

How to Break a Broody Chicken: Easy and Effective Ways

Has your hen become broody, won't leave her nest, won't eat anything, and stop laying eggs?

Breaking your hen's broodiness takes enormous effort and time, **but don't worry!**

This PDF shows the easy and effective ways to **break your broody chicken in 3 days** while prioritizing their health and getting them back into their laying cycle.

This will also cover **identifying a broody hen if you are a beginner**. Let's break it down to make it.

What is a Broody Hen and What Causes Broodiness?

To break a broody hen, you must first **understand what a broody chicken is** and why they act this way.

Broodiness is a **natural behavior** and **hormone change** in chickens, occurring at any time of the year, **especially in springtime**.

Broodiness makes hens sit on eggs and hatch them even if the eggs are infertile or nonexistent. It also prevents hens from laying eggs.

She'll stay in the nesting box, fluff up her feathers, and become aggressive if someone disturbs her.

So, what causes this broody behavior?

Hormonal changes **cause Broodiness**. When a hen is urged to hatch eggs, her body releases hormones **that prepare her for motherhood**.

It's like a switch flips on, and suddenly, **she feels her main job is sitting on eggs**. Isn't it amazing how nature works?

Broodiness behavior is a **positive trait**, as they can hatch chicks without artificial incubators.

Moreover, hen broodiness **seems to be contagious**. If one of your chickens becomes broody, all the other hens like to start.



How Do You Tell if a Hen is Broody?

Identifying a broody hen is **easy**, and anyone can tell if a hen is broody or not. But still, if anyone has an issue placing a broody chicken, here are the signs of a broody hen:

- **Sign 1:** A broody hen always wants to **sit on eggs** or stay in the nesting box.
- **Sign 2:** In this behavior, a hen will **fluff their feathers** when someone approaches her.
- **Sign 3:** The hen will **flatten herself** to cover all the eggs and the nesting box.
- **Sign 4:** They are **too aggressive** and protective when someone wants to be near them.
- **Sign 5:** A broody hen will **continuously cluck** (warning others) when leaving their nest.
- **Sign 6:** they don't leave their nest but just **release a huge, stinky broody poop**.
- **Sign 7:** A broody hen will have a **bare broody patch** on her breast.
- **Sign 8:** They will also **not be interested in eating and drinking**.
- **Sign 9:** These hens will **lose weight** due to their dedicated energy for hatching eggs.
- **Sign 10:** They will keep their **away from other** chickens.
- **Sign 11:** A broody hen will **stop laying** eggs.



Can You Stop/Break a Broody Hen?

Can you stop this momma behavior in your chickens? The answer is **yes, it is possible** to stop your chicken hen from going broody.

But it can undoubtedly take some time and patience. Moreover, you must **try different strategies** and methods and find what works best for you.

Is it Safe to Stop or Break a Broody Hen?

Breaking or stopping a hen's broodiness **seems like Cruelty** to chickens, **but this is not**, so feel free of these thoughts.

If done carefully, it is safe to break or stop a hen's broodiness, especially when they are sitting on unfertilized eggs or you don't want chicks.

It's often **beneficial for her and other flocks**, as they don't want to eat and drink and also disturb the order of eating, laying, pecking, etc of other chickens.

But **avoid methods** that can stress her, such as excessive handling, chasing, or isolating her in dark, cramped spaces.



How Do You Break a Broody Hen?

Finally, we are at the point of **how to break a broody chicken**; this process will require some effort, time, and different humane strategies or ways to do this job.

Let's dive deep into the most effective and best ways to break broodiness in hens:

- **Naturally Break Hen Broodiness**

There are **natural ways** to break a broody hen, yes, this is true. Some **herbal remedies and supplements** work in breaking broodiness.

Herbal remedies like **chamomile, lavender, and peppermint** can slow and calm the broody behavior of hens.

These remedies **balance her hormones** (prolactin) and disturb her broody behavior. You can use essential oils, tinctures, or add them to her food.

Likewise, **supplements can help break** this behavior. **Vitamin B6, iodine, and E** can regulate a hen's reproductive hormones.

