

# The Homeowner's Guide to Rodent Control



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**TERMITE & PEST CONTROL Co.**

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# Introduction

Being a home owner is a rewarding experience but unfortunately comes with a great deal of responsibility and concern for your home and property. We deal with the chance of natural disasters, fires, burglary and so much more, but the one issue that we almost never consider until it's too late is infestation.

We may be lying in bed at night and suddenly hear the pitter patter of tiny feet crawling around in our attic, or begin noticing holes in trash bags and droppings in corners in the home. These are the unfortunate beginnings of a battle with rodents, and the battle can often seem like it's never ending.

We think of our homes as protective, warm and comfortable places that we can relax and raise a family, so it's no wonder that the homes we work so hard to create are so appealing to critters, they're simply looking for a safe and warm place to raise their own families.

We want to be able to be comfortable in our own homes, and that means we have to make sure we keep any invaders out. This eBook is designed as a resource to help you identify and control the sources of your rodent problems, and to prevent any issues from recurring in the future. While

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there are steps you can take as a homeowner to reduce the chances of a rodent problem, there are of course no guarantees. As always, it is highly recommended that you seek the services of a professional pest control company that specializes in dealing with rodent problems to ensure complete protection for your home.



# Preventing Rodent Infestation



Rodent infestations carry with them the potential for serious damage to your home and your property. From the moment they attempt to enter your home they begin inflicting damage, from small holes in walls and foundations to completely destroying attic and wall insulation, these critters create havoc as they take over your home.

In addition, rodents like mice can chew up electrical wiring, creating the additional risk of potential electrical fires. Once rodents have taken over your home, they can cause moisture to accumulate in your home as they eat holes in walls and foundations, which allows moisture to accumulate, creating potential mold problems. Add to that the smell of rodent droppings or dead rodents in your attic or crawl space, and you've got a recipe for absolute disaster in your home.

The key to controlling rodent infestations is to stop them before they start, this can only be done by making sure that your home and around your property are well maintained and free of any conditions that would encourage rodents to take up residence.

## **Seal Your Doors & Windows**

Rodents like mice and rats are capable of entering your home through even the smallest holes. Mice are well known for squeezing themselves through holes smaller than ¼ inch! One of the more common issues that lead to rodent problems are broken or worn seals around doors and windows. To keep critters from finding their way in, take an assessment of all windows and doors, including your garage door, and replace or seal any gaps or cracks. This of course gives you the added benefit of energy efficiency as you'll prevent cool air from getting in and warm air from getting out during winter months.

## **Close Openings in Foundations and Walls**

As we mentioned above, critters can enter your home through the tiniest of openings. To prep your home for winter months, take a walk around your home and do a detailed inspection of your foundation and walls. Any cracks or holes need to be filled or blocked off to prevent rodents from entering. If you have a brick home, you will find gaps in the bricks on each side of your home, often in multiple locations, called weep holes. These gaps in the brick are there to allow moisture to vent out, but can make a great location for rodents to find their way in. There are many products available to help you seal these holes, as well as any other holes that you find in the foundation. The key to blocking weep holes is to make sure that you aren't blocking ventilation in the process. Many people will seal holes around their home with steel wool as rodents can't eat through it, but this can clog or rust over time. Instead, try using aluminum screening from your local hardware store, it is resistant to rust and can be applied with a little bit of silicon to prevent any critters from pulling or pushing it out.

## **Store Food in Air Tight Containers**

Whether inside or outside of your home, store food in air tight containers. This prevents rodents from having easy access to food items and can help to eliminate attractive smells that may be luring them to your home. If you're storing your pet's food outside, make sure it's in a sealed container as well. Rodents like mice love pet food and will get through bags easily.

## **Dispose of Garbage and Debris Regularly**

When storing your garbage, make sure to place it in cans. While mice and rats can gain access to your cans when left open or without a lid, it will make it much more difficult for them to do so. In addition, make sure there is no garbage or debris accumulating around your property, in garages or in storage areas. Any buildup of trash or debris (sticks, leaves, etc.) can create a nice home for rodents that is out of sight from people and protected from the elements. Simply moving or removing stacked firewood can make major impacts on reducing hiding places.

