



How to Catch a Deer

Three Methods: [Understanding the Laws and Licensing](#) [Using a Drop Net](#) [Using a Clover Trap](#)

Wildlife organizations and other research institutes have reason to catch deer using humane practices. These practices minimize the risk of harm to both the deer and handlers while studying and/or tagging the animals. Researchers need special permissions to catch deer. For civilians, catching deer falls under the umbrella of trapping, which is subject to licensing and strict guidelines. Look into the trapping laws in your state before trying to catch a deer.

Method
1

Understanding the Laws and Licensing

- 1 Find your state's regulatory board.** Most states have either a Department of Wildlife or a Department of Natural Resources. The appropriate governing body that handles hunting and trapping in your state may go by a different name, though. Find the website for the department and look up information related to trapping deer in your area.
- 2 Read the laws.** Many states forbid the trapping of deer, and using any type of trap to catch a deer can result in stiff fines and penalties. Other states, such as Minnesota, prohibit the use of any type of bait to hunt or catch deer, making most traps ineffective.^[1] Read the laws governing trapping deer in your state carefully, including licensing, methods, seasons, antlered vs. antlerless zones, etc.
- 3 Apply for the appropriate license.** Once you know how to catch deer in your area lawfully, apply for the appropriate license. Deer fall under the big game license in nearly every state. The application will require your name, address, and other standard information. A licensing fee will also be associated with the process.

Method
2

Using a Drop Net

- 1 Buy a drop net.** Different types of drop nets should be used for different animals. A drop net for a deer is commonly tested to 600 lbs. and made of knotted, twisted nylon. Another common feature of certain drop nets is a metal center ring that allows the net to be released and dropped down a center pole.
 - Depending on the type of drop net, the system may also require additional poles to tie off the corners, blasting caps to release the net, and lead-in wire to connect to the blasting caps.
- 2 Clear all debris.** Before setting up a drop net, clear all of the debris from the site where the deer might harm itself. Items you should clear away include stumps, limbs, stones, etc.
- 3 Lay the net out flat.** After clearing the site, lay the net out flat. Place each of the four corners in position, then stretch the net out tight.
- 4 Place a post at each corner.** You will need four eight-foot tall posts, so that you can place one at each corner of the net. The posts should be a minimum of eight-feet tall to make sure that the antlers of a full-grown buck can pass beneath the net.
 - To help support each post, it helps to drive nearby stakes into the ground to attach a tie-down rope on each side of the post. If the posts are near trees, you can attach the tie-down rope to a tree as well.
- 5 Attach the net to the corner poles.** A drop net will have a cable thimble at each corner of the net. Feed rope through the thimble and tie off one end to the drop net. Pull the net taut and tie the other end of the rope to the first corner post. Repeat for all four posts.
 - You can use standard-sized ski rope at fifteen-foot lengths. Any extra give in the rope is perfect for knotting the

blasting cap into the rope, which upon detonation will sever the rope and drop the net.

- You can use a come-a-long or another ratcheting device to help take up any slack in the rope to make sure the drop net is tight.

6 Knot blasting caps into the rope. At about 6-8 inches away from the end of the net, knot a blasting cap into the ski rope. Repeat this step at all four corners.

- Use electronic blasting caps with at least twelve-feet of wire lead to each cap. This will allow you to run the wire leads in series from one cap to the next, making it easy to blast each cap with a single power wire to the power source.

7 Run a coated, insulated power wire to the power source. Whether you have a detonator or a 12v battery (such as a car or truck battery), you will need to run a coated, insulated wire from each blasting cap to the spot from which you will wait and drop the net.

- The easiest way is to run wire leads in series between the blasting caps, ending at the corner closest to your hiding spot. You can then run the final wire lead down and connect it to a single power wire that you can run all the way to your battery or detonator.

8 Bait the area. Place bait toward the center of the drop net in order to attract the deer. The center of the net also means the net will have the maximum time to fall without the deer running out from under it. Shelled yellow corn is a recommended type of bait.

- Pre-baiting the area for a week or two beforehand can make the area more attractive for deer as they will continue returning to the area for food instead of having to stumble upon your bait the first time you place it.

