

# Chicken Nesting – Why is My Hen Broody?

## Chicken Nesting and Broody Behavior in Your Flock



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hynnie was intent on chicken nesting or broodiness and wanted to hatch out the eggs. This was my first time dealing with a broody hen, who was following nature's call to chicken nesting.



*"One day I stopped to watch one of my hens gather up a clutch of eggs to sit on. It was interesting to watch as she methodically pulled each egg under her body using her feet and beak. Quiet determination at its best. I was so glad I had my camera with me. This is one of our Silver Laced Wyandotte hens."* When I first published these photos on the blog a few years ago, I was amazed that Whynnie went about her chicken nesting while I was standing there. But broody behavior is a strong urge for a hen and I guess she had to do what she had to do.

What makes some hens broody and other's never have a thought about sitting on a nest? The hormones that kick in when egg laying begins causes some hens to seek motherhood immediately, while other's never have this urge. Breaking the hen of the broody behavior may be necessary in some instances.

- 1 . You may not want anymore chicks in your coop
2. You don't have a rooster, so the eggs are not fertilized.
3. The hen is not healthy enough to go through a broody phase without further health decline. Some hens are not easy keepers, don't keep weight on well, or have other issues.

Setting on eggs for three weeks, only getting up once or twice a day, will lead to further health deterioration.

4. You want or need the eggs for food and do not want the chicken sitting on them. Also, while your hen is setting on eggs, she will not be laying any eggs.



Whynnie arranges her body over the eggs

Some breeds are more inclined to broodiness and chicken nesting than others. Cochins, Brahmas, Orpingtons and Silkie's have all been reported as being more likely to be broody than other breeds. In my flock, the Black Australorps are the most likely to be interested in chicken nesting.

In the case of Whynnie's attempt at chicken nesting, I did not want anymore chicks at that point. So I had to break her of the chicken nesting, broody urge.



only one egg peeking out!

## **Breaking a Broody Hen**

I took her off the nest of eggs and picked them up, removing them from the coop. The next day, Whynnie tried again. She continued to try chicken nesting for several days, and each day I picked her up and insisted she go out to play with everyone else. Finally, her urge to brood passed. Her life returned to "normal". The other hens were happy they could go

into the nest without Whynnie getting upset. During warm weather, some people will give the hen a cool shallow bath to sit in for a few minutes.

Whynnie was insistent that it was her time to attempt chicken nesting. She is still part of our flock and has never had another spell of persistent broodiness.





## Chicken Nesting

What Makes a Hen Turn Broody



How to  
break  
a broody  
hen