This **reduces the chicken's desire to brood**. You can mix these supplements into her food or give them as treats.

Remember that natural remedies might not work for every hen or might not work effectively.

- **Removing The Hen From the Nesting Area**

As broody hens **always stay in their nesting box** or nesting area, you can disturb this behavior.

Frequently take the hen out of the nesting box or area, but carefully and gently.

You can leave the hen in another pen or coop, without a nesting box or a dark area, or go with other chickens.

Before taking her out of the nest, **protect yourself** with at least long-hand gloves and be prepared, as when you approach him, they will ruffle her feathers, aggressively attack you, and peck at you.

The **point is to distract her** from the nesting area, busy them in activities like foraging, dust baths, etc, or play with them.



- **Removing Eggs and Bedding From the Hen**

As hens become broody, they will **sit in a nesting box even if there are no eggs**, so how does egg removal from them work?

It does not work for all hens, but it **works for some**. Repeatedly removing eggs from some hens can break their broodiness.

Carefully **remove the eggs under** the chicken's seat with your hands. They may peck you and be angry at you, so prepare yourself.

If you can't see your stress and happiness, you can **convert the real eggs into fake ones**. Put something round like eggs, but not real eggs, like stones, golf balls, or counterfeit eggs.

But this works on some hens, not on all. Also, **fake eggs may prolong the hen's broody behavior**, so remember this.

Now, the hens are uncomfortable, but not entirely removing the bedding will disturb their broody behavior.

And it can help you break the broody cycle.

- **Distract Your Hen From Their Activities**

Broodstock want to stay in nesting and dark areas, so they do not drink or eat and are not interested in meeting with other flocks.

So we need to **distract her from these things** with activities that keep them busy.

Encourage her to forage, peck, dust bathe, leave her with other chickens, and more like these.

- **Lock Your Hen Out Of The Coop**

This is like jailing, which we will discuss later, but it is simpler and easier than that.

Broody hens are interested in their nesting and dark area, so **lock your hen out of the coop** or lock it to prevent an enterprising hen.

But make sure **to feed the other chickens** for laying or something else.

The **hen will also try to find other comfortable places** to sit or **hide**, or prevent the hen from accessing those places.

- **Jail Your Hen in a Confined Space**

Jail your chicken until their broody behavior breaks. Placing them in a possible, as broodyness, where they have no nesting areas, drowners, and worm areas, means we are **making the hen as bored and uncomfortable as they can**, as broodiness comes from a calm and comfortable environment.

A chicken **jail can be a cage or pen, an enclosed pen, or a small confined space**—what you use for jailing in a safe and stable place, away from the other flock.

The jail should also **provide plenty of airflow under and around** the chicken as she sits. Place it in a cool area.

Lastly, a hen should be placed in jail **with plenty of food and water, left for 3 days**, and always in good overall health.

You should continually be assessed, can **cage your hen for the whole day and night**, or just jail them for daytime and free her for nighttime, plus allow her to return with other chickens.

However, ensure that she is **blocked access to the nesting boxes** and that the daytime jailing or quarantine continues until the hen is no longer broody.

The main point of jailing your broody chicken is to **bore them and make them uncomfortable** as much as we can to disturb their broody cycle and behavior.

● **Give Your Hen a Cold Bath**

As we discussed before, the hormones that make broodiness in hens are more likely to be released in hot temperatures and cause the hen to become hot, so this can also tell us a way to break her broodiness.

Which is a Cold Bath or Coldness?

Cooling the broody hen is an **effective way** to break her broodiness. **The sooner you give a cold bath to a broody hen, the less time she will spend** being broody.

Remember, before cooling your broody hen, the **weather should be warm and sunny**, and you should cool down her chest and vent area.

Here is the step-by-step method to break hen broodiness with cool water:

- **Step 1:** Fill a **tub with cool water**, covering the hen's belly and chest. If you live in a cold region, use refreshing cool water instead of cold water.
- **Step 2:** Carefully **place the hen into the water**, making sure the water covers her chest and belly.
- **Step 3:** Leave the hen in the water **for a few minutes or 10-15 minutes**; this will interfere with their broody cycle.
- **Step 4:** **Remove the hen from the water and allow it to air dry naturally**, encouraging it to walk around.

