

## How To Find Your Lost Hamster

**Tips on where to look if your escaped hamster gets out and is missing.**

*By Martha Boden*

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**Q:** I have a beautiful Syrian hamster named Princess. She is very intelligent! There's nothing she can't escape from! I also have a 1-year-old male cat named Mijo. When Princess does get out, Mijo always follows her around and meows until I come get her. The other night, while my boyfriend and I slept, Princess got out of her cage. Surprisingly, she managed not to alert Mijo. I saw her right before I went to bed, so there was a four to five hour gap from then until my boyfriend, Matt, noticed that she was missing.

We searched our entire apartment and we can't find her anywhere! I keep telling myself that she's either sleeping somewhere or that she kept running from us while we were searching. The only thing that gives me hope is that it's daytime. I pray that she gets hungry and comes out later during the night. I just don't see where she could be, we looked everywhere! Do you have any advice for me? How can I lure her back? Is there some kind of trap I can set in case she waits until we are asleep?

**A:** Losing a hamster is a terrifying experience for any owner. You are right in thinking that she's probably napping during the day, as she's likely found a snug place under some furniture or behind a bookcase after a busy night's activities. In your situation, the first thing to do is restrict the cat's access to a single room, like a bathroom, that you're certain Princess isn't occupying. Although you said Mijo hasn't hurt Princess in the past, you wouldn't want this to be the first time.

The next step would be to confirm there aren't any holes, cracks or crevices in your walls or doors that would allow Princess access to an area where she couldn't get out. Older homes and apartments can have such openings. If you find any, get a flashlight to check for any signs Princess got inside and listen for sounds she might make. If she's caught in the wall or flooring, you may be faced with the difficult task of getting her out.

Once you've ruled out walls and door openings, you must assume she's still in the apartment. Look underneath and inside EVERYTHING — bookcases, TV and stereo cabinets, inside the underside of the couch, etc. She can squeeze through a hole as small as an inch in diameter if she's determined.

If you can't find her, you may just have to wait her out. Her nocturnal drive will lure her out of her hiding place sometime after the sun goes down. Put some tasty food on newspaper in various areas of the apartment on the floor (moist food like lettuce, carrots or fresh corn will be especially enticing because she probably has no access to water). Turn off most of the lights and sit quietly in your apartment. You may hear her on the newspaper before you see her.

You might also try setting her cage up on the floor in some fashion so she can climb into it herself. Even an aquarium tank can be laid on its side to entice the hamster in. Familiar smells will attract her and you may find her washing up in her usual boudoir.