

# The Bisley Birds Guide to Happy, Healthy Hens

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Welcome to the world of chicken keeping – we're so excited you've chosen to start your hen-keeping journey with us at Bisley Birds! Our hens are raised with love, care and proper attention, and we want yours to thrive in their new home too.

This guide covers everything from setting up, bringing your hens home, daily care, and keeping them healthy and happy long term.

## 1. Is Chicken Keeping Right for You?

Keeping chickens is rewarding and fun, but it comes with responsibilities. Ask yourself:

- Are you looking for pets, egg layers, or a bit of both?
- Do you have enough space in your garden for them to roam and stay clean and safe?
- Who will care for them when you're away?
- Are you prepared for weekly cleaning, daily checks, and seasonal challenges?

Start small – three hens are perfect for beginners. They provide plenty of eggs and are easier to manage.

## 2. Helping Your New Hens Settle In

Moving house is stressful for hens. Here's how to make it easier:

- Transport them calmly in a secure pet carrier or crate.
- Go straight home – avoid detours.
- Keep the car quiet and well ventilated.
- Place the crate in the run or coop and let them come out when ready.
- Lock them in safely at night.
- If joining an existing flock, introduce at dusk and provide extra food/water stations.
- Add multivitamins to water for the first week to support immunity.

## 3. The Golden Rules for Hen Health & Happiness

### Good Food & Plenty to Drink

- Access to fresh water, layers pellets, and grit.
- Extras like leafy greens, fruit, and homemade treat toys (like bottles with holes).

### Comfortable, Clean & Cosy

- Draft-free housing with perches and 1 sq m outdoor space per bird.

- • Dry areas using pallets or wood chips, shade in summer, shelter in rain.
- • Warm mash meals in winter and clean muddy feathers as needed.

### Healthy Hens Are Happy Hens

- • Secure, predator-proof housing and gentle handling.
- • Regular checks for illness, vaccinations, and parasite control.
- • Dry dust baths and safe storage of cleaning products.

### Let Them Be Chickens!

- • Worm your hens when needed – we use Verm-X as a natural preventative, but you can also get effective wormers from your vet.
- • Company of other hens, space to flap, scratch, sunbathe and lay eggs.
- • Nest boxes, perches, enrichment (mirrors, CDs, garden time, even a chicken swing!).

### Safe, Calm & Stress-Free

- • Secure coop, kind treatment, and calm environments.
- • Multiple feeders/drinkers to avoid bullying, and respectful interactions with pets and children.

## 4. What to Expect Day-to-Day

- Hens need daily checks for food, water, and general wellbeing.
- They'll squawk after laying – it's normal and means they're proud!
- Expect some pecking – it's how they establish the 'pecking order'. As long as there's no blood, let them get on with it.
- They should go to bed at dusk – avoid free-ranging until they reliably return to roost.
- Keep an eye on weather, parasites, and predators all year round.
- Coop cleaning is essential – once a week minimum, more in winter.

Keeping hens is a commitment, but they'll give back in eggs, entertainment and affection.

We're always here to help, whether you're after advice, supplies or just reassurance. Thank you for supporting Bisley Birds and giving your new flock the care they deserve.