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## What to do if your pet goes missing

As an animal loving person the concept of your domestic pet going missing is, for some, unimaginable but, unfortunately, it is quite a common thing to happen and once the immediate fog of panic lifts a little there is a procedure that you should perhaps consider as far as practical steps you should take to try and help locate your beloved pet.



Search the local area on foot calling your pet's name. If you have lost your dog and you have another dog at home perhaps take your other dog with you as their scent may entice your lost animal home or to you.

Alert your neighbors to the fact your animal is missing and ask them to keep their eyes peeled and perhaps check their outbuildings and home environment in case your pet has sneaked in somewhere that they shouldn't have and got shut in.

Consider telephoning local vets, animal rescue centres / kennels/ catteries – there is a possibility that your animal has strayed and been taken by some kind soul to them.

In the case of a lost dog, register your dog as missing with the dog warden – Cornwall Council have a weekly updated list of stray dogs that have been found. It's possible your local council does too. When my dog Bella was missing I phoned the dog warden regularly to check what had been found was not my dog. Bella is quite a difficult breed to distinguish (Springer Spaniel crossed with a Patterdale) many people considered she looked more like a Labrador and, due to human error and sometimes difficult to distinguish breeds being found they may be registered under the incorrect breed so be vigilant and check anything that you think 'might' be your animal.

In the case of lost dogs and cats in the UK you can register them with a fantastic company called Doglost run by thousands of volunteers ([www.doglost.co.uk](http://www.doglost.co.uk)). They will produce for free a poster which you can distribute and the terrific volunteers all over the UK will help you physically search for your pet, offer advice and practical and emotional support.

If you are not in the UK you will need to make up your own poster (or get one made up). Use a large clear picture of your animal. Put their name, colour, age, breed and your contact number on it as well as perhaps details of where they went missing. Consider offering a



reward – a sad reality but if someone has taken your pet this may be the incentive they need to return him or her home.

Deliver and distribute posters locally, houses, shops, schools, post offices, dentists, doctors, local businesses, pubs, restaurants, etc. My philosophy was the more people who knew Bella was missing the greater the chances of finding her.

If your pet is microchipped call the microchip company and inform them that they are missing.

Contact the local press and get a missing pet advert featured - perhaps even consider a press release in time particularly if there have been sightings and/or developments.

Make a Facebook page up for the specific purpose of finding your lost pet and ask your friends to join and add any of their friends who they think might be happy to be added to help spread the word. Share your missing pet page to 'lost and found' Facebook groups. Facebook is extremely powerful and there have been many a lost pet found due to social media efforts – worth a try!

Consider contacting a reputable pet psychic or pet detective.

As hard as it may seem in the circumstances, try and stay positive, although losing Bella was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life I always felt that I would eventually find her and I did. The power of positivity is actually quite amazing.

Good luck.

