

Do-It-Yourself Fence for Domestic Cats

and Homed Feral Cats (*Not Appropriate for Feral Cat Colonies*)

This cat fence is made of netting material that can go on an existing fence or be put up even without a fence. The net gives, which is why cats will not climb it. First, determine which section(s) of instructions you need for your yard:

- If you have an existing chain link or any fence (under five feet high) see **Section I** for supplies and instructions necessary for installing the net fence to your existing fence.
- If you have no existing fence, see **Section II** for installation of a chicken wire fence and also **Section I** for netting.
- If you have an existing wooden privacy fence (five feet or higher) use only **Section III**.

SECTION I Installing Net Fence on Existing Chain Link Fence Under Five Feet

MATERIALS:

- Garden net
- Fishing line
- Garden poles (7 feet)
- Wire Twist ties
- 1/2 inch staples for staple gun

TOOLS:

- Pliers
- Staple gun
- Scissors
- Clippers or pruning shears
- Loppers or pruning saw

Clear fence of plant growth. Prune shrubs to clear space for net. Examine chain link for any holes or gaps along bottom. Repair with chicken wire, wood boards, or dirt as necessary. Tree guard can be installed on trees (see **Section IV**).

Cut netting. Roll out and cut so each strip is 69 inches wide. Caution: twigs easily catch and tangle in net. Be careful not to accidentally tear holes in net.

Prepare garden poles. Secure pole, then staple with gun pressed firmly against side of pole point. If staple does not penetrate evenly and securely, remove with pliers and try again. Put

MATERIALS & APPROXIMATE COSTS

- Polypropylene Net**—1 1/2 x 1 1/2" inch (this size hole is least visible) 208 inches wide (cut into strips of 69 inches): *Product no. OV-4885 \$\$.032/square foot.*
EXAMPLE: Fence perimeter = 150 feet, order 50 feet of net (208 inches/12 inches x 50 feet x .032 = \$27.31)
- Garden Poles**—Available in garden centers and hardware stores with garden supply departments. The poles are green vinyl wrapped around aluminum. Seven feet is the best height. *Each pole costs approximately \$3.49.*
- Fishing line**—Black fishing line is least visible. Twice the fence perimeter is required. EXAMPLE: Fence = 150 feet line needed = 300 feet.
- Wire**—Sixteen gauge. Fence requires 1 1/2 feet per garden pole. *Cost approximately \$3.29/100 feet.*

two staples in pointed end of pole before pole is attached to fence (staples are used to attach net to poles by threading with fishing lines).

Affix pole to chain link fence with stapled end up. Pole does not need to penetrate ground. Affix garden pole to inside of chain link pole with wire. Use pliers to twist wire in three places on each set of poles. Poles should be no more than 10-12 feet apart.

Use twist ties to attach net to staple on top of garden pole. Wherever pieces of netting are joined be sure to leave an overlap of netting. Pull net along fence to next pole and attach in same manner. Net should be taut but not pulled tight and should fall to inside of fence.

Weave fishing line through top of entire net from staple to staple, moving horizontally for length of fence. Fishing line should be woven through both (together) chain link and net just below top of chain link fence to prevent cats from slipping under. Only weave netting vertically to end poles where netting strips join together.

SECTION II Installing a Chicken Wire Fence

MATERIALS:

- Chicken wire (3 feet high, 1 inch mesh)
- Chicken wire stakes (4 feet)

TOOLS:

- Small sledge hammer
- Screwdriver

Stakes should be placed every five feet and pounded into ground so that metal flange at bottom of stake is completely underground. Use flat head screwdriver to slightly pry open metal hooks on stake.

Attach chicken wire to stakes by hooking wire into hooks on stakes. Try to get bottom of chicken wire flush with ground so cats cannot go under it.

Bend hooks back against stake to permanently bind chicken wire to stakes. Do this by holding sledge hammer behind hook on stake, then use regular hammer to pound hook back to stake. Stake the chicken wire to the ground so cats do not go underneath (i.e. bricks, metal stakes).

Install netting as described in **Section I** with the following adaptation—attach garden poles to every other stake. Netting should be draped inside and woven to chicken wire close to top of wire.

SECTION III Installing Net on Wooden Privacy Fence Five Feet or Taller

MATERIALS:

- Flag pole brackets
- Wooden dowels (4 feet) that fit into pole brackets
- Garden net (see **Section I**)
- Staples
- Fishing line
- Twist ties

TOOLS:

- Screw driver
- Pliers
- Staple gun
- Scissors
- Clippers or pruning shears
- Loppers or pruning saw

Clear fence of plant growth. Prune shrubs to clear space for net. Examine fence for any holes or gaps along bottom. Repair with chicken wire, wood boards, or dirt as necessary. Tree guard can be installed on trees (see **Section IV**).

Cut netting. Roll out and cut so each strip is 69 inches wide. Caution, twigs are easily caught and tangled in net. Be careful not to accidentally tear holes in net. Attach flagpole brackets to fence about four feet off ground and about ten feet apart.

Put staples securely in tops of wooden dowels. Leave enough room to thread fishing line. Insert the dowels into brackets. Secure firmly, with wedge or wire if necessary.

Attach netting at top and base of poles with twist ties. Vertically weave fishing line around net and poles. Staple net to fence horizontally along bottom seam. Weave fishing line through top of net horizontally from pole to pole and attach to staple on poles.

SECTION IV Additional Information

Birds—It usually takes a few weeks for birds to get used to the fence. If they fly into the fence, they usually bounce off the net and fly over it. Do not feed birds inside the fence.

Other cats getting into your fence—This can happen if a tree or shed outside of your fence can be used as an access point. Simply let them out by opening your gate.

Homed or tamed feral cats—These wary animals may be afraid of the fence and should be introduced to it gradually or so that they are not frightened into running through it. They can break through it, but it is best that they don't discover that breaking through is an option.

Adjustment period—Cats that are accustomed to being outside usually go through an adjustment period lasting a couple of weeks. At first they may be angry with you and each other. They will search for and probably find ways to escape. Watch them and patch the escape routes. After a while they will no longer search for escape routes. Supervise indoor cats upon initial exposure to the fence, as they become familiar with their yard. This lets them “know” their home and return if they do escape.

Trees—To prevent cats from escaping on large trees, aluminum flashing can be wrapped around and nailed to the trunk of the tree. Put the flashing high enough so cats cannot jump about it, and away from branches.

Escape routes—You may have escape routes if your yard has sheds, trees along the fence, or dense shrubbery. In these cases, your fence may require customization. Chicken wire (see **Section II**) may be used to block escape routes.

Escape artists—Some cats learn to rip or push through the fence. A double layer of netting takes care of this problem.