

Tips for Hard-to-Trap Cats



When you're conducting 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 door. Don't worry—you'll get them! Try these tips:

- Get them comfortable with the trap. Feed trap-shy cats out of unset 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.
- 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!](#)
- Use distraction techniques. Some cats can be guided into a trap with a laser pointer, which you can control from a distance. Or try hanging a piece of cooked chicken from a string above the trigger plate to trick the cat into springing the trigger.
- 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, 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.
- 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. 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 her eventually!