



HIGH-FLYING FUN WITH...

THE LIFECYCLE OF A RACING PIGEON



COACH QUILL SAYS:

From the moment a racing pigeon hatches, it takes 28 days to reach adulthood.

Journey from Egg to Adulthood

Learn about a racing pigeon's journey from egg to adulthood by following the lifecycle chart below. Then, put your memory to the test with the Memory Challenge on page 2.

1
EGG



A racing pigeon hen (female) typically lays 2 white eggs a day apart. Once the eggs arrive, both the hen and cock (male) take turns incubating them.

The racing pigeon's lifespan will depend upon many factors, including predators, disease, and access to food and clean water. It's not uncommon for a healthy, nurtured racer to live for 15 years. Once the bird has reached adulthood, it's ready to begin training to race.

2
HATCHLING



If the eggs are fertilized, they will hatch 18-19 days later. The hatchling's body is covered with yellow down and its small wings are not ready for flight. Both the hen and cock produce crop milk and take turns feeding the newborns through regurgitation. After about 10 days, they start gradually mixing in grains. Around this time the cock does most of the feeding.



4
ADULT

At about 20 days old, the squab will start eating bird seed. By 25-28 days old, it will be ready to fledge (leave the nest) and start exploring the loft on its own. Its wings are not yet fully developed, so it can't fly, though it may try.



3
FLEDGLING



For more high-flying fun, visit: TeamHighFlyers.com



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Memory Challenge

How much do you remember about the racing pigeon's lifecycle from page 1? Find out by answering the questions below. Check your answers using the answer key at the bottom of the page.

1. How many eggs does a racing pigeon hen typically lay? _____
2. What color are racing pigeon eggs? _____
3. Who is responsible for incubating the eggs? _____
4. What's the name for a baby racing pigeon that has just hatched? _____
5. What covers a newly-hatched racing pigeon's body? _____
6. What do the hen and cock feed their newborns? _____
7. What verb describes a squab leaving the nest? _____
8. What does a fledgling eat? _____
9. Name one factor that impacts how long a racing pigeon will live. _____
10. At which stage of the lifecycle is the racing pigeon ready to begin training to race? _____