



Humanely Trapping, “Hard-to-Trap Cats”

When performing Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), some cats may be particularly hard to trap. They might be too suspicious of entering the trap, or maybe they keep getting the bait without triggering the trap plate. Don't worry—you'll get them! Try these tips: (We prefer to cover the trap with a sheet/blanket before setting it)

Get them comfortable with the trap. Feed trap-shy cats out of un-set traps in their normal feeding locations for a week or two before trapping again. Start with the food right by the entrance of the trap and gradually move it closer to the back each day. You can use a zip tie to keep the door open while you are “training them”.

If the cat is stepping over the trip plate, place one sheet of newspaper over the plate. Most cats will walk right across the newspaper without realizing the plate is there! Also, it serves as a liner for the cat for bathroom purposes. No more than one sheet as it will be too heavy and set off the trip plate.

Use a larger trap. A larger trap with a taller opening and wider sides can be more inviting to a cat wary of entering an enclosed space.

Try a more exciting bait. Something extra tasty and out of the ordinary might pique a cat's interest. We have tons of suggestions for safe and tasty treats! Try Fancy Feast Tuna and Shrimp (very smelly!), Sardines or any smelly cat food.

Use distraction techniques. Some cats can be guided into a trap with a laser pointer, which you can control from a distance.

Change up the location. Move the trap to a quieter, protected place so the cat feels safer going into it. You can even try camouflaging the trap with its surroundings. Covering the trap with a dark cloth or towel can do the trick, but make sure the coverings don't interfere with the trap door closing.

Withhold food. Consider withholding food for up to two days rather than one day, but no longer than that. Never withhold water.

Spring the trap yourself. You can manually spring the trap by propping the trap door up with a piece of wood or full water bottle with a string tied around it. When the tricky kitty walks in, pull the string to shut the trap. Make sure the cat is clear in the back of the trap before you spring it!!

Use a drop trap. If the standard box trap just isn't doing it, try using a drop trap. It's a large mesh box that you prop up and trigger manually with a rope. If the wrong cat walks in, you just don't trigger it. Once you have the cat you want, you can transfer her to a regular trap but you will need to use a 2-door trap so the cat cannot escape out the side of the drop trap—humane trap during transfer. Always cover the drop trap/humane trap with a sheet to keep the cat calm. Make sure to have a partner when using the drop trap—their size makes them a little awkward for one person to handle.

Take a break from trapping. Unless the cat is in need of immediate medical attention, take a break for a week or two. Give yourself and the cat a rest, and then try again. You'll get the cat eventually!