9 Wait for a deer. Several professionals should be on site to help handle any deer, but only one person should wait in a blind to drop the net. Everyone else should wait away from the site in a car to avoid scaring the deer off by allowing it to see or hear more people than necessary.

10 Drop the net. Once you have everything set and a deer has started feeding on the bait, you can use the detonator or the battery to detonate the blasting caps. This will sever the ski ropes, releasing the net from its attachment to the corner posts and dropping it down to catch the deer.

- Wait until the deer has its head down while it feeds to reduce its reaction time and ensure the net has time to fall.

11 Handle with extreme care. Deer are powerful animals that can kick and gore with their horns as they try to escape. Research teams have proper staff on hand to tranquilize and sedate a deer before the team even attempts to handle the animal. The team will then typically blindfold the animal to keep it in a less frightened state during handling as well.

- For purposes of ear-tagging or otherwise handling the deer, professionals quickly approach the deer, grasp the deer over the back in a bear hug, tackle the animal down to its side, and hold the front legs close to the body while avoiding the hind legs.^[2] This allows another team member to quickly tag the ear of the animal.
- Wear protective coveralls as well as a helmet with a face mask to help avoid injury.^[3]
- In addition to the immediate physical threat, deer can carry ticks that spread Lyme disease as well as other disease risks for humans. Take every precaution when handling a live deer.

Method
3

Using a Clover Trap

1 Purchase a Clover trap. A Clover trap is a netted trap that is large enough for a deer. The trap consists of a metal frame covered on all sides but the bottom with a linked netting. A trip wire runs parallel to the back wall that releases the front netting, allowing it to fall and trap the deer.^[4]

- You can purchase a Clover trap or make one on your own. Ensure that you use netting that won't risk harming

the deer as opposed to covering the frame with chain link or chicken wire.^[5]

2 Place and pre-bait the trap. Before actually setting the trip wire, you should place the trap and pre-bait it.^[6] Place shelled yellow corn around the entrance and inside the trap for several days before setting it. This gives the deer time to find the bait and feel out the trap. Any deer will return to the trap for more food with less hesitance regarding entering the trap.

3 Set the trap. When you notice that the bait you've been placing toward the back of the trap is getting eaten, then you're ready to set the trap. Place more bait and set the trip wire connected to the net door of the trap. Place the bait beneath the trip wire at the back of the trap. This ensures that the deer will release the trap when it lowers its head to reach the bait.^[7]

4 Check the trap every day. One of the greatest benefits of the Clover trap is that you don't have to sit in a blind waiting to release it, but you still have an obligation to check the trap often. Even though the netting on the trap won't harm the deer, it does leave the deer open to attack by predators, so you should check the trap at least once a day.^[8]

5 Handle the deer with caution. You should hood the deer first before attempting to handle it because the animal will be more sedate when it can't see the human presence.^[9] Researchers who handle deer inside Clover traps are trained professionals.^[10] It is not recommended that you try to handle the deer due to risk of injury to both yourself and the animal.

- Most Clover trap designs are collapsible, making it easy to push the trap downward. This will force the animal to the ground without any room to kick, making it easier to hood and safely handle the deer.^[11]
- If a professional handler must actually enter the Clover trap with the deer, the professional will bring the deer down to its side with a bear hug maneuver from the deer's back and pin the deer's front legs to its body while avoiding the hind legs.^[12]
- Protective coveralls and a helmet with a face mask are highly recommended, as is leaving any direct deer handling to a trained professional.^[13]

Community Q&A

Can you keep it as a pet at your house?

Karin

Absolutely not. Deer are wild animals. If you're going to catch a deer, you do what you need to do with it (tag, vaccinate, move it etc.), then let it go be free as a wild animal. Confining a wild animal to a tiny enclosure against its will is inhumane and irresponsible. If you want a pet herbivore for your house, get a pygmy goat. They're much tamer, will love you more, and are way cuter.

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Where do I purchase a deer trap?

wikiHow Contributor

There are plenty of sites that sell deer traps, just do a Google search.

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Warnings

- If you are attempting to catch a deer to relocate it, be aware that studies have shown well over half of caught and relocated deer die within a year of the move due to relocation-related injuries, unfamiliarity with the new site, and exposure to new mortality agents.^[14]

Sources and Citations

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