



HELP YOUR CAT BEAT THE BULGE

Just like in people, when we want our cats to lose weight there is no simple fix. The tried and true principles of eating less and exercising more apply to cats too.

Feeding and Diet

All cats should be on a controlled feeding schedule rather than a free-choice schedule (see our separate handout on controlled feeding for more information about this).

Eliminate table scraps and treats from the diet. If you have to feed them a treat, try a small amount of flaked tuna (tuna in water, not tuna in oil) once to twice a day.

Ideally, feed a low calorie and low carbohydrate food (such as Purina DM).

Moist food may be advantageous because it is less calorically dense than dry food.

Increasing Exercise

Instead of feeding the cat in a bowl, try some of these suggestions:

- Divide the food up and place it in all four corners of a room.
- Place a small part of the food on each step of a stairway forcing them to walk up/down the stairs to eat.
- Place food on different floors/different rooms in the house.



Cut the hole so that the normal-weight cat can get to the food inside the box, but make it too small for the overweight cat to get inside!

Make the cat work for its food. For example, drill small holes into plastic PVC piping. Place the food in that and have them roll that around room to get the food out. Commercial variations on this are available at many pet stores.

You can also throw individual kibbles of food down a hall so the cat will stalk them. This is a great way to mix feeding and exercise.

Many toy options exist to encourage exercise as well. Cats love to play in crinkle bags. Laser pen lights on walls and floors allow the cat to utilize its predatory instincts. Cat-nip toys, wind-up mice, and punchy string toys all take advantage of these predatory instincts as well.

What if I have a non-obese cat as well?

Finding a way to get one cat to lose weight in a multi-cat household is always a challenge. But we do have some helpful suggestions that can allow you to minimize difficulties.

Try feeding them in separate rooms (easy to do when they are on a controlled feeding schedule). You can also place food in high places where the thinner cats can jump up to get at, but the overweight cats cannot. And, as pictured in the upper right corner, use a cardboard box to create a doorway so that your non-obese cats can gain access to their food, while the overweight cat cannot get through!

Calculate Your Cat's Daily Caloric Needs

Cats

Ideal Weight in Kg: ____ (lbs ÷ 2.2)

Calories/day = [(Wt_{kg} x 30) + 70] x 1.4 = ____

Inactivity: Multiply by 0.8 = ____

Wt. Loss: Multiply by 0.6 = ____

Estimate 300 cal/cup or 400 cal/14-15 oz can

Daily need:

____ cups or ____ cans maintenance food

____ cups or ____ cans diet food