

1. Know Your Dog's Healthy Weight

Different breeds and ages have different healthy weight ranges. Check what the standard weight is ideal for your pet's breed. If your dog is beyond that range, consult your vet. It's best to get a professional's help as you assess your pet's accurate weight, body condition, and diet, determine if the dog would benefit from a weight-loss plan, and set a target weight to work toward.

Note that some dogs may be shorter or taller than their breed standard requirements, so the ideal weight would be within those dogs' breed standard height descriptions.

2. Keep Your Dog Active

Just like humans, [exercise is crucial](#) when it comes to helping your overweight dog get healthy. Increasing your dog's activity helps burn off energy (and calories consumed).

Don't panic! Exercising your pet doesn't have to mean running marathons or going for long hikes. [Regular walks](#) and the chance to run and play in a safe off-leash environment are good forms of exercise for your dog.



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Even creating a [stimulating indoor environment](#) that gets your dog moving can help. Remember, different breeds need different amounts of exercise, so consult your vet, breeder, or your dog's breed standard for guidance on how much activity is recommended.

3. Know the Difference Between Begging and Hunger

Begging is not always about wanting more to eat. In fact, it's often a ploy to get more attention. (And, when it's rewarded, you reinforce and encourage the behavior to continue.) If your dog begs, don't assume that they're hungry. Trust your instincts and keep track of when the last mealtime was.

If your dog is prone to begging and you're prone to giving in to those puppy dog eyes, talk to your vet about a [high-protein diet](#) with a blend of fibers to help manage your dog's appetite and reduce their voluntary food intake. That way, you can feed your dog while knowing that they will feel fuller and stay satisfied longer.

4. Limit Treats and Table Scraps

Even when our dogs don't beg, many of us volunteer too many treats and table scraps. Dogs don't need to share everything we eat. Think of treats and scraps for your pet as you would candy for children to help you keep them to a minimum.

If you use [treats for training](#), look for low-calorie, low-fat options and [limit the amount](#). As an alternative, remember that [clickers](#) work great for reinforcement, and they've got zero calories! After all, a few extra pounds can make a huge difference for dogs, who are much smaller than we are. (Even those large breeds!) So, concentrate on a healthy diet, and curb the urge to "treat" them with more.

5. Measure and Monitor

Once your vet has designed a weight-management plan, you should have a clear idea of how much your dog should eat at each meal. Be vigilant. Don't free-feed

or eyeball how much you scoop out. Instead, use an [appropriate measuring device](#) to ensure you're managing portion control.



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6. Customize Your Dog's Diet

Not all weight-loss foods are created equal, so it's important to match your dog with a [nutrition plan](#) that directly addresses their specific needs. Look for a brand that offers [dog food](#) designed for your pet's own issues, whether it's [weight management](#), [sensitive stomachs](#), or something else entirely.

7. Don't Go Cold Turkey

No, this isn't about feeding your dog leftovers. It's important to [ease your dog into a new diet](#), rather than abruptly changing what they eat. Always consult with your vet before starting your dog on a new regimen. A good guideline is to plan for at least a seven-day transition when starting a new type of food. Here's what that could look like:

- On the first two days, feed your dog 75% of their old food and 25% of the new food.
- On the third and fourth days, increase the percentage of new food to 50%, with the other 50% being the old food.
- On the fifth and sixth days, feed your dog 75% of the new food, and 25% of the old food.
- By the seventh day, you should be up to 100% of the new food.

8. Stick With It

Like human, like pet! Studies have shown that after successfully losing weight, approximately half of all dogs regained weight. The good news is that researchers also found that rebound weight gain was significantly reduced by keeping dogs on a weight-loss diet, even after achieving their target weight. So, now that you've done the hard work and transitioned to a new formula that's working, stick with it! As with so many things in our dogs' worlds, consistency is the key.

References: <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/nutrition/8-ways-to-help-your-overweight-dog/>