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# Basic Traps and Snares

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When trying to find a source of food, a trap or series of snares is often your best chance to capture small game and prey. Just a few examples are highlighted here. As is the case with all survival skills, building a trap or snare takes preparation, practice, and patience - but is a skill worth learning.

## Figure 4 Deadfall

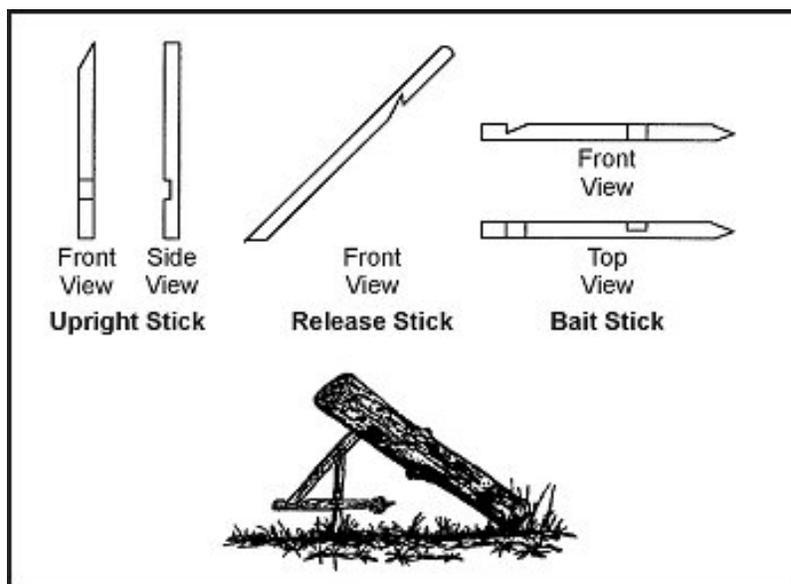
The Figure 4 deadfall is a trigger used to drop a weight onto a prey and crush it. The type of weight used may vary, but it should be heavy enough to kill or incapacitate the prey immediately.

The Figure 4 Deadfall is constructed using a deadfall weight and three notched sticks:

- upright or support stick
- release stick
- bait stick

The notches cut into these sticks hold them together in a Figure 4 pattern when under the pressure of the deadfall weight. When a prey disturbs the bait stick, the movement collapses the Figure 4 trigger, dropping the weight on the prey, crushing it.

It is essential to practice making the trigger beforehand, because it requires close tolerances and precise angles in its construction. It also calls for a delicate touch when setting the trap. Setting one just right will take practice and patience.

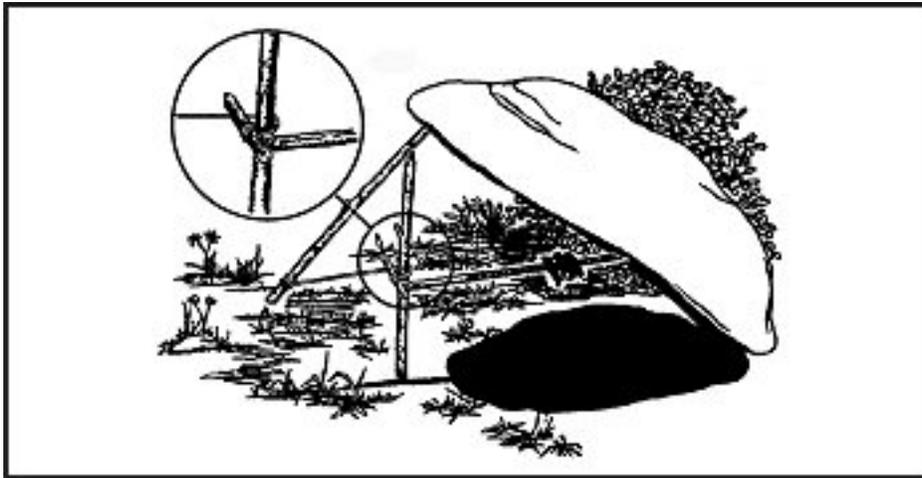




### Paiute Deadfall

The Paiute Dead-Fall is similar to the Figure 4 but uses a piece of cordage and a catch stick. It has the advantage of being easier to set than the Figure 4.

- Tie one end of a piece of cordage to the lower end of the diagonal stick.
- Tie the other end of the cordage to another stick about 2 inches long. This stick is the catch stick.
- Bring the cord halfway around the vertical stick with the catch stick at a 90-degree angle.
- Place the bait stick with one end against the drop weight, or a peg driven into the ground, and the other against the catch stick.
- When a prey disturbs the bait stick, it falls free, releasing the catch stick. As the diagonal stick flies up, the weight falls, crushing the prey
- To increase the effectiveness of this trap, bait well may be placed under the deadfall weight to lure the animals to the snare



Getting the tension just right will take practice and patience much like the Figure 4 Dead-Fall, but the Paiute Dead-Fall is much easier to master, although it is not always as effective.

### Bottle or Funnel Trap

A Bottle Trap or Funnel Trap is a simple trap for mice, voles and other small animals. One thing to remember is to not dig too deep, or you will have a difficult time getting your prey out of the trap; but if you don't dig deep enough, the prey will easily escape. This type of trap is often most successful when made in an area of grass and underbrush.

