

How to Find a Lost Cat

You are home and someone opens the front door. Your cat scoots out, turns the corner of the house and vanishes! What do you do?

If your indoor cat escapes outside, go after your cat, but you don't run, and you don't make loud noises. Try to keep the cat in sight, but normally when an indoor cat gets outside, the smells and the sounds tend to be overwhelming and the first thing they want to do is hide close to home. Any loud noises like shouting their name or clapping your hands will tend to further startle them. If they stop and look at you, drop immediately to a kneeling position, don't look them in the eyes and stretch your hand out. Using your calmest voice, call the cat. If there are no distractions around you, they will sometimes come right to you. If you are lucky, the cat will come out when he is calmer and eat and come in the house.

GONE WITHOUT A TRACE

You have returned home only to find that your cat is missing. The first thing you do is make a systematic search of your home. Take each room and search thoroughly. Get down on your knees and think like a cat. Remember when scared or hurt, they can crawl up into things you would never dream they could even fit under. You want to look under chairs, inside arm rests, inside recliner chairs, (a lot of times a cat will tear the underside lining of either a chair or a bed and vanish up into the springs). Look in cupboards and make sure you cover every inch of your living space before even thinking about looking outside.

After your careful home search, you need to do a few things. One is to find an old tee-shirt that you don't much care about, or a pair of old sneakers. Put the sneakers on without socks, or throw the shirt on and just start walking around your property calling to your cat. Take a box of dry cat food or cat treats, and shake it gently as you walk. In case you don't find your cat, you want to get that shirt and those shoes really sweaty with your scent because the shoes and shirt will help scent the cat home. If unsuccessful in your search, when you return home, hang up the shirt outside where the wind can blow your scent around, and set your shoes up outside near your front door.

FURTHER TIPS ON FINDING A LOST CAT

1. Take a large cardboard box and flip it over. Cut a cat sized hole in the side and place it outdoors with some soft bedding inside. Weight the bottom down and make this a safe place your cat can return to. Place food and water nearby.
2. The best time to search for a lost cat is when the world is asleep. The best time-frame is around 2:00 a.m. Go out with a flashlight and food. You can take a few cans of cat food with you, stand out in the open and pop the cans, or shake a treat jar. You will be surprised how the sound can travel in the quiet of the morning, and oftentimes your cat will appear within minutes of the first can being opened. Enterprising cat owners have also recorded the sound of their can openers opening a tin of

food, and played the tape over and over while looking for their lost cat.

3. Make up fliers. Include a picture of your cat and offer a reward as incentive. Post these fliers in grocery stores, at vet offices, feed stores, anywhere you can. Post them at eye level. DO NOT stuff them in mailboxes. You can get into trouble for doing this. Walk your neighborhood with these fliers, put them on telephone poles, and talk to the kids of the neighborhood, the paper boy the UPS driver, the mailman anyone who walks your neighborhood.
4. Call the local papers and place a lost cat ad. Call the local radio stations, many of them will [run free](#) air spots for lost critters. Call your vet and let the staff know your cat is missing. Tack up a flier at all the vets in your area, and take one over to any rescue shelters nearby. If you have recently moved and brought the cat with you, check out your old address as well.
5. Locate a Havahart trap and set it in a safe place near your home. You may trap another cat, or perhaps a possum or even a skunk (depending on where you live) but you might also trap your cat.
6. If you see a dead animal on the road near your home, remove it with a shovel and take it to the weeds off the road. There have been instances where domestic cats will become curious about road kill and go out to investigate, only to become fatalities themselves.
7. Keep a list of everything you do to find your missing cat. Get on cat boards and ask for ideas if nothing seems to be working. There are businesses such as Pet-Detective.com and Sherlockbones.com have great tips on their websites and are available for hire or advice.
8. Check your newspaper for the lost and found ads daily.
9. Weekends work outside. Putter in your garden, or just sit out near your home, talk in a soft voice, sing, or chatter so if your cat is close she will hear you. If she has a canine friend, bring the dog outside, or take the dog for a walk around the neighborhood to see if the cat will come out and join you.
10. Check the trees on your property.
11. Make a map of where you place your posters and or fliers. Check every 3 days to be sure they are still there. Keep tape, pushpins or thumbtacks, black felt markers and white poster board in your car, so you can make up any that might go missing.
12. Go door-to-door with a photo of your cat. Talk to all the inhabitants of the house, kids especially. Past experience has shown that little girls make the best finders of lost cats.
13. Keep the hope alive. There are countless stories of people who have lost cats for long periods of time, only to have the animal show up at their door one day.

Not every cat will return home, but if you cover all your bases as completely as you can, you can lessen the probability that your cat will stay lost. As hard as it sounds, you have to stay focused and not become stressed. **Your cat will sense any stress coming from you, and may stay hidden until you calm down.** Most cats go to ground immediately-which means they hide close to the home they know- unless they get chased off or scared away. If you can hold your emotions in check, you increase the odds in your favor.

Excerpt from a PETMD article written by Mary Anne Miller.