- **Step 5:** Then **put the hen in a clean and well-ventilated coop** or open area away from the nesting box and dark places.
- **Step 6:** **Do this several times daily** until she is no longer broody, but ensure the weather is warm.

Continuously **monitor the broody hen's behavior**. Her broodiness will likely break once she stops sitting in the nesting box and resumes normal activities like foraging.

It is important to note that this practice is **not recommended in the winter months**. If you accidentally get her too wet, dry her off gently with a blow-dryer set to a comfortable temperature.

Conclusion:

Always remove your broody hen from the nesting area, remove eggs and bedding from the hen, distract your hen as much as you can, prevent the hen from entering the coop, jail your hen, and, lastly, if they are still broody, give them a cold bath.

How to Stop a Hen from Going Broody?

Stopping hens from broodiness is good if you want a regular supply of eggs or don't want to hatch chicks.

But how do you know that your hen is going broody?

When they become broody (not fully), there **are few signs to identify** their broodiness, so you need to observe their first or coming behaviors.

They will spend an unusual amount of time sitting in the nesting box, fluffing up their feathers, making growling noises, acting aggressively, and typically stopping laying eggs.

Now let's learn how to stop a hen from going broody once you notice that they are becoming broody:

- **Distract them** on time with any activity.
- **Busy them** with dust bath, playing, foraging, etc.
- **Collect eggs** twice or thrice daily; do not leave them in the nesting box.
- **Move the hen** to an open area or room where it can move freely.
- **Make their surroundings full of activities** to prevent boredom.
- **Don't leave them in one place** for a while, especially in a dark place.
- **Light their coop** and nesting box with artificial light to prevent darkness.
- **Regularly change the location** of the nesting box or add a new one.



11 Most Broody Chicken Breeds

Almost **all hens go through broodiness** behavior, but some chicken breeds are more prone to go broody.

So, if you want to avoid this behavior in your chickens and want them to lay, you need to **prevent these chicken breeds.**

Here are the 11 most broody chicken breeds:

- Silkies
- Cochins
- Buff Orpingtons
- Sussex
- Columbian Wyandottes
- Cornish
- Partridge Rocks
- Australorps
- Brahmas
- Buffs
- Buff Rocks

11 Chicken Breeds That Are Not Too Broody

As we discussed, some breeds easily go broody, so some chicken breeds **are not too broody**.

Here are the 11 chicken breeds that almost don't go broody:

- Crevecoeur
- Leghorns
- Hamburg
- Lakenvelder
- Minorca
- Polish
- Hybrid Production
- Rosecomb
- Sebright
- Sex link
- Sicilian Buttercup

Why Do Chickens Go Broody?



Broodiness is **natural** in chickens and can occur in almost all chickens.

Let's discuss the broodiness reasons:

- **Rise of Prolactin Hormones**

The first and foremost reason for chicken broodiness is hormones.

When hens are urged to sit on eggs and hatch them, their bodies release more prolactin hormones, preparing them for motherhood.

Prolactin hormones are produced in the hen's pituitary gland, located at the base of the brain, and are responsible for activating the maternal behaviors associated with broodiness.

These prolactin hormones often **rise with longer daylight hours**, so hens are more prone to broodiness in spring.

Other hormones, **like estrogen and progesterone**, help prepare hens for laying and hatching, but the main one is prolactin.

- **Role of Breeds**

While all hens can become broody, **some are closer to broodiness** behavior, as discussed earlier.

If a hen, such as a silkie, cochin, Orpington, etc., is more prone to this behavior, it can **easily become broody**.

On the other hand, some breeds are primarily for egg production, not for broodiness, such as leghorns, sexlink, polish, etc. These types of breeds are **rarely broody**.

- **Seasonal Changes**

Seasonal changes also influence broodiness in hens, like all animals. Almost all hens are more prone to broodiness in warmer months than in colder ones, especially in springtime.

When days are longer, temperatures are warmer, and there is a more abundant food supply, this time is **perfect for chicks' maintenance** and survival.

