

Trapping Basics

For your safety, do not put your fingers into the trap at any time; always pick the trap up by the handle on top of the trap. Keep children and pets away from the cat at all times during the trapping and recovery process.

- The first step is to get the cat(s) used to being fed at the same place and time of day. Early morning or at dusk are the best times for trapping, but the cat will learn to come at whatever meal time you have set. **Consistency is important.**
- Plan to set the trap(s) and catch the cat(s) on the day before your clinic appointment. If the cat has been consistently eating in the trap each day, it is not necessary to withhold food. Use the regular food and feed at the regular time. **Never leave a trap set overnight**, and do not trap without a spay/neuter appointment scheduled.
- Do not “set” the trap or practice “trapping” the cat days before your scheduled appointment. It is much harder to trap the cat a second time. Be careful not to “set” the trap when training the cat to eat in the trap. (Refer to pre-baiting trap section).
- Do not trap in the rain or the heat of the day without adequate protection for the trap, and make sure you can be present. Use common sense.
- Prepare the area where you will be holding the cat(s) before and after their spay/neuter surgery. A garage, laundry room, bathroom, or other sheltered, warm, protected area is best. Lay down plastic sheeting or a tarp covered with newspapers to absorb any mess. You can use pieces of wood to elevate the trap off the newspaper to allow the mess to fall through and away from the cat. Prepare the vehicle you will use to transport the cat in the same way by using a tarp and newspaper.

Pre-Baiting the Trap

- Feeding the cat in the trap prior to setting the trap is called “pre-baiting.” This is a very important step in the trapping process. Optimally, you would pre-bait the traps for 3 consecutive days prior to trapping.
- Place the trap in the area where you normally feed the cat.
- If using an FCCO (Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon) double-door trap, remove the back door. For a one-door trap, securely wire or zip-tie the door into the open position.
- Feed the cat at a time when you will be available to monitor the trap.
- Place the food on a small paper or plastic dish at the far end of the trap so the cat has to go all the way into the trap. Be sure the cat does not have access to the food from outside of the trap. Do not put food anywhere other than inside the trap during this process.
- Use the cat’s regular food, but leave enough for the cat(s) you are intending to catch, and **pick up what is left after each meal**. Do not leave food in the trap all day or night; this will encourage animals that are not your targets, such as neighbor cats and wildlife.
- Once you start this pre-baiting process, **do not put any food outside the traps**; the cat is learning that it’s necessary and safe to go into the trap to eat. Several days of pre-baiting are ideal, but even one or two days will be helpful.

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Information provided courtesy of the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon

Preparing the Trap to be Set

- Line each trap with newspaper. A couple of sheets of the daily paper folded lengthwise make a perfect trap liner. This keeps the cat from having to walk on the wire and will help absorb any mess the cat makes while in the trap.
- Each trap must be covered with a towel or other piece of fabric large enough to completely cover the trap. **Keep the trap covered at all times.** This will reduce stress on the cat and keep him or her calm. Make sure you have a spay/neuter appointment on the following day, and have your holding recovery area and car prepared.

Setting the Trap

- On trapping day (the day before your appointment), set the trap just before the cat's normal feeding time. If trapping in a public area, try to place the trap where it will not be noticed by a passerby who may not understand what you are doing.
- **Replace the door to the trap and latch it.** To latch the trap door securely, place the hasp (oblong metal piece that is on the bottom of the trap door opening) over the piece of metal the latch goes through. Once the hasp is in place, place the latch through the metal piece, and make sure it is closed.
- To set the trap, open the trap door by pushing the top of the door in and pulling the bottom of the door upward. There is a small hook attached to one side of the trap top. It hooks onto a tiny metal cylinder on the right side of the door. The hook holds the door in an open position, which also raises the trip plate. When the cat steps on the plate, it will cause the hook to release the door and close the trap.
- Cover the trap with the towel, leaving both ends uncovered, and set it in the area where the cat eats.
- Make sure the trap is on solid, level ground. If necessary, use another towel under the trap to make sure it doesn't wobble.

