

The Basic Coop



chicken coop construction plan

what's inside

Overview and precautions (read first!)	3
Tools and materials	5
Prep and cut	9
Sand and paint	23
Assemble the coop	26
Attach the roof	36
Build the nest box	45
Tips and suggestions	47

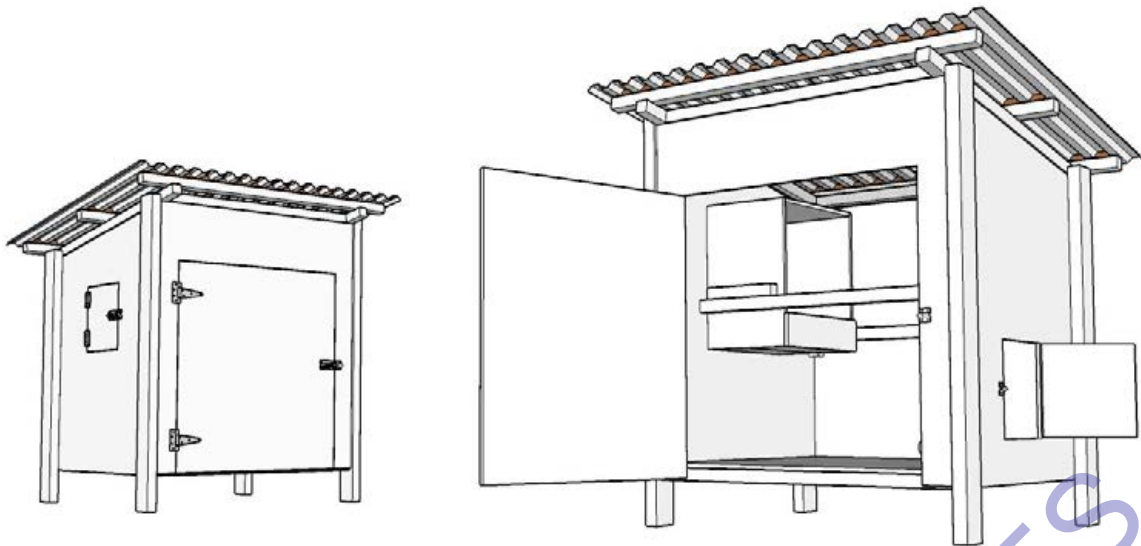
thank you!

Thank you for buying The Basic Coop chicken coop construction plan and for supporting my efforts. I know the plan will save you quite a bit of time, hassle — and money — while helping you keep your backyard chickens safe and healthy. More importantly, I hope it leads to a coop that you love and are proud of!



overview and precautions

THE BASIC COOP makes for a comfortable, attractive, affordable home for 3-4 standard hens. The walls and doors are made of plywood or plywood siding, and with the help of a few two-by-twos, a couple two-by-fours, and some screws, the whole coop comes together easily and solidly. Plywood is already a cost-effective material for a chicken coop, and this plan shows you how to get all you need out of just two sheets. The hen house is elevated off the ground on two-by-four legs. These boards actually serve triple duty — as legs, as part of the frame, and as trim for looks.



The front door gives broad, easy access for care and cleaning. Inside, the coop is outfitted with two roosts and a nest box (perfect for up to 4 hens). There is space for either hanging or setting a feeder and a waterer should you choose to keep those inside the coop. A hinged, latched pop door is your chickens' entry to their day yard or attached run. You can work this door manually or install a separate automatic door on a timer. Your birds simply hop the short distance to/from the ground, or you can fashion a ladder or step. There's a similar small door on the other side that opens to the back of the nest box for egg collection.

The “open air” ceiling above the henhouse is fully secured with hardware cloth. It provides plenty of ventilation for your hens and can be partially covered in the winter as needed. For looks, you could add a small window or vent in the front wall as well, but that's completely optional. A few inches above the open ceiling is the polycarbonate (translucent) roof which lets in some light while protecting the coop from rain, snow, heat, and UV rays. What's really cool is that one standard corrugated roofing panel is all you need for the job.

Those are the basics of The Basic Coop. It's a simple, economical design that sacrifices neither function nor looks. What's more, with four whole sides as your canvas, there's plenty of room for you to embellish with your own style, color, and designs!

