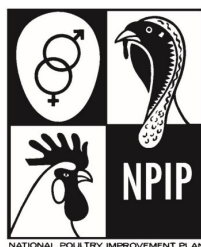




HATCHING & INCUBATION GUIDE

For Shipped Hatching Eggs

Practical tips and recommendations based on personal experience and successful hatch results.



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Introduction

Hatching shipped eggs can be rewarding, but it often comes with additional challenges. Temperature fluctuations, rough handling during transit, and varying environmental conditions can all impact hatch rates.

The methods outlined in this guide are based on what has worked best for me. Every incubator, environment, and flock is different, so use this information as a starting point and adjust as needed for your specific setup.

Important: *There are many successful approaches to incubation. Don't be discouraged if your results differ from someone else's experience.*



Preparing Your Incubator

Before Your Eggs Arrive

Proper preparation helps ensure stable incubation conditions from day one.

Recommended Setup

- ☑ Turn on your incubator **12–24 hours before setting eggs**
- ☑ Place a backup thermometer/hygrometer inside the incubator
- ☑ Verify that temperature and humidity readings are stable
- ☑ Allow the incubator to fully stabilize before eggs arrive

Equipment Recommendation

I use a Govee thermometer/hygrometer as a secondary monitor to verify incubator readings and receive alerts if conditions change unexpectedly.

Temperature & Humidity Targets

Stage	Temperature	Humidity
Days 1–18	99.5–100°F	Approximately 30%
Days 18–21 (Lockdown)	99.5–100°F	50–65%

Pro Tip

Ambient humidity in your home will determine how much water needs to be added to the incubator.

Some people successfully "dry hatch" by adding no water at all. In my experience, this works best when ambient humidity is naturally high and remains consistent throughout incubation.

Resting Shipped Eggs

Shipped eggs benefit from a rest period before incubation.

Recommended Procedure

1. Leave eggs in the shipping box or carefully transfer them to an egg carton.
2. Wash your hands before handling eggs.
3. Position eggs with the pointed end down.
4. Allow eggs to reach room temperature before setting.

Typical Resting Time

2–12 hours

The amount of time needed depends on weather conditions and how the eggs were shipped.

Exception

If eggs arrive during extremely hot weather or a heat wave, they may be placed directly into the incubator.

Sanitizing Hatching Eggs

Research has explored the use of hydrogen peroxide to reduce bacterial contamination on hatching eggs and potentially improve hatchability.

My Method

- ☑ Lightly mist eggs with **3% hydrogen peroxide**
- ☑ Allow eggs to air dry or gently pat dry with a microfiber cloth
- ☑ Handle eggs only with freshly washed hands

What I Do Not Do

- ✗ Wash hatching eggs
- ✗ Mist eggs prior to shipping them to customers

Candling

Candling helps monitor embryo development and identify potential issues.

When I Candle

Before Incubation

I candle every egg before it enters the incubator to check for:

- Hairline cracks
- Micro-cracks
- Shell defects

Minor cracks that are not leaking may be sealed with wax.

If a crack is severe or leaking, I typically do not incubate that egg.

During Incubation

Many guides recommend candling around Day 7 and again at lockdown.

For shipped eggs, I generally avoid additional handling and wait until lockdown unless there is a specific concern.

If you choose to candle during incubation, I recommend waiting until **Day 7–10**.

Dark-Shelled Eggs

If you're incubating dark eggs, invest in a quality candling light.

The built-in light on many incubators often does not provide enough brightness to see through darker shells.

If You're Unsure About an Egg

As long as an egg:

- ☉ Has no foul odor
- ☉ Shows no leakage or exudate

Consider leaving it in the incubator for the full hatch period.

Sometimes eggs surprise you.



Turning Eggs

Turning eggs helps prevent embryos from sticking to the shell membrane and promotes proper development.

Automatic Turners

Some hatchers recommend leaving turners off for the first several days after shipped eggs arrive.

My Experience

I begin turning shipped eggs immediately and have consistently achieved better hatch rates by doing so.

Ultimately, this decision is up to you, but starting from Day 1 is my recommendation.

Lockdown (Days 18–21)

Lockdown is the final stage of incubation before hatch.

Day 18 Checklist

- ☑ Candle all eggs
- ☑ Remove egg turners
- ☑ Increase humidity to 50–65%
- ☑ Position eggs on the incubator floor
- ☑ Stop turning eggs

Egg Position During Lockdown

I place eggs directly on their sides on the incubator floor. If the floor is not rubber/non-stick, I add rubber shelf liner for grip for the chicks.

Some hatchers prefer:

- Egg cartons
- Egg trays
- 3D-printed holders

I have not noticed a significant difference in hatch rates between methods.

During Lockdown

Keep the Incubator Closed

Once lockdown begins:

- Avoid opening the incubator unnecessarily
- Maintain stable humidity
- Maintain stable temperature

Frequent opening can cause humidity fluctuations that may affect hatch success.

After Chicks Hatch

Do not rush to remove chicks.

Wait Until Chicks Are:

- ☑ Completely dry
- ☑ Fluffy
- ☑ Active

Newly hatched chicks can remain in the incubator safely for 24–48 hours because they absorb the yolk sac immediately before hatch.

Assisting Chicks During Hatch

I rarely assist chicks out of the shell.

In my experience, issues requiring assistance are often related to developmental or genetic problems rather than hatch conditions.

One exception may be shrink-wrapping caused by humidity fluctuations.

Recommendation:

Before hatch day, take time to read about:

- Assisted hatching
- Shrink-wrapping
- Malposition in the egg
- Common hatch problems

There are many excellent tutorials and visual guides available online.

Final Tips & Troubleshooting

Emergency Preparedness

Power Backup

- ☑ Generator
- ☑ Battery backup
- ☑ Emergency power plan

Even short outages can impact hatch success if environmental conditions are not restored quickly.

Use Remote Monitoring

Configure your backup thermometer/hygrometer to send phone alerts for:

- High temperature
- Low temperature
- High humidity
- Low humidity

Catching problems early can save an entire hatch.

Consider Your Environment

My incubators are located in a cool basement.

To maintain stable conditions, I may:

- ☑ Wrap incubators with towels
- ☑ Run a small space heater during cooler months
- ☑ Use a humidifier when ambient humidity is low

Your needs may differ depending on your climate and incubator location.

Good luck and happy hatching!

The methods in this guide are based on personal experience and are intended as general recommendations. Results may vary depending on incubator model, egg quality, shipping conditions, and local environmental factors.