



Prideland Acres Coturnix Quail Hatching Guide

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1. Let the eggs **settle**, pointy side down, for about 12 hours.
(This helps with any shaking up occurred during transit)
2. Verify incubator temperature and humidity. Temperature should be **99.5** degrees plus or minus .5 degrees. Humidity should be between **40%-50%**. It is highly recommended that you get at least one reliable, back up thermometer/hygrometer to ensure accuracy in your incubator.
3. Place eggs into the incubator pointy side down. If not using quail rails (if using chicken-egg size trays) add a small piece of paper towel to each hole to keep the eggs in place. If hand turning, **turn at LEAST 3 times a day**.
4. **Day 1** is the day you place the eggs in the incubator. Do your best to NOT open the incubator during the first 14 days. If you wish to check for fertility/growth, it is suggested you do this when you go into lockdown. That way, you can discard any infertile/clear/blood-ringed eggs.
5. **On DAY 15** remove eggs from the turner (remove the turner) or stop turning and lay them on the incubator floor with a little space between each egg. Increase humidity to 65%-70%. (**IMPORTANT**). This is called "**lockdown**." We recommend you put soft, mesh "cupboard" or drawer liner on the floor of the incubator to reduce splay-leg issues.
6. Within the next 3 days, you should see some wiggling. Once they hatch, we suggest you leave them in the incubator to dry and fluff up for at LEAST 24 hours. *Please do not to open the incubator while any eggs are "pipping" in lockdown.* Sometimes an egg can pip and take 12-24 hours to hatch. This is normal. Let nature take its course and the babies will hatch on their own.
7. If you must open the incubator for ANY reason while eggs are hatching/pipping, use a spray bottle to gently spray a light mist of WARM, clean water over any eggs to reduce the likelihood of shrink-wrapping (when a baby gets stuck in an egg due to quick humidity changes).
8. Put the chicks in your brooder and offer them **warm** (not cold) water for their first drink. Food should be game-bird starter crumbles of 30% protein. They should not be started on poultry chick-starter since they *require* high protein to thrive.
9. **Congrats!!!** You're a quail parent now!

Quick FAQ:

Eggs hatch early: (Days 14-15) Temps are too high.

Eggs hatch late: (Days 20+) Temps are too low.

What temp will kill the eggs? 103° or anything lower than 98 degrees is not safe for your eggs. If your incubator gets that low or high, it could kill the eggs. I've had successful hatches with fluctuations between 98.5°-102°, but only when they occur for brief periods of time.

How long can a chick stay in the incubator? (AKA: It's screaming and I feel bad for it!) You can leave chicks in the incubator as their siblings are hatching for 24-48 hours (some people say 72, but I feel that's too long). Their chirps will encourage the other chicks to keep fighting and to hatch. If you have too many chicks running around, and they are disturbing the eggs or grabbing other chicks' toes, etc. you can quickly remove them if no other eggs are pipping, or mist other pipping eggs with warm water as mentioned above. Remove the fluffed chicks only. Leave any "sticky" looking chicks to fully dry.

How long do I wait between pips before I assume all the eggs are done hatching?

I usually give all eggs 48 hours after the 'final' hatching has emerged, just in case there are some late bloomers. Unfortunately, the later the hatch, the more likely the chicks will suffer deformities/health issues and may not survive.

How long does it take for a chick to hatch after "pipping?" Chicks can take 24 hours and even a few hours more to emerge after you notice the first crack in the egg. Please be patient. Hatching is hard work!

What do I feed the chicks? Quail chicks must be fed a 25-32% protein game bird starter. We have had the best outcomes with Purina Game Bird/Turkey Starter feed from Tractor Supply. Grind it briefly in a coffee grinder for the first 2-3 days for best absorption and edibility. Place it in an easy to access location for the first week, such as on the floor of the brooder or a paper towel. Protein can be reduced down to 18%-25% at about 5.5 weeks and calcium must be increased to a minimum of 2% to facilitate laying at the same time. Hens can lay as early as 6 weeks of age.

For water, use only a no-drown chick waterer or a regular chick waterer full of marbles to prevent drowning and chills/death. When you offer them water, start with room temperature or warm water, but never cold. This helps to reduce fatalities from shock.

GOOD LUCK!