



ELK GROVE ANIMAL SERVICES

Working/Barn Cat Acclimation Guide

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU NOW HAVE A FREE AND ALL NATURAL WAY TO KEEP THOSE PESTS OFF OF YOUR PROPERTY!

Preparing the Cats' Home Base

Decide where you would like your cats to find shelter when they are ultimately released...The Barn? Shed? Garage? Warehouse? Take in to consideration that your cats should be able to see people and other animals coming and going. They need fresh air and light; for example next to a window or center aisle, or busy tack room. You want the cats to get acquainted to the normal hustle and bustle of their new environment.

The cats will need to stay in this location for 4-6 weeks. The latter will give more assurances that your cats will stick around once released.

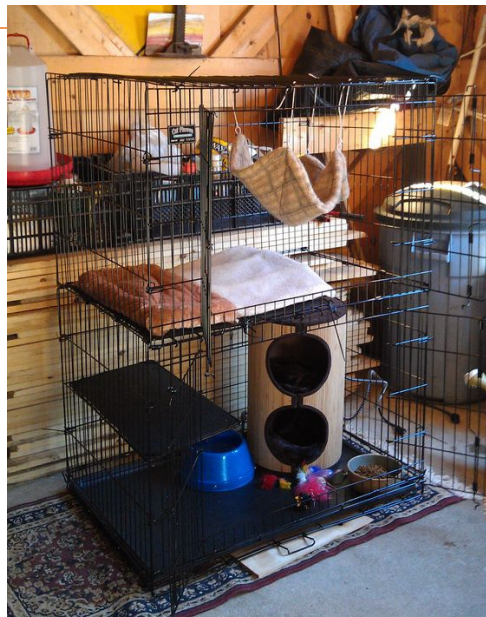
ACCLIMATION SUPPLIES

- A cat carrier for pickup from the shelter and hiding place at home base
- A large dog crate - preferably wire or a 3 tiered wire cat crate
- Food and Water in Bowls
- Litter and Litter Pan
- Bedding
- Sheet or Blanket to drape over crate

LONG TERM SUPPLIES

- Food and Water in Bowls
- Straw or Fleece Bedding
- Heated Cat House (optional)
- Heated Water Bowl (optional)

Acclimation "Home Base" Set Up Examples



FEEDING

Dry food is essential, wet food is a bonus. Special treats of tuna or tuna juice are okay, but commercial cat food contains all the nutrients cats need in their diets. Looking for labels that specify outdoor cat can support the energy your cats will exert when they get to work.

Some owners feed wet food during the acclimation period and continue after release to ensure their cats will return each evening. This is even more beneficial if you plan to close your cats into the barn, shed or garage in the evening to protect them from predators.

Feeding is the #1 way your cats will bond with you, feed them at the same time every day and night, talk to them as you approach and soon they will come to recognize and expect you. Refill water and change out the litterbox daily at the same time as one of the feedings.

You can generally tell how the acclimation process is going by the cats behavior during feeding time. Over time you may notice even the more feral cats make eye contact or not immediately hide when you approach. With more social cats they may brush up on your arm or allow petting as they eat.

RELEASE DAY

After 6 weeks secure the door of the cage open after morning feeding. Walk Away! Continue your normal day and allow the cats to come out on their own accord. Some may dart out right away and find a hiding place, others may wait until you leave the area. Leave the door open and continue feeding, watering and changing the litterbox as the weeks pass. If you opt to take the cage down at some point, keep feeding nearby - remember the food is what is keeping the cats around; when resources are gone, so are the cats.

COLD WEATHER

Always provide a place for the cats to get out of the rain, wind, or snow, with insulation and with enough space that allows multiple cats to snuggle together. You can provide straw bedding for the cats to stay warm. Straw, being hollow, traps the heat from the cats' body and transfers it back to their body, alternatively, hay does not provide the same insulation. Heated water bowls are also helpful for locations that reach freezing temperatures overnight, these can be found online for as little as \$20. Heated cat houses are another option for winter and range in price from \$40 to \$150.

Working cats sometimes move on, pass away or need reinforcements to control the pest population. If you are interested in adopting additional barn cats, or know someone who is, do not hesitate to contact Elk Grove Animal Services at 916-687-3042.