# Controlling Rodent Populations



Rodents need food and shelter to survive, just like humans do. They also need a source of water. In order to keep them from entering and remaining in your home, you need to limit their access to these needs as much as possible. By making your home a less than habitable environment for critters, you can encourage rodents to leave and seek shelter and food elsewhere.

## **Stop Feeding Them**

Whether we'd like to believe it or not, humans are not by any means the cleanest species on the planet. We may spend all of our time cleaning up our own messes, but there's always something that gets overlooked or left until later.

Between kids dropping bits and pieces of food all over the house and our occasional laziness in cleaning up after ourselves, our houses can become a major food source quickly if we're not careful. By removing food sources from around your home, you will discourage mice from reproducing and remaining in your home.

**Make these changes today and you can help to reduce the likelihood of a rodent problem:**

- Never leave food items laying around on counters, in sinks or on the floor. Clean up after prepping and eating meals and make sure any leftovers are thrown away in a container or put in the fridge.
- Store your food in sealed containers. If you're leaving items like chips or cereal in your cabinets, make sure they're stored in containers that can't be accessed by mice.
- Do your dishes, every night. Leaving dishes laying on the counter or piled up in the sink creates odors, and these food odors attract rodents. Take some time to get your dishes washed or throw them in the dishwasher, and of course, make sure to wipe down the counters and your sink afterwards.
- Store pet food in a sealed container, off of the floor. Many of us tend to leave pet food in bags or store it in the garage. This invites pests to chew through the bags and get themselves a treat. Prevent them from acting like your new pets simply by limiting their access to your pet's food.
- Make sure to sweep your floors. If you have kids, this is especially important, as they have a tendency to carry their food around the house. Crumbs create an ideal midnight snack for rodents on the go, by sweeping up at the end of the day, you make sure they aren't able to find food.



# Trapping Rodents Safely & Effectively



Humans have been catching animals for centuries as a means of survival. These days, catching animals for food is considered more of a sport than a necessity, so most of the trapping we do today is done for animal control purposes. Fortunately, centuries of experience trapping animals (and of course some commercial innovations) have made it pretty easy for anyone to learn how to catch and control animals like mice and rats around their home.

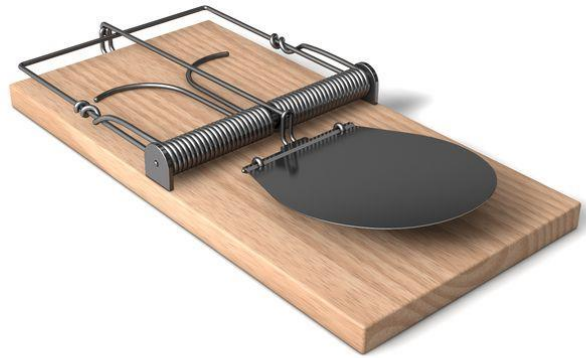
## **Rodent Snap Traps**

We've all seen them in old cartoons and in pranks on TV, the good old fashioned rodent snap trap. These simple devices have been used for generations as the go-to resource for catching and killing rodents. The best choice for many, simply buy a few traps, bait them with an attractant and wait for that loud snap to let you know you've caught a critter.



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Snap traps are often the best choice for rodent control, as they simply just work.

While many look at them as inhumane, they are actually the most humane method of getting rid of mice and rats as they snap and kill cleanly and quickly. Snap traps can be baited and left just about anywhere, and don't necessarily require constant maintenance, although any caught rodents should be removed as quickly as possible to prevent unpleasant smells due to decaying rodents.

These days, snap traps come in all shapes and sizes, from the more traditional wood/metal traps to aggressive looking plastic versions. The old fashioned versions are bit more difficult to bait, and can result in some hurt fingers if you're not careful, but are all around the most effective method of capturing and killing rodents in your home.

### Tips to Using Snap Traps:

- Use the right baits:** Contrary to what we learned in old cartoons, mice respond better to attractants like peanut butter than they do cheese. When baiting, opt for a fragrant, sweet scented bait that will lure mice in, and avoid trying to use cheese if you want to actually catch anything.

