Body Condition Score (BCS) for Cats

Very Thin: 20%+ under ideal weight
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are visible (coat may interfere with visibility)
- Fat can not be seen or felt under the skin
- Obvious loss of muscle mass

Thin: Ideal
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are visible (coat may interfere with visibility)
- Fat can not be seen or felt under the skin
- Obvious loss of muscle mass

Ideal
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are easily felt and may be visible (coat may interfere with visibility)
- A waist and abdominal tuck are seen when viewed from above and side
- Fat can be felt around ribs, spine and hip bones

Overweight
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are not visible and difficult to feel
- Excess fat is felt around ribs, spine and hip bones
- Waist and abdominal tuck are minimal or absent

Obesity: 30%+ over ideal weight
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are difficult to feel under a thick layer of fat
- Waist and abdomen distended when viewed from above and side
- Prominent fat deposits over lower spine, neck and chest


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Weight Management for Body Condition Score 7 - 9

The number of pets that are overweight or have obesity (BCS 6-9) continues to increase in the U.S. and globally. Obesity is a complex, multifactorial disease that requires early recognition and intervention to achieve a healthy body condition, prevent secondary medical problems, extend longevity, and improve quality of life.

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| is a screening tool used to evaluate body fat accumulation in an animal. Body condition scores are most accurate when performed by a trained professional. | - Diabetes  
- Kidney disease  
- Hypertension  
- Bladder & urinary tract disease  
- Arthritis & osteoarthritis  
- Respiratory disease  
- Cancer  
- Heart disease  
- Liver disease  
- Reproductive disease  
- Skin disease  
- Blindness (high blood pressure) | Obesity is a complex disease influenced by several factors, including genetics, medical conditions, caloric intake, diet and feeding habits, physical activity, and general lifestyle. | - Identify & treat any underlying medical conditions  
- Calculate daily caloric needs  
- Select a diet  
- Create a healthy feeding & treat program  
- Feed cats separately  
- Aim for 15 minutes of daily physical play & activity  
- Weigh monthly  
- Involve the entire family |
| Determining the BCS of cats is different than dogs. Cats have a normal “primordial pouch” of sagging skin on their belly. This may be accentuated in certain cats. | **Next steps** vary depending on the medical assessment and immediate health needs and risk factors for your cat. |
| Cat owners often underestimate their cat’s ideal or healthy body condition. | If excess fat accumulation and obesity are unrecognized, untreated, or unmanaged, it can lead to many weight-related health problems, including decreased life expectancy, chronic pain, and poor quality of life. | A human-animal-family treatment approach works best if your cat has been identified as over their ideal body condition. | Develop a nutritional management, exercise, and medical plan with your veterinarian and pet healthcare team. |