

RETURNING AND MANAGING

- **Return the cats to the trapping site.** The morning after surgery, cats can be released as long as they are bright eyed and alert. It is essential for the cats to be returned exactly to the site that they were found, as they are bonded with their surroundings and colony groups. Relocation should only be considered as a last resort.
- **Manage the colony.** Once every cat is spayed or neutered, the population will stabilize and decrease naturally over time. Manage the colony by providing daily food and water, keeping the area clean and discreet, and providing care as needed. If a new cat is discovered, immediately spay and neuter them to keep the population stabilized.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- **Kittens:** Keep kittens with mom until they are weaned. Kittens can be put through adoption or TNR depending on socialization level and available resources.
- **Nursing moms:** If the clinic discovers that a cat is nursing, she should be returned to the colony the same day after her surgery to ensure that the kittens are fed. She will still lactate once spayed.
- **Friendly cats:** If a foster home is available, friendly cats can be neutered and placed for adoption. If no foster home is available, they can go through a TNR program.
- **Sick or injured cats:** Ask your vet if they are able to treat feral cats, and make a plan for recovery space if needed. Euthanasia should only be considered as a last resort if the cat is hopelessly suffering.

Alley Cat Rescue is a 501c3 nonprofit organization committed to the protection of cats. Alley Cat Rescue saves cats' lives through direct rescue, Trap-Neuter-Return programs, affordable spay/neuter services, and nationally recognized advocacy efforts.

Learn more about Alley Cat Rescue at
www.saveacat.org.



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SAVING CATS' LIVES Through Trap-Neuter-Return:

A Step-By-Step Guide



ALLEY CAT RESCUE
AN ALLIANCE FOR CAT PROTECTION



Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is a humane and effective program for managing outdoor, free-roaming cat populations. Through TNR, community cats are spayed/neutered, vaccinated, eartipped, and returned to their outdoor home. Trapping cats for TNR is fun and easy — follow Alley Cat Rescue's step-by-step guide and start saving cats' lives.

PLANNING

- **Set a feeding schedule and count the number of cats.** With a regular feeding time each day, you can easily count exactly how many cats are there. Feed the cats at the same time, in the same place, every day.
- **Make an appointment with a vet.** Schedule an appointment with a feral-friendly vet for spay/neuter, vaccination, and eartipping.
- **Talk to neighbors.** Educate your neighborhood about TNR, and why and when you are doing it. Obtain permission to enter any property you'd like to trap on.
- **Gather supplies.** You will need bait, newspaper, traps, trap covers, and a tarp. Wet, aromatic foods like tuna in oil tend to make the best bait. Whenever possible, bring as many traps as there are cats, so that you can complete the trapping all in one day.

- **Don't feed the cats the day before trapping.**

Ensure that nobody feeds the cats for the 24 hours leading up to trapping. Fasting the cats for a day is a critical part of the plan, and ensures that they are hungry enough to go into the trap.



TRAPPING

- **Prepare your vehicle.** Line the bottom of the vehicle with a tarp to keep it clean when transporting cats. Be sure you are using a vehicle with enough space for each trap to lay flat, without stacking them on top of one another.
- **Prepare your holding and recovery area.** Pick a quiet, indoor space for the cats to be held in traps before and after surgery, such as a spare room or a garage. Ensure that the room is climate controlled at around 72 degrees, as cats cannot regulate body temperature when recovering from surgery.
- **Count the traps.** Put a label on each trap with your name and contact information. Ensure that you count exactly how many traps you put out, and ensure that you leave with the same amount.
- **Prepare the traps.** Line each trap with a layer of newspaper. Place 1-2 tablespoons of bait in the far back of the trap, behind the trip plate. Place a teaspoon or two of bait at the front of the trap, leading the cat in towards the back. Ensure that the back side of the trap is locked so that the cat cannot escape.
- **Set the traps and wait.** Place the trap on stable ground so that it does not shake when entered. Cover the trap halfway with a large towel or trap cover. Set the trip plate so that the door is propped open. Give the cats ample space and wait for them to enter the traps. Once the cats enter the traps, immediately cover the whole trap with the cover.

TREATING

- **Assess the cats.** Once you've trapped the cat, take a look at her to assess the situation. If the cat is already eartipped and looks healthy, she is free to go. If the cat is not eartipped, she will be part of your TNR effort. If you've found kittens, a friendly cat, or a sick or injured cat, follow our contingency plans.
- **Transport and hold overnight.** Load the cats into the car, ensuring that the traps are flat and stable, on top of a tarp, and are covered completely by a towel or cover. Once home, keep the cats in the traps, fully covered, in your recovery space.
- **Bring the cats to the vet clinic.** In the morning, transport the cats to the clinic and ensure that they are receiving the desired treatment. At a bare minimum, we recommend a spay/neuter, rabies vaccine, and eartip; a full package can also include an FVRCP vaccine, microchip, deworming, and flea treatment.
- **Hold overnight for recovery.** After surgery, hold the cats in your climate controlled recovery space overnight. Do not let the cats out of the traps. Monitor for any unusual signs such as bleeding, vomiting, or excessive drowsiness. Call your vet if you are concerned about their recovery.

This is an eartip!