- Place multiple traps:** Depending on the severity of your problem, it is important to place multiple traps around the home and in your attic to have the best chance of controlling a rodent problem. Place traps at known rodent entry points, along baseboards (mice tend to run around looking for entry points) and in the attic. Having multiple traps set provides not only multiple opportunities to catch a mouse, but to catch more than one at a time. When placing traps, set them near walls or along base boards as mice are not big fans of open areas.

- Keep away from pets and kids:** These traps come with a very real danger of injury, especially for small hands and pets. They do not discriminate with the way the function, so while they are great at catching mice, they are just as capable of snapping on a curious child or pet. When placing snap traps, make sure to do so in areas where they will be out of reach of children and pets.

### **Rodent Glue Boards and Live Traps**

Glue boards are an effective, albeit relatively inhumane method of catching and controlling rodent populations. These traps come in a variety of forms, and work by attracting rodents with fragrant aromas, then sticking them to the boards as soon as they walk across. Once caught in the sticky substance, any caught rodents will remain alive until they starve to death, which is certainly a safer alternative to a snap trap, but a fairly inhumane and torturous method of killing rodents.

Live traps, on the other hand, rely on baiting the mouse in and catching them in a cage. These traps will also keep the rodents alive, but require a very high level of maintenance as they must be checked daily, if not multiple times per day. Rodents left in these traps may die within the course of a day from dehydration or starvation, and potential from stress induced from captivity.

### **Rodent Poison Baits**

Rodent poisons have developed a name for themselves in recent years, and rightfully so. These poisons are generally highly toxic, and come with a very real risk of exposure to pets, humans and children. Poisons are generally deployed in bait stations to control large infestation problems, and kill rodents slowly over time after ingesting some of the poison. Depending on the type of poison, this process can happen within 24 hours or over the course of several days. They also have a disadvantage when compared to trapping methods, as the rodents could die in just about any location in your home after ingesting the poison, meaning they could end up in a wall or inaccessible area, causing a putrid smell as they decay.

The use of poisons requires almost no maintenance on the home owners' part, and while effective, can create more issues than they solve. In some cases, rodents may be able to identify and avoid toxic baits and may require the use of "pre-baits" to encourage rodents to consume the poison bait.

# Maintaining a Rodent Free Home



Depending on the extent of your rodent problem, within a few days (or maybe even hours) you'll have begun to catch a few critters with your traps, especially after removing their usual hiding places and food sources. The battle is not yet over though, as you will need to continue to monitor and secure your home moving forward, making sure to keep up with everything you've learned thus far.

By now, you've made sure that your home is sealed up from the outside, cracks and holes have been filled and that all food sources have been removed and are no longer accessible to little critters. This might seem like a good fix, but that isn't always the case. You will need to continue to check on your property, not only to check on your traps, but to make sure that the measures you've put in place to keep rodents out aren't tampered with.

### **Remove Food Sources for Good**

As time goes on, it's important to make sure that you continue to prevent any critters around your home from accessing food of any kind inside your home. Continue to make sure there is no food left out, that your floors are routinely swept to remove any crumbs and that trash and food are stored in sealed containers, off of the floor.

### **Maintain Your Protective Barrier**

As we mentioned earlier, sealants and weather stripping around your home will wear out over time. In addition, any materials that were used to seal cracks in your foundation may deteriorate or can even be removed by persistent mice who attempt to enter your home. Since you've already identified possible entry points to your home, the next step is to routinely monitor them on a monthly basis to make sure that the seals are still intact and that no critters have damaged them in an attempt to get into your home. Should you notice an area that may be damaged, replace it as soon as possible.





### About Arrow Termite & Pest Control

Arrow Termite & Pest Control was founded in Northern Louisiana in 1958 by the Cohn family. After many years working in the pest control industry, Mike Cohn came to Baton Rouge in 1978 to start his own company. Since then, Arrow Termite & Pest Control has grown to become one of the premier pest control companies in the south, providing services across most of the Gulf Coast region including Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, with sister companies in both Florida and Alabama.

### Our Mission

Arrow Termite and Pest Control strives to provide quality services and consumer satisfaction to keep families, businesses, and non-profits pest free. Our goal is total customer satisfaction by maintaining a pest free environment in the Residential, Commercial and Industrial settings. We guarantee that we will design and implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan specifically for each customer. We also guarantee that we will research and implement new and better products that are on the market to provide even more comprehensive and environmentally friendly services.

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