PURINA Institute
Advancing Science for Pet Health

BODY CONDITION SYSTEM

TOO THIN

1 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance; no discernible body fat; obvious loss of muscle mass.

2 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones easily visible; no palpable fat; some evidence of other bony prominence; minimal loss of muscle mass.

3 Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat; tops of lumbar vertebrae visible; pelvic bones becoming prominent; obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

IDEAL

4 Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering; waist easily noted when viewed from above; abdominal tuck evident.

5 Ribs palpable without excess fat covering; waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above; abdomen tucked up when viewed from the side.

TOO HEAVY

6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering; waist is discernible viewed from above, but is not prominent; abdominal tuck apparent.

7 Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover; noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail; waist absent or barely visible; abdominal tuck may be present.

8 Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure; heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail; waist absent; no abdominal tuck; obvious abdominal distention may be present.

9 Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail; waist and abdominal tuck absent; fat deposits on neck and limbs; obvious abdominal distention.

The BODY CONDITION SYSTEM was developed at the Nestlé Purina Pet Care Center and has been validated as documented in the following publications:
Laflamme DP. Development and Validation of a Body Condition Score System for Dogs. *Canine Practice July/August 1997; 22: 10-15.*
Mawby DI et al. Comparison of Various Methods for Estimating Body Fat in Dogs. *J Am Anim Hosp Assoc 2004; 40: 109–114.*
German AJ et al. A Simple, Reliable Tool for Owners to Assess the Body Condition of Their Dog or Cat. J. *Nutr. 2006; 136: 2031S–2033S.*
German AJ et al. Comparison of a Bioimpedance Monitor with Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry for Noninvasive Estimation of Percentage Body Fat in Dogs. *AJVR April 2010; Vol 71, No. 4.*