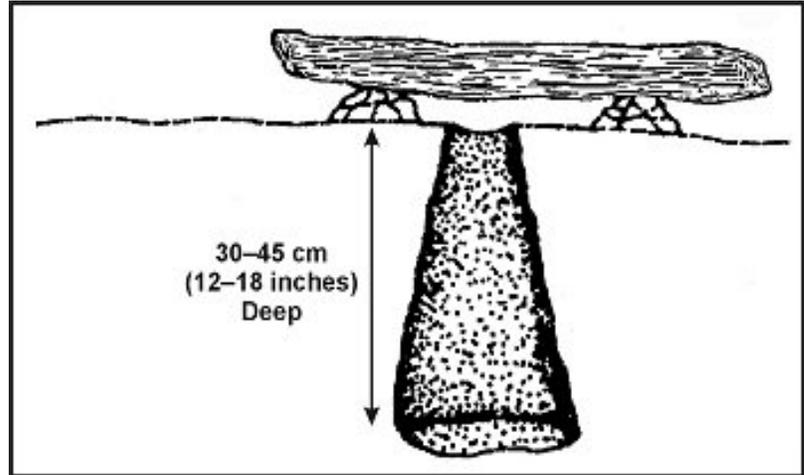
Dig a hole 12 to 18 inches deep that is wider at the bottom than it is at the top. Make the top of the hole as small and as narrow as possible.



Place a piece of bark or wood over the hole with small stones under it to hold it up 1 to 2 inches off the ground.

Mice or voles will hide under the cover to escape danger and fall into the hole. They cannot climb out because of the wall's backward slope.

Use caution when checking this trap - it makes an excellent hiding place for snakes.



## Snares

The advantage of a snare is that a snare functions best when you attend it least. Snares can be set easily and in a fairly great number while using a minimum of resources. The important thing to keep in mind is to use cord or line that will not break under the strain of holding an animal, and to make an appropriate sized loop. Make the snare loop opening slightly larger than the head of the animal that you intend to catch: approximately three fingers in width for a squirrel, and about fist-sized for a rabbit. The important thing to remember is to set as many snares as possible, and don't disturb them.

Some of the best places to locate snares include:

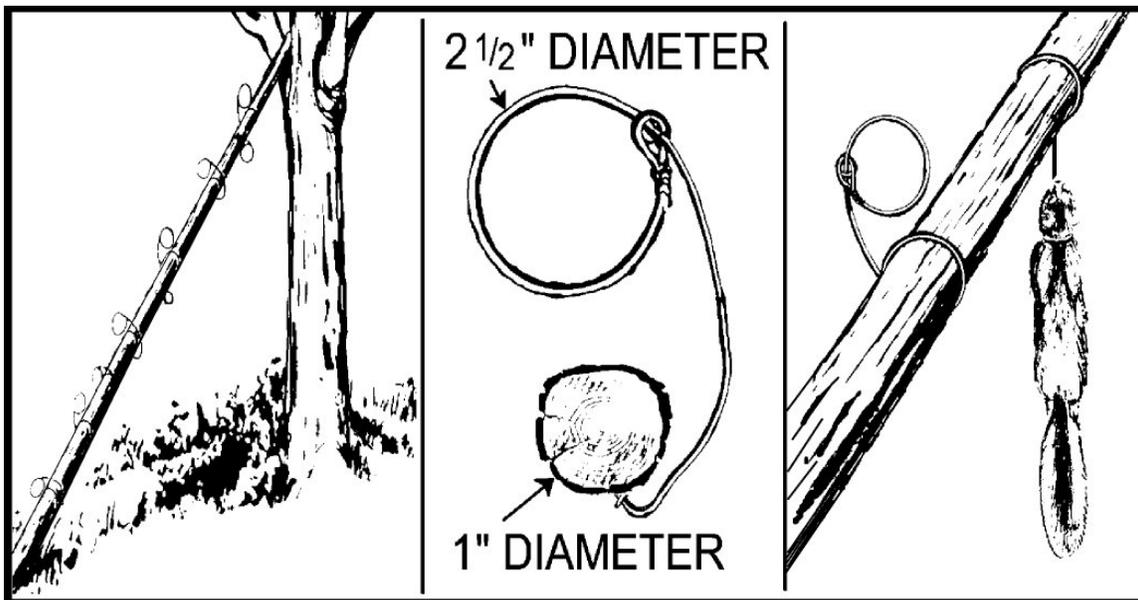
- Trails leading to water, feeding, and bedding areas
- Small game trails
- Mouth or opening to a dens
- Areas of high dense grass





## Squirrel Pole

A Squirrel Pole is a specialized snare or series of snares intended to catch only one animal - a squirrel. To construct a squirrel pole use simple loop snares along the full length of a timber or pole, in a number high enough that any squirrel running the length of the pole cannot avoid all of the loops. The natural curiosity of the animal will lead it to run the length of the pole in ascending the tree, which can be to your advantage in a survival situation.



The Figure 8 loop used in constructing a squirrel pole and other drag-type snares

