

With Spring around the corner, what better opportunity to lay your own eggs? Well of course – not literally!

With the help of my not so little brother, here's how. Keeping hens is a bit like baking a cake – miss out an ingredient and it will be a flop!

1. Select a suitable **chicken coop**.

This needs to be weatherproof, but with plenty of ventilation, spacious and fox-proof. This could be an old garden shed, a chicken run, or you could make your own. You'll also need to fence them an enclosure so they can't escape onto roads, or into the flower beds.



2. Get the **equipment and feed**.

This can be bought from a local agricultural supplier such as Whitaker's Animal Feeds, or Haworth Pet Supplies is one to try. You'll need: water drinker, feed tray, vermin proof grain bin and a bag of layer's pellets. A bag of pellets costs around £10 and will last 5 hens about a month (by my brother's reckoning).



3. Get the **livestock**.

Local livestock auctions do a quarterly feather sale, where you can purchase all breeds, sizes and colours of hens. I'd recommend you start with a bantam that's relatively easy to look after – a Light Sussex. Identified by their white plumage with black tipped feathers. These are generally good layers and



make good pets. They cost around £10-15 each depending on the sale. Four female hens will be a nice group size.

4. Introduce your hens to their new home.

They will need a constant supply of fresh water, a perch to roost on and a cosy corner to nest and lay their eggs in. Bedding them up with sawdust or straw is ideal. Let them roam around outside during the day, and lock them up at night. Feed them morning and night – you'll soon have names for them all. My hens used to know it was bedtime as I whistled and they came running!!

5. Cockerels.

The male of the species, and just like humans, the noisiest! In all seriousness, consider carefully before you buy a male as the WILL cock-a-doodle-do at the break of dawn – so consider your neighbours! The whole idea of having a cockerel is that he 'treads' the hens and fertilises the eggs. If the hen sits on them for 21 days and keeps them warm, you'll get chicks.

If you don't want to breed them, just collect the eggs daily. A cockerel is not necessary for egg production, only for breeding.

Have fun and enjoy keeping poultry.

TRUTH or MYTH?

Hens only lay 6 days a week??

True – they have 1 day a week off!!

Aireworth Vets

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Springtime at Aireworth Vets

Now the warmer weather is on the way, our pets can enjoy being outdoors more. Here are a few ideas about keeping your pets healthy and happy with the changing seasons:

- **Fleas** and other **parasites** become more active at this time of year, it's time to start regular treatment to control the pests. Remember the products that **Aireworth Vets** recommend are highly effective and can't be bought in shops.
- Keep those **vaccinations** up-to-date and if you're thinking of travelling abroad with your cat or dog this summer, or maybe using a kennels or cattery while you go on holiday—then your pets may need extra protection. Come and speak to one of our friendly Vets.
- More daylight encourages us all to take more exercise, **Aireworth Vets** stock a great range of toys, leads and collars. Our qualified Veterinary Nurses are happy to give advice about your cat's and dog's fitness.

Many routine preventative items like vaccinations and flea and worm treatments are covered by our **money saving Pet Health Plans**. You pay a fixed monthly direct debit to spread the cost of the regular things your cat or dog needs. **Pet Health Plan** members also benefit from a special 5% **discount** on our high quality range of Science Plan cat and dog food.

At Aireworth Vets, it's not just about cats and dogs....

Our smaller pets will also appreciate a good Spring clean, as the temperature rises consider moving your Rabbits and Guinea Pigs back out of doors.

SMALL ANIMAL 

EQUINE 

FARM ANIMAL 

Horses, Ponies and Donkeys will be enjoying the milder conditions too, so why not take advantage of our **Free Zone Visits** for routine equine health-care like vaccinations and dental checks.

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