



How to Build a Predator-Proof Chicken Coop & Run

Here's how to select and implement the right materials and the proper steps to maintain your chicken coop for the long-term security and safety of your flock.

✓ Use hardware cloth, not chicken wire

Chicken wire keeps chickens in, but it doesn't keep predators out. Replace it with ½" hardware cloth for walls, windows, and vents. This mesh is rigid, chew-resistant, and too small for most predators to reach through.

✓ Bury fencing to stop diggers

Predator proof fencing for chickens ensures protection from digging predators like coyotes and foxes. To deter them, extend hardware cloth or fencing at least 12 inches underground or bend it outward in an apron shape along the ground.

✓ Secure doors and windows with strong latches

Use locking latches that require two steps to open. Raccoons can open simple slide bolts or twist locks. Carabiners, spring-loaded eye hooks, or keyed locks are harder for animals to manipulate.

✓ Cover the top of your run

Use netting, hardware cloth, or welded wire to cover the run area and block aerial predators.

✓ Install motion-sensor lighting

Sudden lights can spook nighttime predators and give you time to respond. Mount motion-activated lights near coop entrances and around the perimeter.

✓ Build with solid materials

Thin plywood, loose boards, or plastic panels can warp or weaken over time. Use sturdy wood, metal sheeting, or prefab materials rated for outdoor use.

✓ Create a safe nighttime routine

Since most predators hunt at night, closing the coop at dusk is one of the best steps you can take.

- Lock birds inside a secure coop before nightfall every day.
- Count them each evening to spot missing or injured birds early.
- Invest in an automatic coop door system if you can't always be home by sunset.
- Keep food stored in rodent-proof containers to avoid attracting wildlife.