- **Environmental Factors**

Environmental factors also lead to broodiness, such as a quiet, safe, and secure area with nesting boxes.

The availability of eggs in nesting boxes, bedding materials, and the **overall feeling of safety** can encourage broodiness in your hen.

Likewise, if a hen **feels threatened or stressed**, she is **less likely to become broody**, as her instinct will shift towards self-preservation rather than nurturing.

How Long Do Hens Stay Broody?

Now, if your hens become broody and you don't want to disrupt their broodiness with any methods, and instead **choose to leave it as is**, they will naturally break their brooding on their own.

But how much time?

Commonly, a hen chicken **stays broody for about 3 weeks**, that's right—21 days is also the golden number for hatching.

This broodiness period might **continue for an additional week** or more. During this time, hens are more interested in sitting on eggs and less interested in leaving the nest, even for food.

One more thing to remember is that if a hen sits on unfertilized eggs, it may be broody **for 6 to 8 weeks** or even more unless you break its broodiness.



How a Broody Hen Can Affect Your Flock?

A broody hen can affect your flock; they significantly **impacts their friends**.

The first is when they become broody, they separate themselves from other flocks. This behavior stirs up in other chickens and also stresses and confuses them.

The second impact is that they also affect other flock pecking orders; a broody hen disrupts this order.

Third, a broody hen stops laying eggs, which can affect other chickens' egg-laying order.

Fourth, broodiness seems to be contagious. If one hen becomes broody, the other wants to hatch or sit on eggs.

Fifth, a broody chicken also becomes super protective and aggressive. She pecks other flocks for their nest.

Sixth, they are not interested in eating and drinking, which can affect their health.



Can a Hen Die by Broodiness?

Broodiness is **not a disease, and in fact, this is not an issue**. Chickens dying from broodiness are rare; no one in my flock dies from this natural thing.

However, hens are not interested in eating and drinking during broodiness, which **leads to dehydration, malnutrition, and weight loss**.

Moreover, due to the lack of movement, they can get **exhaustion** and **parasite infestations**, which can cause infections and further weaken the hen.

Also, when the hen starts laying again after broodiness, they sometimes has an issue called **egg binding**, which can be life-threatening.

Constant broodiness also **weakens hens**, making them more vulnerable to illnesses.

Last but not least, in extreme weather, a broody hen can **suffer from heatstroke** in hot climates or hypothermia in cold conditions, especially if she isn't eating and drinking enough.

These issues can weaken the hen and make them more prone to disease, which **may lead to death**.

So, ensure **she eats, drinks, and moves well** and regularly. Checking her health and parasites is also crucial. If necessary, intervene to break her broodiness.



Will a Broody Hen Stop Other Hens from Laying?

A broody hen **physically and directly can't stop** other hens from laying, but indirectly, they can interfere. **How?**

As broody chickens stay in the nesting box and don't leave them, this can **prevent other flocks from accessing the nesting box** and laying, discouraging egg laying.

Broody hens are super aggressive and fight, which can **cause stress and tension within other chicken** hens and interfere with their egg-laying.

A broody hen in the nesting box and coop can **lead some hens to avoid these areas** due to the broody's aggressive behavior, which may result in delayed egg-laying.

Should You Break a Broody Hen?

