

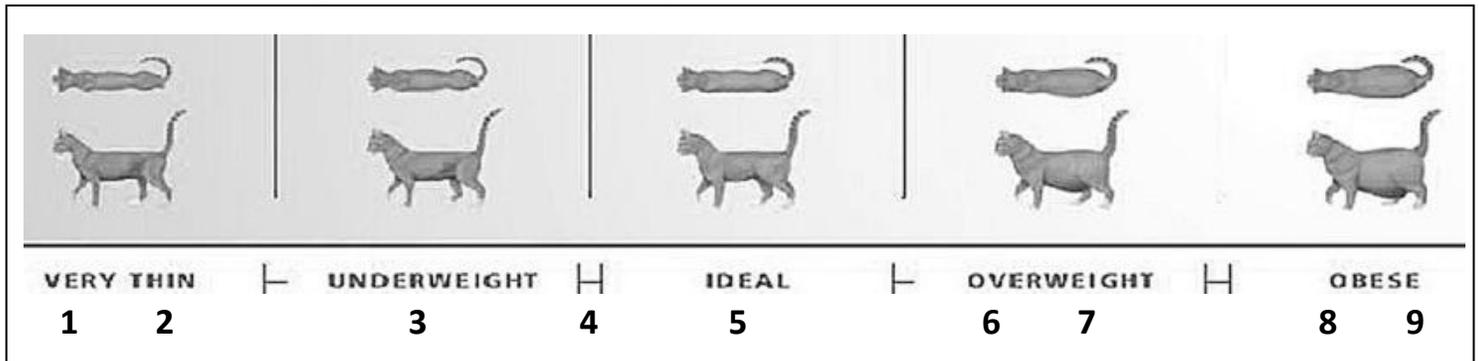


Weight Loss for Cats

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Approximately 60% of our feline patients are overweight, and many are clinically obese. Getting cats to lose weight can be a challenge, but the two components of weight loss for cats are the same as for people – diet and exercise.

Body Condition Scoring is a tool we use to describe a pet’s ratio of fat to lean muscle mass. We worry less about the actual weight and more about the ‘BCS’, which is scored on a scale from 1 to 9.



Diet Most commercial cat foods fit a lot of calories into a small package, and portions are really important!

Normal portion size is **¼ cup of dry food** or **3 oz of wet food** twice a day – overweight cats often need even less.

- Measure portions and feed cats twice a day, *do not use unlimited automatic feeders!*
- Reduce portions *gradually* – do not cut back by more than 10% every two weeks
 - If you leave dry food out all the time, try measuring how much your cat eats in 24 hours to know what his/her current ‘portion’ is, then cut back from this amount
- If your cat is begging you for food, try one of the following diet options:
 - ‘Indoor’, ‘Senior’, and ‘Weight Management’ cat food formulas (all are lower calorie density)
 - Prescription weight loss diets
 - Substitute a spoonful of canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix) for a spoonful of food
- Put portions into food-dispensing toys to prevent gorging and help your pet eat many small meals throughout the day; check out <http://store.petsafe.net/pet-care/toys/cat-toys> for a few options

Exercise Encouraging your cat to burn extra calories will speed along weight loss.

- Create cat exercise equipment by installing a cat tree or cat wall (check out www.ikeahackers.net for some good DIY options)
- Change meals from sedentary to active time (this will also help slow eating for cats that gorge, then regurgitate)
 - Use a ‘play board’ (available online and at some pet stores) to feed your cat
 - Try food-dispensing toys as described above
 - Divide food into several small bowls or dip dishes and place all around the home
- Institute play time
 - Try a variety of toys—feathers on a string, cat nip toys, and fetch are a great place to start
 - Some cats like chasing lights—try battery-operated laser light toys (look online and at pet stores) to provide playtime even when you aren’t around