Now some important notes and precautions. . .

prep and cut

④ Cutting out doors

EGG DOOR AND POP DOOR:

Follow the tips in the sidebar below for making a plunge cut with a circular saw. Use this technique, or a jigsaw if you prefer, to cut the egg door and pop door from the side panels. You can cut right on the lines that you marked, being careful not to extend those cuts beyond the corners that you've marked. Finish cutting the corners with a handsaw. Mark each door, including which side is up, so you can reattach it in the right place later.

Making plunge cuts with a circular saw



In the next couple of steps, you'll be making plunge cuts in plywood — that is, making cuts that do not start at the edge of the sheet. If this is your first time doing this with a circular saw, it's fairly simple.

Draw a line where you want to cut, position the saw blade over the line (or just to either side of it), tilt the saw forward (with the front of the base plate resting on the material), manually retract the blade guard, and power up the saw. *Note: If you use a jigsaw instead of a circular saw, you will have to drill a small starter hole to fit the blade into.*

Slowly lower the spinning blade into the wood. Once the saw base is flush with the wood, you can move the saw along the line to extend the cut. Take care to not remove the saw from the cut until the blade has stopped spinning or it may bind and split the wood or cause injury.

A circular blade won't cut all the way through the material at the end of each cut, and that's fine. It's better to finish your cuts with a handsaw than to have them extend too far.



assemble the coop

Steps in this section

- 1 Attach door hardware
- 2 Build side walls
- 3 Build floor
- 4 Join walls, floor, and roosts

1 Attach door hardware

To attach the hardware, lay your panels out on a flat surface, outer faces up. Working from above, position each door within the space from which it was cut so that there is an even gap on all sides.

Use ½” screws (13 mm). There’s no need to predrill the holes. Take care not to drive the screws in too hard or fast. There’s not much “bite” to work with on a short screw like this, and if you overspin them, they could strip the wood and lose their grab.

EGG DOOR AND POP DOOR:

- a. Starting with the egg door, decide if you’d like it to swing open to the left, right, up, or down. (On the coop shown in this plan, I have both small doors hinge open towards the back of the coop.)

On the hinged edge of the door, **attach a 2 ½” (64 mm) utility hinge** about ¾” (20 mm) from each corner.

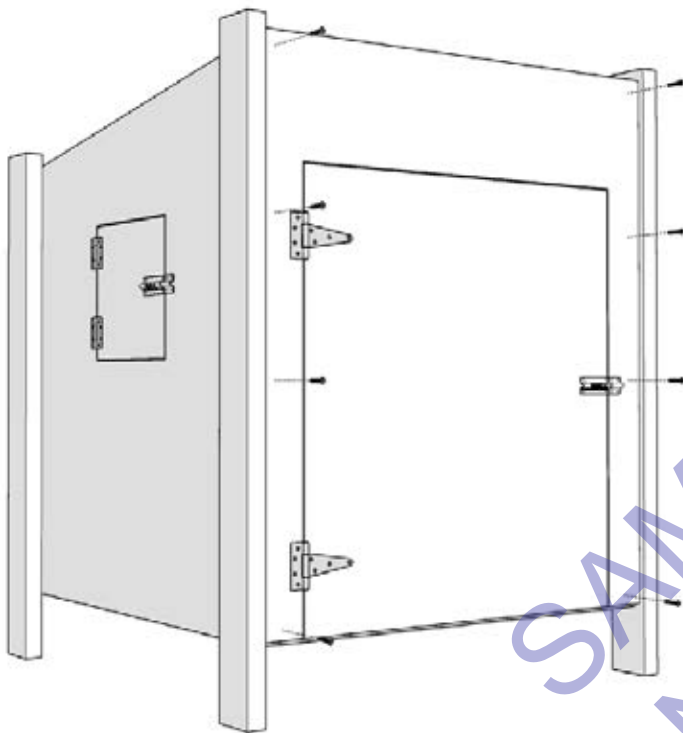
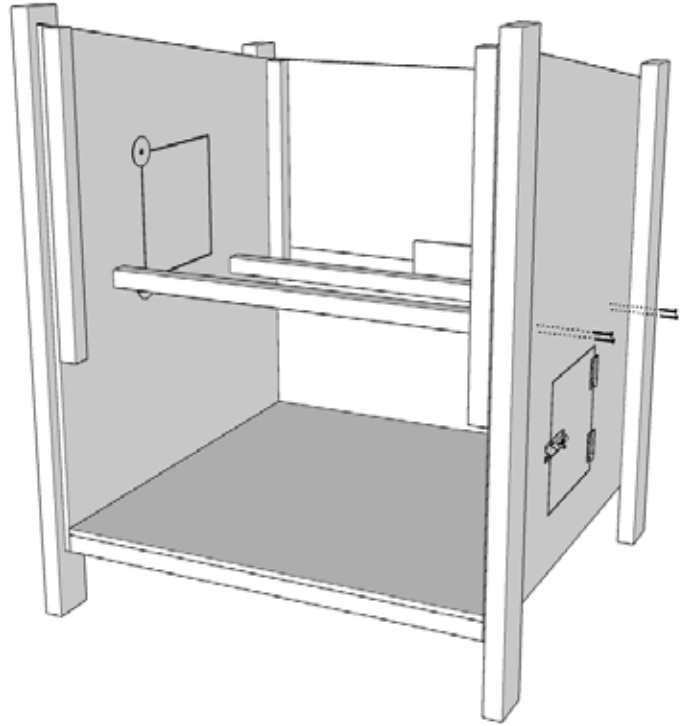
- b. **Attach a barrel bolt** (or other type of latch) in the center of the latching side. You can extend the bolt to help position the mechanism and the catch before attaching. Secure the latch, then carefully flip the panel over.



