

The following is excerpted from:

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2013/05/03/raising-backyard-chickens>

Article by Robert Litt as told to Max Follmer. Robert and his wife, Hannah, are the authors of *A Chicken in Every Yard: The Urban Farm Store's Guide to Chicken Keeping*.

10 Essential Beginners' Tips for Raising Backyard Chickens

1. Check with your city or other municipality to make sure it's legal to raise chickens in your backyard.
2. Figure out if you've got the space. A minimum coop size is three feet, but you'll need an additional enclosed run of at least four feet by eight feet—although 10' X 10' is better!
3. Choose your chickens. Three birds is an ideal starter flock size. They're social and need to have company. Rhode Island Red, Barred Plymouth Rock, and the Americana are great for beginners.
4. Keep your pets away! Cats are only really a threat to baby chicks, but dogs are likely to be aggressive no matter how old your chickens get.
5. If you're starting with chicks, set up their space to brood. Baby chicks need a heat source of about 95 degrees, and will be inside for about six to eight weeks.
6. Fully grown chickens can stay outdoors year round, but will need additional heat if the temperature drops below about 15-20 degrees.
7. Mature chickens will start laying eggs at about six months—but laying is impacted by the seasons. Chickens that mature as the days are getting shorter may not start laying until early the following spring.
8. Day-to-day chores are minimal, but you'll need to:
 - a. clean out the coop about once every two months,
 - b. keep the chickens stocked with food and water every day, and
 - c. add a new layer of litter every week.
9. Always use hand sanitizers after handling chickens, and avoid bringing them near your mouth or face.
10. Never visit another coop and then walk back into yours—especially wearing the same shoes. You could spread diseases to your flock.

The KIEFER SUSTAINABLE KOOP

DESIGN: Papa John Kiefer

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE HENS?

- DRY GROUND, WITH 'SOFT SOIL' FOR SCRATCHING & BATHING.
- SPACE TO EXERCISE.
- 360° FRESH AIR CIRCULATION.
- ADEQUATE NATURAL LIGHT
- PROTECTION FROM WIND & RAIN
- SAFETY FROM PREDATORS AND RODENTS.
- HEALTHY FOOD FROM YOUR LOCAL FEED SUPPLIERS

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOUR FAMILY?

- NO SMELL.
- NO CLEANING
- NO CROWING. (Roosters not welcome, nor needed.)
- ORGANIC FRESH EGGS
- HEALTHY HENS
- READY TO USE COMPOST
- CHILDREN'S PLEASURE – (Feeding, gathering eggs, holding their pets)

Many local families are now 'Keeping Chickens', and realizing the gift of having a few hens in the backyard. Fresh eggs, Wow! A Sustainable Coop is important in providing a long term healthy living environment.

NOTES:

- Standard coop size, 6' X 8', which will house up to 8 hens.
- The natural ground within a standard coop is removed to a depth of 8", and replaced with 'soft soil'. Wire is placed around perimeter, both below and above ground level, to deter rodents, predators and provide air circulation.

REGISTER: Chicken Workshop: *Raise Your Own Chickens.*

NEXT WORKSHOPS: Jan./ Feb. 2015 in Lafayette

Contact: papa john kiefer. jhkiefer@comcast.net

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