

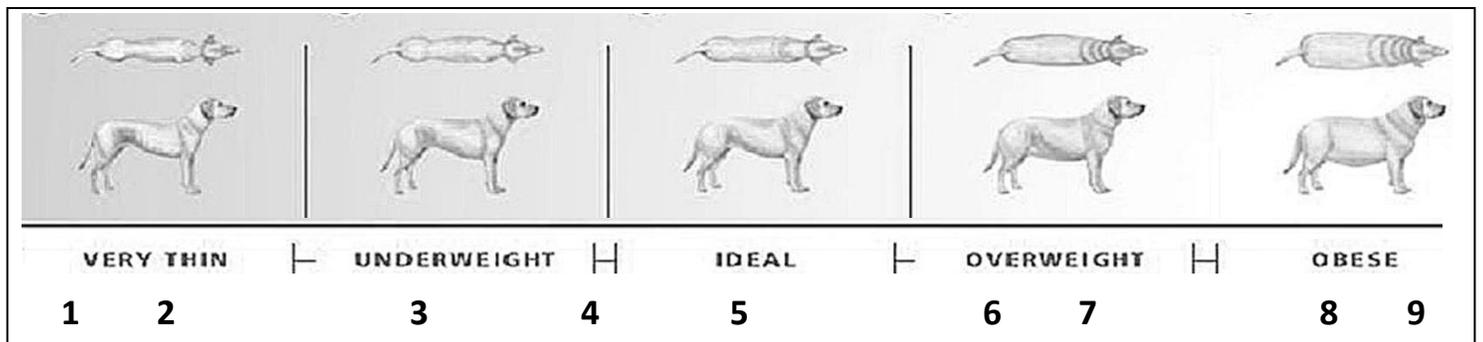


Weight Loss for Dogs

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A large number of our canine patients are overweight, and many are clinically obese. Getting dogs to lose weight can be a challenge, but the two components of weight loss for dogs 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 dog foods fit a lot of calories into a small package, and portions are really important!

There is no 'normal' portion size – the right portion is the one at which your dog maintains a healthy weight.

- It is important to measure portions and feed dogs twice daily.
- Start by cutting back the current portion size by about 10-30%, including treats!
 - If you leave dry food out all the time, try measuring how much your dog eats in 24 hours to know what his/her current 'portion' is, then cut back from this amount
 - Table scraps (and treats) are very high calorie—try cutting these out of the diet for a jumpstart
- If your dog is begging you for food, try one of the following diet options:
 - 'Senior' and 'Weight Management' food formulas (all are lower calorie density)
 - Prescription weight loss diets
 - Substitute low-sodium canned or raw string/green beans for part of the diet to increase fiber

Exercise Helping your dog to burn extra calories will speed along weight loss (and is good for you, too!)

- Change meals from sedentary to active time (this will also help slow eating for dogs that gorge, then regurgitate)
 - Put meals into food-dispensing toys
 - Bring part or all of your dog's breakfast on your morning walk and use it as treats for good behavior
- Increase walk lengths, even by an additional 5 minutes twice a day
- Encourage playing—either with toys in the house, at the dog park, or with a friend's dog for extra credit
 - Bonus: a tired dog has less energy to beg for treats!