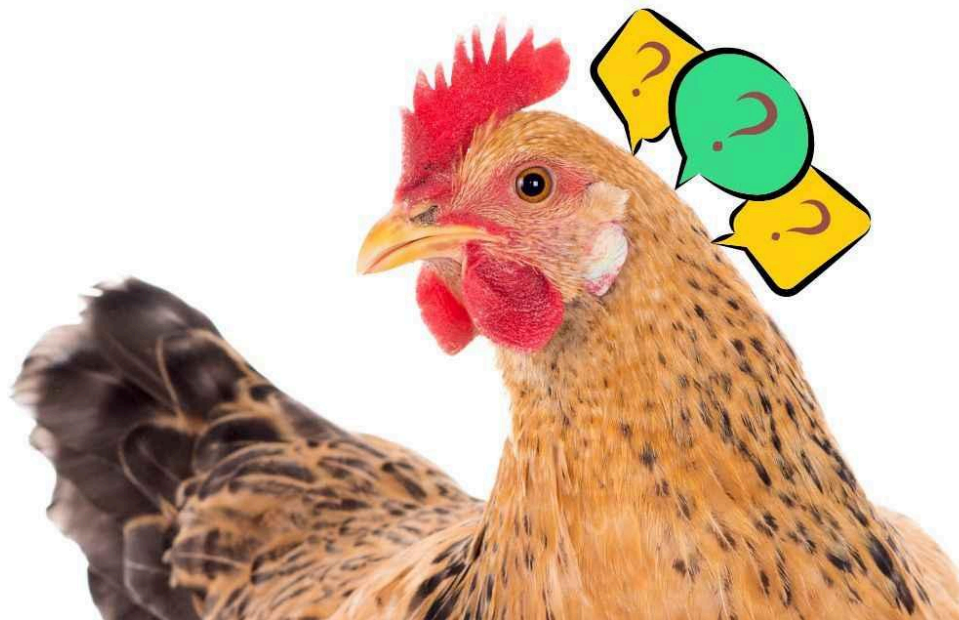
This **all depends on you** and your specific needs. If you want to continue the egg supply, break their broodiness. But if you wish to hatch chicks from eggs, don't break them.

Moreover, if they sit on unfertilized eggs or you don't want chicks, they will waste time and energy, so **break their broodiness**.

Additionally, **broody chickens neglect their health. They** don't eat, drink, or sit in one place for a prolonged time, leading to parasites, which is also a reason to break her broodiness.

Their behavior can disturb **other flocks from living comfortably**, which is another reason.

Finally, broodiness is natural, and if you don't want to intervene, after 20 to 30 days, their broody behavior will likely pass on its own.



Answers to Some Questions

What is broodiness in chickens?

Broodiness is when a hen wants to hatch eggs. She sits on a nest often and gets upset if you bother her.

How do I know if my hen is broody?

Look for signs that she won't leave the nest. She might also puff up and get mad if you try to move her.

How can I prevent broodiness in my chicken flock?

To prevent broodiness, ensure enough nesting boxes, control the light, and remove eggs from nests often.

How long should you leave a broody hen in a cage?

She typically must stay in a "broody breaker" cage for about 3 to 5 days. The exact duration depends on how stubborn the broody behavior is.

How long does it take to break a broody chicken?

Breaking a broody chicken typically takes 3 to 7 days, depending on the chicken's temperament and method.

How do you reset a broody hen?

Methods include cooling her down with a broody breaker cage, removing her access to nesting areas, and ensuring she spends time in an environment that distracts her from sitting. Once her behavior returns to normal, she can be reintroduced to the flock.

How to break a stubborn broody hen?

Breaking a stubborn broody hen requires patience and consistency:

Keep her in a wire-bottom cage for 3 to 5 days to cool her down and disrupt her nesting instincts. Completely block off the nesting boxes to prevent her from returning.

Cooling her body temperature by increasing airflow around her or even dipping her in cool water (if the weather permits) can help.

How to break a broody Silkie hen?

Silkie hens are known for their strong broody tendencies, and breaking them can be a challenge:

A broody breaker cage is good for them. Use a wire-bottom cage for 3 to 7 days to cool her down and prevent her from nesting. Ensure she cannot access soft bedding or nesting boxes.

Silkies can be remarkably stubborn, so it may take longer to break the cycle, or she may go broody again soon after breaking.

Why do I need to break a broody hen?

If a hen stays broody too long, it hurts her egg-laying. It's key to get her back to laying eggs.

What are some gentle ways to break a broody chicken?

You can gently move her from the nest. Give her a special coop or cage. Water can also help break the broodiness.

Can I use natural remedies to break a broody hen?

Yes, herbal remedies and supplements can help softly. They're good to try before more serious steps.

Final Thoughts

In conclusion, breaking your chicken broodiness takes time and effort, but these practical ways can take almost 3 days and little effort.

Our **main goal is to help your hen return to laying eggs** while staying healthy and happy.

I hope this PDF helps you control your hen's broodiness. Please share it with your fellow chicken keepers to help them.