

How can we help?



You're probably used to your cat's comings and goings but what happens when suddenly the usual friendly greeting you receive when you arrive home isn't there?

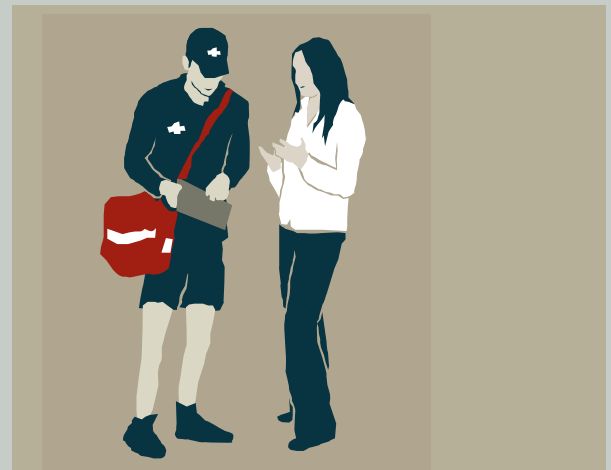
Don't panic!

Even if your cat does have a routine like clockwork, cats will often go 'missing' only to arrive home later that evening, the next morning or even a week later looking very pleased with themselves and showing no concern about their poor, worried and often fraught owners. So, if the worst happens and puss doesn't show up what should you do?



Step 1 – Have an action plan!

First things first – check your home and garden. Cats can be crafty little things and can hide themselves in all sorts of places. If you have checked every nook and cranny and are positive he is not at home then start to check the garden. Check sheds and shady places especially if the weather is hot as they will often try and find a nice cool spot to sit and relax. Still no luck? Take a walk around the



neighbourhood and call their name. Sometimes the sound of a familiar voice will be enough to bring them running back home.

Next, make all of the neighbours aware and ask them to also check their sheds and garages. If you are able, make some flyers up. When preparing a flyer make sure to include a good description of your cat, the gender, age, colour, colour of the cat's eye, breed and any distinguishing features they may have. A photo is a big help. A contact telephone is necessary but for your safety do not give your address. It's also worth asking the local postman or milkman to keep their eyes peeled.

Step two

Once all of this has been done then it's time to make some telephone calls:

- Notify your local Cats Protection. To find out your local branch please call **03000 12 12 12**
- If your cat is microchipped, call Petlog: **0844 4633 999** so that they can register your cat missing, and also to check any 'found cat' reports in your area – lines are open 365 days a year 24/7
- Register the details of your cat at **www.animalsearchuk.co.uk**
- Contact the RSPCA helpline on **0300 1234 999**
- Call all local vet practices in your area – not just your own vet
- Most local councils' Environmental Health Departments will keep a record of cats found killed on the roads. Although not an easy call to make it is worth giving them a quick call to help rule this out
- Get in touch with any other local animal rescue organisations in the area

If you do get any calls claiming to have found your cat don't build your hopes up too soon. Be prepared for the disappointment that it may not be yours.

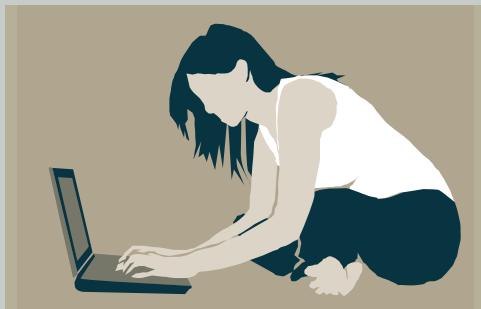
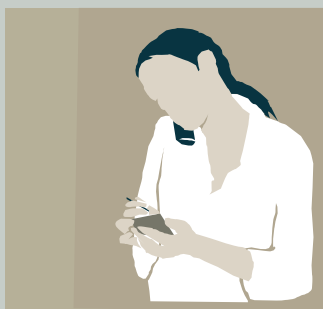
For safety reasons, make sure you take a friend or relative with you if you do follow up on any calls.

Hopefully your cat will soon be safely back home but you can help to ensure this doesn't happen again by following two steps:

- Keep your cat in at night
- Make sure your cat is microchipped

Cats get themselves into all sorts of mischief, especially at night. A cat's natural instinct is to hunt so by keeping him in between dawn and dusk you're helping to keep him safe and also helping other wildlife that is active at night.

Cats Protection believes that all owned cats should be identified in order to trace their owner should they become lost or injured. The preferred method of identification is an implanted microchip as this is permanent and safe. If an owner also chooses to fit a collar with their contact details attached, CP advises the use of a quick-release or snap-opening



Step three

Take your flyers to local shops, vets, local notice boards and put them anywhere where it is legal to do so.

The internet and social media sites can be a great tool to help track down a lost animal. If you have a Facebook and Twitter page make sure you put the details on there and notify all of your friends. Ask your friends to notify their friends. Post it on your local animal charities' Facebook pages too.

Get in contact with your local radio station, police station and fire station.

Hopefully by this time puss will have sauntered back in as if nothing has happened but if not now is the time to intensify the search. Use a few tricks and put them into action:

- If your cat has a favourite toy, try leaving it in your garden
- A cat's main sense is smell so if it has a regular blanket or bedding it usually sleeps on leave it out in a dry spot to try and entice it out of hiding
- Cats may be more active at night, especially in the hot weather, so go out with a friend or relative when it is dark and call for it by name
- Leave a bowl of water out and some food. Food may attract other animals but it's still worth putting something out to help lure puss out of his hiding spot

collar in preference to an elasticated one. This means that the cat is less likely to be trapped should the collar become caught or tangled. The collar must be fitted correctly; two fingers should fit snugly underneath it when the cat is wearing it. A cat's leg or jaw may become caught in an elasticated or ill-fitting collar and this can result in serious injury.

Above all, don't give up hope. We hear so many tales of cats being found and reunited with their owners, sometimes years after they have gone missing. ●

To contact Helpline, please phone
03000 12 12 12 or email **helpline@cats.org.uk**

If you see a cat, or indeed any animal, that you think is being mistreated or neglected then do call the relevant animal authority on their cruelty helplines:

England and Wales	RSPCA 0300 1234 999
Scotland	SSPCA 03000 999 999
Northern Ireland	USPCA 07739 948 520