

long live  pets



A
healthy
shape

for a healthy dog



pdsa for pets in need of vets



Body

Why should I check my dog's shape as well as weighing him?

- Dogs come in many different shapes and sizes.
- It is difficult to tell if your dog is a healthy shape by weight alone.



Why should my dog stay slim?

- Your dog needs to be in good shape to be healthy and to have a long and happy life.
- An overweight animal will become old before its time. It will have less fun with you, so you will have less fun with your dog.
- Weight problems lead to arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and other illnesses.
- Operations are more risky if your dog is overweight.
- As dogs get older, they often slow down. Keeping your dog an ideal shape means it will get more out of life.

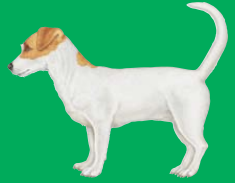


condition



ideal

- Can feel ribs, backbone and hipbones; but not prominent
- Smooth, curved, tucked-in waist
 - Base of tail smooth



overweight

- No waist and back broader
- Ribs, backbone and hipbones difficult to feel
 - Fat at base of tail



obese

- Bulging pot belly
- Cannot feel ribs, backbone and hipbones
- Thick fatty pads at base of tail



score



How to check your dog's shape

It is good to get into the habit of checking your dog's shape from when it is a puppy.

Looking at your dog

- Look at your dog from the side and from above every few weeks.
- Can you see a waist?



Visit www.pdsa.org.uk/pethealth

Feeling your dog

(This is especially important for long-haired dogs)

- Run your hands over your dog's side. The skin should move freely over the ribs.
- Stand over your dog and feel its ribs. They should be easy to feel.
- Run your hands along your dog's back and over the hipbones. You should be able to feel its bones quite easily under the skin.
- Run your hands over the base of your dog's tail. Can you feel a build-up of fat?
- Feel under your dog's tummy. It should go in, not bulge out.



When you have finished, give your dog a cuddle!

If you think your dog has a weight problem ...

- Have your dog checked over by your vet.
- Ask if your vet practice runs free weight clinics. These are usually run by trained veterinary nurses.
- If your dog is young and a bit overweight you can slightly reduce its meal size. Cutting down on treats and increasing exercise will also help.
- Take advantage of free advice from pet care specialists such as leading veterinary charity PDSA and other reputable organisations. Expert help is essential because there are so many misleading myths about losing weight.

Remember **EVERY** dog can be helped towards a healthy shape and weight – whatever age or sex, whether neutered or not.



Leading veterinary charity, PDSA, exists to care for the pets of people in need by providing free veterinary services to their sick and injured animals and promoting responsible pet ownership.

The charity relies entirely on the generous support of pet lovers to fund its PetAid services.

To find out if you qualify for PDSA funded veterinary care, freephone **0800 731 2502**.

For more information on the charity and its work, email: **info@pdsa.org.uk**
freephone: **0800 917 2509**
visit: **www.pdsa.org.uk**

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