

# Poultry Quick Tips – Spraddle Legs

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## What is it?

Spraddle leg, or splay leg, is a deformity occurring in the chicken's legs. It is characterized by the feet pointing out to the sides, instead of forward. This limits mobility and makes walking nearly impossible. This deformity will be permanent if left uncorrected.



## Main Cause:

The main cause of spraddle leg is slick flooring/inadequate bedding causing chicks to lose their footing. The legs twist out from the hip and require intervention to correct.

## Other Possible Causes:

1. Temperature fluctuations during incubation
2. A difficult hatch
3. Leg/foot injury
4. Brooder overcrowding
5. Vitamin Deficiency

## Prevention:

Chicks need bedding that provides good traction for their tiny feet. Flat newspaper can be too slippery for them. Sprinkle shavings lightly over newspaper to provide better footing or consider using paper towel instead.

## Treatment:

If you notice a chick with spraddle leg, remove them from the group and treat them right away. Early intervention lends itself to a higher rate of success. If left untreated, these chicks often die from an inability to reach food and water. To treat spraddle leg, chicks must be hobbled to provide stability while the bones and muscles grow and strengthen in the correct position. Once corrective measures are established, chicks can learn to push up to stand and walk in less than a week.

## Chick Hobbles:

Chick hobbles can be made at home easily with a few common items.

### VetRap Method:

1. Using 1 inch width vet wrap cut a short piece off the roll and then cut that piece in half lengthwise (you should now have 2 long, skinny pieces).
2. Wrap one piece around each leg to create "anchors". Do not wrap too tightly.
3. Cut a 6 inch piece of VetRap and cut in half lengthwise. Using one of these pieces wrap the legs together at the anchor points so that the legs are positioned under the chick and slightly wider than normal stance.
4. Remove and adjust daily to assess the chick's progress.



### Hair Tie Method:

1. Retrieve 1 small hair tie and a ½ inch piece of drinking straw.
2. Slide hair tie into straw to create 2 loops on either side.
3. Slide chick's feet into loops
4. Remove and adjust daily to assess the chick's progress.

