, and you can always freeze the scratch, too. Clean out your freezer. That frozen bag of green beans that's been in there forever? They'll love it!

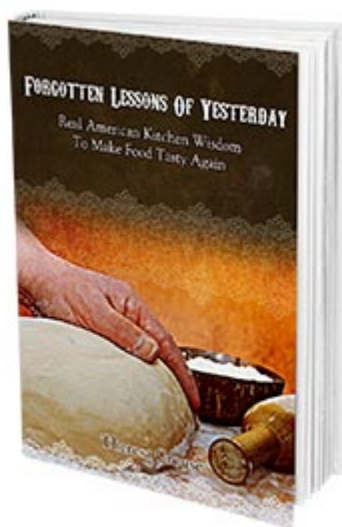
Choose the Right Breed

There are several breeds of chicken that are particularly suited to hot weather, and to cold for that matter, so do the

research on your area when you decide to [raise chickens](#).

It's natural for a chicken to lay in the spring and summer because that's when they're naturally reproducing, so until you get to late summer, Mother Nature is working in your favor. Still, summer does present numerous unique challenges for hens that aren't just free-range laying in the wild. That's why it's so important to take the steps necessary to the ladies happy!

Raising chickens is one simple way to provide the best, nutritious foods that will not only keep you healthy, but make your body strong and virtually bullet-proof against diseases or the toxic food that's being shoved down our throats. Take the chance to grow your own food instead of spending hundreds of dollars at the grocery store!



Click Here To Find Out!

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If you have any hints or tips to help hens lay in the summer, share it with us in the comments section below.

*This article has been written by **Theresa Crouse** for **Survivopedia**.*