assemble the coop

f. Attach the roosts. From inside the coop, position the rear roost between the side walls, tucked into the L-shaped marks you made earlier on the side walls.

Have a helper hold the roost in place as you attach it, driving your screws from the outside of the wall through the holes you made earlier and into the roost. Move to the other side and attach it there as well. Attach the front roost in the same way.



g. Attach the front panel. Position the front panel so that the top edge is flush with the top edge of the plywood on the side walls. Driving through the plywood from the front, screw the panel to each front wall support in three or so spots and to the front floor support in one spot to each side of the front door.

Make sure that you retain an even gap around the edge of the front door so that it can swing freely. If your coop frame happens to narrow or flare at the top or bottom of the front wall, or if your plywood is not cut evenly and square, you may notice the front panel sides pushing in on the door. Adjust your assembly or trim pieces as needed to get the right fit.

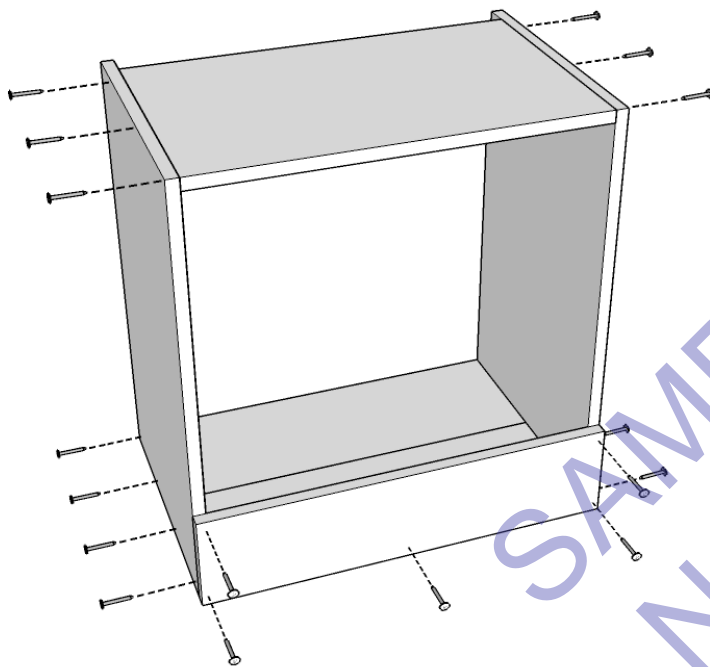
build the nest box

The **removable nest box** fits between the roosts in The Basic Coop. It is supported by blocks attached to either side that rest on the roosts.

The top and bottom panels attach between the side panels, flush to the top and bottom edges. The rear of the nest box is open for access through the egg door, but sits flush against the wall to hold bedding and eggs in. A lip holds things in at the front.

- a. Join top and sides.** Using 1 ¼" (30 mm) nails, connect the top panel to the left side panel. Nail the right side to the top in the same way.

Note: If you managed to cut a top piece that covers the nest box fully, that's great. But if you followed the cut list to make full use of the two plywood sheets, then your top piece will be 1" (25 mm) shorter front-to-back than the side panels. Position it flush to the front edge of the box.



- b. Attach front panel.** It should overlap the edges of the sides and be flush with the bottom.

- c. Attach bottom.** Attach the bottom panels (or panel, if you managed to cut it as one piece) just as you did the top. These fit in between the side panels.