

Steps to TNR

1. How old do they need to be?

Most vets will spay/neuter kittens as young as 8 weeks old in order to end the homeless cycle. Cats can get pregnant at 4 months of age. For homeless cats that will be returned to the outdoors, **cats MUST be brought to the clinic IN A TRAP. Staff cannot sedate a cat in a carrier and you will be turned away.** All clinics require appointments.

2. Get a trap

- Borrow one from the Humane Society of NMB for a \$50 deposit IF they have one available. <https://humanesocietynmb.org/> They open at 11am; (843) 249-4948. Closed (Thursdays?)
- Buy a live animal trap from Amazon. \$50-32" live animal trap (Timaze brand is what I have).
- Have a trap to donate to another trapper, email Cindy@sub4health.com to rehome the trap.

3. Feed the cats the same times every day

- Feed morning and late afternoon if possible, centering on the times you want them to visit once you are ready to trap.
- You can also establish a "call" like call a name as if looking for a lost animal. Or a noise like a bike bell, ring the bell once or twice before feeding and again once food is available. Cats QUICKLY know to come once they hear that name or sound, training the cats to come when you really need them to-to trap but not attracting attention of passers -by.
- Always provide fresh, clean water.
- Ants-if your food has an ant problem, some solutions:
 - Put the bowl in another bowl or pan a little larger and fill it partly with water creating a moat (ant's cant leave their trail scent after passing in water).
 - You can buy an anti-ant bowl or 3D print one: https://www.amazon.com/GRPET-Puppy-Eating-Feeder-Animals/dp/B0CF9Z7G3S?ref_=ast_sto_dp&th=1

4. Watch videos on how to set the trap

- This Jackson Galaxy video is the best I have found for setting up the trap. It shows how to set the trap with the trip plate up, food under the trap on a plate at the very end/far away from the entrance door. They line the trap entrance with newspaper*.



- Jackson Galaxy introduces **Cole & Marmalade on** how to trap. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBJI4ASS3nM>
- Instead of a paper plate, I use scrap cardboard like from a cut up cereal box. Place food on cardboard or plate, then place trap on top of plate. No bowls to get "stuck" inside with a scared cat.
- Heavy cardboard for the trap entrance-instead of newspaper to line the trap entrance (cats do not like to walk on the wire of the trap, scary), I use the flap of an amazon etc box that I cut to

size. **It has to stop short of the trip plate** and 1" short of the trap door so the door can swing down and hit metal and not the cardboard. A strong cat can jam out the door if it is ajar.

- f. When you bait the trap, that is when to put the towel over the trap. The towel will make the trap look less suspicious to the cat and help keep them from freaking out once the trap door slams shut. If you use a dark towel, it can help conceal your trapping efforts. This video best shows towel technique. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBJI4ASS3nM>
- g. To SET the trap, put the towel over both sides and top, leaving 3-4" at the front uncovered so it does not interfere with trap door, AND leaving 4-6" at the back uncovered. You want all the "wonderful" smell of the cat food bait to get out and around so the cats smell it and "have" to go into the trap to eat it! <https://fcpga.org/tnr/>
- h. PRACTICE. Practice setting a tripped trap. You might catch a cat who is "tipped" and thus already fixed. You might catch an opossum or raccoon who will be angry and need to be released. It is not uncommon to have to reset the trap after it has been set. Now practice setting the trap at night

5. Set an appointment with a TNR vet.

- a. NEVER EVER trap a cat without an appointment. Most for profit vets WILL NOT do a feral cat. NO office allows drop ins. A feral cat will injure themselves waiting for days/weeks for an appointment.
- b. Cat MUST be delivered in a trap or vet will not do surgery.
- c. See <https://www.sub4health.com/resources/> for the latest list of Horry County TNR surgery options.

6. Assemble trap "kit" (stuff to bring with you to trap)

- a. Paper plates or cardboard squares for wet food, some cans of fish based canned cat food, lid(s) for can(s), spoon for wet food, baggie to put food covered spoon onto. Towel to cover trap. Baggie of the usual dry food to "lead cat". Cardboard cut properly for entrance to trap. Binoculars if you have them. Flashlight. Optional: rotisserie chicken chunks or KFC greasy chicken chunks or tuna in water pieces for really hard to catch cats.
- b. Line the back of your car where cat in trap will be transported. Dollar Tree sells shower curtains or shower liners for \$1.50 that can be spread in the hatch back area of an SUV. Alternatively you can spread several trash bags or you can buy some puppy pads at Dollar tree, or even put some puppy pads on top of plastic for extra car protection. You will generally get leaves and nature debris from the bottom of the trap. Rarely but sometimes the cat simply cannot hold it any longer and has an accident during transit.