Waiting for Success

- **Never leave a trap unattended.** The trapped animal is vulnerable and could get injured inside the trap, or a passerby could release the cat, steal the trap, or both.
- Wait quietly in an area where you can still see the trap without disturbing the cat, but not where the cat can see you. Your car or house window would work well. Check the trap every 15 to 30 minutes; you can usually hear the trap door closing. As soon as a cat is trapped, quickly cover the trap completely, and remove it from the area. When carrying the trap, always use the handle on top of the trap. Do not use the handle for the door in case it is not latched properly. If you are trapping multiple cats, repeat this process until all cats are trapped.
- When you get the captured cat to a quiet area away from other traps, lift the cover, and make sure you haven't trapped a pet or previously neutered feral (look for an ear tip). There is a chance of catching an unintended cat or a wild animal attracted to the food. Simply release the animal as described in the releasing instructions.

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Cats in Recovery

- When you pick up the cat(s) from the clinic, he/she will still be groggy from their anesthesia and may head bob, wobble, drool, shiver, have mild bleeding from the ear tip, and/or have mild swelling at the surgery site. This should resolve by the following morning.
- Keep the Post-Operative Instructions form that you receive when you pick up the cat. All of the information you need to know should be on this form. This form is also your medical record for the cat including all procedures performed that day.
 - Do not release any cats that are unable to walk or move.
 - Do NOT give aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol products, which are toxic to cats.
 - Release lactating females within 24 hours so they may return to their kittens.
 - Watch for excessive bleeding from the ear tip or surgical site, difficulty breathing, excessive grogginess, excessive swelling of the surgery site, or tissue hanging from the incision.
- Please call the clinic at 503-480-7729 or the Feral Cat Coalition at 503-931-2466 if the cat does not seem to be recovering well from surgery.
- **The cat will spend a night in the trap** in the area you have prepared for the recovery period and be **released the next day** in the same area where the cat was trapped. Make sure the cat is warm, dry, and draft-free during recovery from anesthesia. In the summer months, prevent the cat from overheating during this time.
- **Do not transfer the cat from the trap to a carrier. Cats actually do better in the trap, and it's cleaner for the cats as well.**
- Feed the cat the night you pick him or her up from surgery if the cat is sitting up and in the morning before release. Place a small amount of canned cat food (1/4 can) on a paper plate. Place the trap over the food so the cat can reach the food without you opening the door of the trap.
- Do not place a water dish in the trap; feeding canned food should provide the cat with enough water needed for the time while in the trap.
- Do not open the trap until the next morning when the cat is being released. Cats will try to escape out of small openings.
- It is best if the cat eats before he or she is released, but do not be concerned if the cat is not interested in the food. Sometimes cats are too scared and stressed to eat.
- All cats recovering from anesthesia are unpredictable and should be kept quiet. Even if this is a tame stray, **do not open the trap door or attempt to handle the cat.** This can have serious consequences such as the cat getting loose in unfamiliar territory, injury to the cat, or injury to you.
- If the cat does try to escape, do not try to grab him/her with your hands. Cats in this situation will not hesitate to bite or scratch.

Returning the Cat

- Do not relocate the cat to an area where he/she was not trapped. This is dangerous for the cat without the proper preparation.
- When ready to release the cat, turn the latched door away from you, unclip, and remove it, and let the cat go. For additional information, please call the Salem area Feral Cat Coalition at 503-931-2466

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cat run out.

- **NEVER PUT YOUR HAND IN THE TRAP.** If the cat does not go out immediately, walk away from the trap, and watch from a distance until the cat leaves the trap.

Cleaning and Returning the Trap

- Call the FCCO trap depot where you picked up the trap(s) to arrange a time to return by the date specified on your trap agreement.
- Remove and discard all stickers, tape, and newspaper.
- Use warm, soapy water and a scrub brush to remove all remaining debris. Rinse thoroughly several times with clean water.
- **Do NOT use bleach.** It is damaging to the trap, and bleach residue is dangerous for cats. All traps will be safely disinfected by FCCO volunteers before they are used again.
- Once the trap is returned clean and undamaged, your deposit will be returned to you.

General Precautions

- **Any bite or scratch should be taken seriously. Seek medical attention immediately. If possible, DO NOT RELEASE the cat. The cat must be quarantined. Contact Willamette Humane Society at 503-585-5900 for quarantine instructions.**