

Happy Hens Lay More Eggs: 8 Tips To Happy Hens

Are you having [problems with egg production](#)? Do your hens seem to be rebelling against you? Well there may be a good reason for it. They may just need a bit of coddling (chicken style) to make them happy and increase their yield.

It's a known fact that happy, healthy chickens lay more eggs than ones who aren't so satisfied and today we're going to give you a few tips on how to make your hens happy so that they'll lay more eggs.

1. Don't forget that they're birds

It's easy to just put your chickens in a coop and leave them there but that's not how they were meant to be. Even though they've been domesticated since somebody realized that they tasted great with gravy and that they could lay something that had about a kazillion different delicious uses, chickens still have bird instincts.

They like to roam. They like to flap their wings and pretend they can fly. They like to scratch around looking for things to eat. If it's at all possible, let them roam. If you don't have that luxury, at least give them a coop big enough for them to stretch their wings.

2. Give them something to do

Bored chickens are unhappy chickens. Scratching around gives them something to do and it also helps boost their metabolism and keep them warm in the winter. Throw your hens in some leftover vegetable scraps or the weeds that you just pulled from your garden.

The ends of cabbage heads and wilted lettuce will give them

something to peck at and they will soon turn it into the dirt and manure in their coop, making it excellent compost. Corn cobs, whole melons or melon rinds make great scratch, too. Any kind of scraps will do, as long as their vegetables.

3. Let them forage

I know that this is a point of contention for some, but the entire time I was growing up, our chickens roamed the yard during the day and we fed them by tossing the feed out in handfuls onto the ground. It kept them busy and it was a more natural way for them to eat. If you can do that for them on a full-time basis, then great. If not, try to let them out for a bit in the evenings. When dark settles, they'll head back to the coop to roost for the night.



4. Build them a nice coop

Though an airtight coop with no breezes sounds like a warm, cozy, ideal chicken coop, it's actually not. You've likely been inside your coop when it was sweltering hot. If it's poorly ventilated, it was not only uncomfortably warm in there, it also smelled bad.

A coop with good ventilation will keep your hens comfortable and let air flow through so that disease-causing bacteria won't have as much chance to flourish. It will also help keep your coop dry so that it doesn't smell as bad. That helps with the bacteria growth, too.

Make sure that they each have a place to roost at night and provide plenty of nesting boxes – at least 1 for every 4 hens. Finally, if your chickens are in the pen all day, you should

ideally have 10 square feet per chicken.

Our coop has hinged doors on the sides with screen so that we can keep them open most of the time but close them up if there's a particularly cold, windy night. Our hens seem to appreciate it.

5. Give your girls a place to take a dirt bath

Chickens clean themselves and keep their skin and feathers in good condition by taking dirt baths. It also helps keep them free of mites and lice and they smell better. They'll roll around in it and work it all through their feathers. If your chickens are free-roaming, they will make a dirt bath in your favorite flower bed if you don't provide them with one.

Pick a spot for your hen spa and either dig a hole or find a container that's at least 12 inches deep and 24 inches across each direction. Fill it with sand and dirt. Some people use wood ash, which is fine if you have it. Others say to use diatomaceous earth, but I don't because it comes with a warning to wear a mask when using it. If I can't breathe it, I figure my chickens shouldn't either. If it comes right down to it, just sand will work.

A side benefit of a dirt bath is that it's hilarious to watch. Your hen will flop around in it, roll in it, and do all kinds of funny stuff.

6. Keep their lives stress-free

Stress is at the very top of the list when it comes to reduced egg production. Chickens don't like to be chased by kids or dogs. They don't care much for loud music or vehicles coming and going past them all the time. Predators in the coop terrify them and will keep them from producing. Just about anything that you consider stressful will be stressful for your girls, too. Keep their area quiet and safe.

If you bring home new hens, it will be a bit of a transition for them. They'll lay 2 or three eggs that were already in the making but then they may slack off for a few days or a week. It's normal. Just let them adjust and keep their environment calm and collected and they'll pick right back up where they left off.

7. Provide physical requirements for good laying



The happiest hen in the world won't lay many eggs if she isn't getting the nutrition, water or sunshine that she needs in order to lay. Give her plenty of good-quality feed as well as oyster shells or egg shells to peck at. Make sure your girls have plenty of CLEAN

water, readily available at all times. Hens also need 12-14 hours of sunlight per day in order to lay well. That may mean that you need to give them a light for a few hours in the winter time.

On the other hand, your ladies need a break sometimes. Laying eggs is hard work so if you'd like to give them a bit of rest and relaxation, skip the extra light. They'll still lay, but production will go down by 1/3 or even 1/2. It's up to you to determine [how many eggs you need](#).

8. Don't think that you NEED a rooster

Unless you're hatching out more chickens, a rooster isn't going to add anything but commotion to your flock. If your egg production is down, buying a rooster isn't going to help matters any. If you do use a rooster so that you can hatch out chicks, be prepared to find homes (or gravy-related options) for roosters because you'll have plenty of new ones in every batch.

Keeping your hens healthy, happy and safe is the best way to

get the most from your girls. If you want to increase egg production, increase the happiness of your hens!

I'm sure that I didn't touch on everything in this article so if you have tips that you'd like to add, please share them with us in the comments section below. Until next time, may the cluck be with you.



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*This article has been written by **Theresa Crouse** for [Survivopedia](#).*