7. Prepare your home before trapping

- a. If the kitties will be placed outside before and after surgery, pick a location out of the sun, where they can get a breeze if the weather is warm, or is enclosed as possible during cold weather. Ensure wild animals cannot harass the trapped and helpless cats by enclosing as much as possible.
- b. If the cats will be in a garage or in your home, keep other animals away because you do not know if the trapped kitties have a transmittable disease.
 - i. Purchase puppy pads or shower curtains to place down on the floor and then the traps. They can only hold bodily functions for so long.
- c. Cats can have food and water until midnight the night before surgery. You can use small bowls for water. You can use paper plates/cardboard squares for wet. For dry food, you can use small bowls or save the lids from jars like pickle jars to use as disposable bowls for wet or dry food.

Sanitize all reusable bowls after use. Some cats prefer wet, some prefer dry, some are too scared to eat.

8. Prepare your cats before trapping

- a. 12-24 hours before trapping pull the food so kitties are hungry and want to go into trap to get the food. Always provide water in the normal water spot.
- b. If you must arrive at the vet at 7am on Wednesday, then start trapping at 7am on Tuesday or as close to your usual morning feeding time so the cats are gathering to eat. Call the name or ring the bell as if it is the normal feeding day so they hear you and will approach, even if you don't see them.

9. Set the trap

- a. Place the trap where it will be near their normal feeding area but in a quiet area because noise/human activity will discourage them.
- b. Get the paper plate or cardboard square and put some wet cat food, mounded on it. Lift the back of the trap up and set it down over the mound of food so the cats can smell it but realize they cannot get it without going inside the trap.
- c. What I do is put a TINY bit also on the trip plate and a few dry kibble from the trap door leading up to the trip plate, but the big reward is the greasy wet food that you have to step on the trip plate to get.
- d. If you feel the cat might be hard to trap, take a second piece of cardboard and put some greasy chicken on it and likewise set it next to the wet under the trap. Then, you can dangle a piece of the chicken from the "ceiling" of the trap well past the trip plate so the cat cannot reach over the plate to get the food, he has to go in to keep their balance and snatch the chicken dangling down.
 - i. You can additionally try attaching a feather toy to a string and dangling it inside the trap beyond the trip plate to catch the cat's attention.
- e. Place the towel over the middle of the trap as explained above.
- f. Open the trap door, set the trap (look and make SURE the trip pad is elevated because the cat pressing the plate to the ground is what pulls the trap door closed).
- g. Purists say never leave the trap. I leave the trap for one hour and come back to check every hour. I often trap when it is dark out, that is why I need a flashlight to see if the kitty I trapped is tipped or not. Often the tip is so old or small I have to bring the trap home and get a human to give me a second opinion because I am not SURE if the cat is tipped or not.
- h. Repeat once an hour for 24 hours until you catch your kitty! In the summer, I pull my trap (put it in my car, take the food etc) from noon to 3 because there is no way my cats get out during the heat of the day.
- i. NOTE: If you trap a lactating mother (generally indicated by extremely enlarged mammary glands), release her immediately. Young kittens rely on their mother for food and may not survive without her. Additionally, kittens should not be taken from their mother until they are eating on their own and ideally not until they are 8 weeks old.
- j. Once you catch your kitty, put the food out for the rest of the colony, give them the food under the trap.
- k. NOTE: for the trap I have, to set the trap, pull the trap door upward and attach it to the hook on the right side of the cage. This holds the door open for the cats and raises the trip plate, which will close the trap when the cat steps on it.
- l.

10. Trapped, waiting for the trip to the TNR

- a. Place trap in safe place (see above)
- b. The trapped cat can eat/drink until midnight once they are home with you (see above/see instructions from TNR clinic).
- c. Cover entire top and sides with towel to keep cat calm. You can leave the front and back of the trap uncovered so they can get fresh air unless they are particularly angry and then cover front and back, too.
- d. When carrying the trap, be very careful to keep the trap away from your body so an angry paw does not lash out and scratch you. The kitty is homeless and may have bacteria that can make you sick if scratched.
- e. LI

11. Post surgery

- a. Full recovery from anesthesia may take up to 24 hours. During this time it is important to keep the cat in his/her trap and allow them to rest. Limit interruptions to allow them to recover with minimal additional stress.
- b. All cats and kittens should be provided with water once fully alert.
- c. They may not want to eat for 8 hours. Offer water but they might not want any. If he or she keeps the food down, you can offer more.
- d. There may be a few drops of blood in the bottom of the trap and this is normal. Do not put additional items, such as blankets or litterboxes, in the trap. Only food and water dishes should be in the trap with the cat. Continue to keep the trap covered loosely with a towel or sheet to help the cat relax and regulate body temperature.
- e. The cat may not urinate or defecate during the first day or two of the holding period.
- f. Cats do not require suture removal after the surgery.
- g. Follow the post-operation care guidelines provided by the clinic. Males are generally released with less recovery time than females. Do not release unless the cat is fully alert.
- h. When ready to release the cat, bring trap back to the feeding area. Unless the back of the trap is the expensive kind where a clip is unclipped and the back door can be raised up, generally the trap door is opened and the cat races out the trap door.
- i. Pat yourself on the back. You are a quiet, unseen hero, saving female cats from a life of endless litters, saving male cats from a life of fighting and injuries, and preventing future generations that could starve or otherwise live a short, less than ideal life. If you don't do it, who will.
Thanks for caring.