

Feral Kitten Rescue Tips

Do you have feral cats living near you? An experienced owner shares her tips for rescuing and taming stray kittens.

Sarah Magee

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We cat lovers tend to love all cats, and our hearts go out when we see cats in need, especially homeless or feral kittens. With the proper steps and care, it is possible to catch feral kittens and gradually tame them to become adoptable pets. For me, this has been a rewarding experience. Here are some tips I have learned from my own experience rescuing and taming feral kittens. 1. The best time to catch a feral kitten is at 4 to 5 weeks of age, just as it is old enough to be weaned. At this age, kittens don't move too fast, so it is relatively easy to catch them. Once they start playing and romping away from the nest, you may need to employ some other methods to catch the kittens (such as luring them gradually with food, or using a humane trap). 2. If you are able to remove any young kittens from their mother's nest, wear gloves, and use a large towel to lift each kitten. You do not want to get scratched or bitten, especially if the mother is around. Ideally it would be good to also trap the mother cat and have her spayed and released, or attempt to tame her as well. However, catching a feral adult cat involves greater risks and requires the proper equipment and procedures for your safety. 3. Any feral kitten you catch is likely to have some health problems, such as conjunctivitis (eye infection), feline herpes, or may even be a carrier of more serious disease, such as rabies. Immediately schedule a veterinary visit for any kitten you catch. In addition, if you have other cats in your home, keep the newcomers absolutely separated, and wash your hands and clothing to prevent spreading any disease to existing pets.

4. Until the kittens are tamed, to them, you are a big scary monster. At first, keep them confined in a cage or a room of your house you can use the bathroom if no other is available. Visit them often, talking softly and keeping your movements to a minimum.

5. Gradually, you can begin to play with them, using a string or cat toy. As they come to associate you with food and fun, they become less afraid. Soon, you'll be able to pet them.

Some feral kittens are wilder than others, depending on their own personalities and experiences with trauma. But most will be tame within a week if you handle the taming process right so that they learn to trust you.

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