



# Keep Your Feline Fit

## Diet Tips for Your Cat

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Overweight cats are less common than overweight dogs. Cats have a much better ability to regulate their own energy intake. However, being overweight adds stresses upon his body and puts your cat at an increased risk of diabetes, liver problems and joint pain. Here are some tips on keeping your cat in tip-top shape.

### **Is your cat too fat?**

As a subjective assessment of body condition, you should be able to feel the backbone and palpate the ribs in an animal of healthy weight. If you cannot feel your pet's ribs without pressing, there is too much fat. Also, you should see a noticeable "waist" between the back of the rib cage and the hips when looking at your pet from above. Viewed from the side, there should be a "tuck" in the tummy—the abdomen should go up from the bottom of the rib cage to inside the thighs. Cats who fail these simple tests may be overweight.

### **A Hunting We will Go**

An additional factor to be considered when managing obesity in cats is hunting. It may be necessary to confine your cat to the house to prevent "additions" to the diet.

### **Get a Pro Involved**

Make sure your pet's weight gain isn't something more serious like a heart, thyroid or other metabolic disorders.

### **Correct Diet**

Overweight animals consume more calories than they require. Work with your veterinarian to determine your cat's caloric requirements, select a suitable food and calculate how much to feed.

### **Exercise**

Increasing physical activity can be a valuable contributor to both weight loss and maintenance. Check out our website for some indoor exercises for your dog and cat.

### **Owner Behavior Modification**

A successful weight management program requires permanent changes in the behaviors that have allowed the pet to become overweight. Perhaps you are giving your pet too many treats,

### **Here are some other important things you can do:**

- Remove the pet from the room when the family eats.
- Feed your pet several small meals throughout the day.
- Feed all meals and treats in the pet's bowl only.
- Reduce snacks or treats.
- Provide non-food related attention.

### **Panther's Aren't Fat**

Many cats are fed "free choice," which means there is food available all the time and the cat eats whenever it wants. This isn't natural for your feline. You should feed them two to four small portions daily and control the amounts fed so that over a period of time the cat does not gain weight.

### **Altering Doesn't Effect Weight**

Spaying or neutering does not cause obesity. This is absolutely false. Any pet, neutered or not, will gain weight if it is over fed relative to its energy requirements.

### **Over Feeding Your Dog is Not a Sign of Love**

Many cats became overweight because the owner's sign of affection for their pet has focused on feeding. It is an understandable trait but unfortunately for the cat it can be a case of too much of a good thing. Direct your attention more toward physical activity than feeding. Think "PLAY" not "FOOD"!

### **Carbohydrates**

Cats, unlike most mammals, have no carbohydrate-digesting enzyme called Amylase in their saliva. Humans and dogs do and actually begin the digestion of carbohydrates in the mouth. Nature did not intend the kitty to be a carbohydrate consumer. Be aware of the food you feed your cat and offer healthy alternatives to store bought treats.