



Trap-Neuter-Return for Community Cats



••• THE BASICS •••

Follow these basic steps to improve the lives of community cats – also referred to as feral cats. You may feel nervous, but with our expert advice you can get to work improving cats' lives.

Set a feeding schedule

Feed the cats at the same time and place every day – usually for about 1-2 weeks. Use this same time when you are ready to trap. Withhold food for 24 hours before your trapping day. Always provide water. (Optional tip: Feed cats out of an unset trap if the area is safe and secure; the cats will acclimate to seeing and walking into them.)



Trap Humanely trap the cats in a colony.

Neuter Take the cats in their traps to a veterinarian or spay/neuter clinic to be sterilized, eartipped, and vaccinated.

Return Return the cats to their original colony site.

Arrange veterinary appointments

Before your trapping day, call and make reservations with a veterinarian or neuter clinic experienced with community cats. Let them know you may or may not be successful, so you may call to cancel your appointment.

Practice, practice, practice

Practice setting the traps ahead of time. Make sure they are operating properly and will be secure when sprung.

Prepare and set traps

Prepare traps away from the trap site so you do not disturb the cats. Line the bottom with newspaper. Place bait at the back of the trap, past the trip plate, and drizzle a trail of oil in a zigzag pattern leading to the front of the trap. Tag each trap with its location so you can return the cats to the same place later. Place the traps on level ground and set them. Never leave traps unattended. Watch from a distance where you won't intimidate the cats, but can see anyone approaching.



Care for the cats after surgery

Hold the cats overnight after their surgery in a temperature-controlled, safe location. While the cats are recovering from anesthesia, they are unable to regulate their body temperature. Provide food and water when the cats are awake by cautiously and slowly lifting the back door of the trap by a half inch and sliding in a plastic lid with food or water. Never open the door or put your hands inside the trap. A good rule of thumb is that cats can be returned 24 hours after surgery, once they're clear-eyed and alert. Talk to your veterinarian about when to return lactating mothers and other special cases.

Return the cats to their outdoor home

Return the cats to the location where they were trapped. Clean the traps with a non-toxic disinfectant.

• • • **THANK YOU** • • •

On behalf of the cats, you've done the right thing!