



Senior Weight & Body Condition Tracker

PETSLIKEMINE
SENIOR PETS

How to score body and muscle condition at home, with a monthly weight log

PET NAME _____	DOG OR CAT _____	IDEAL WEIGHT (ONCE KNOWN) _____
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Weight is the number that quietly tells you the truth about an older pet, and the lever you control most. The picture flips in later life: old pets are, as a group, more likely to be too thin than too fat. So the senior job is two-handed: gently trim a pet still carrying too much, and watch closely for the slide the other way, because in an older animal that slide is rarely "just old age".

READ THE BODY WITH YOUR HANDS, NOT JUST THE SCALES

Body condition is scored out of 9, and the middle is ideal: about 4 to 5 out of 9 for a dog, around 5 for a cat. **Ribs:** you should feel them easily through a thin covering, like the back of your hand. **Waist from above:** a visible tuck behind the ribs. **Belly from the side:** it should tuck up, not hang level. Do this monthly while you fuss them.

MUSCLE IS THE REAL SENIOR STORY

Muscle condition is scored separately, because a pet can be overweight and losing muscle at the same time: the fat hides the wasting. Feel over the bony landmarks, the spine, the top of the skull, the shoulder blades and the hips. Good muscle pads the bone; as it is lost, those places feel sharp and prominent ("bonier over the back"). Muscle you use is muscle you keep, so keep them gently, regularly moving.

MONTHLY WEIGHT & CONDITION LOG

DATE	WEIGHT	BODY COND. (/9)	MUSCLE (NORMAL/MILD/MOD)	NOTES
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

WHEN TO CALL THE VET

Losing more than about a tenth of body weight without trying is clinically significant and earns a vet visit (for a 4kg cat that is under half a kilo, easily hidden under fur). Weight loss points to treatable problems caught better early: kidney disease, an overactive thyroid in cats, diabetes, dental pain, gut disease and sometimes cancer. Any weight loss should be slow and supervised: plan it with your vet, never crash-diet an older pet.

Written and reviewed by Dr Alastair Greenway MRCVS and Claire Greenway BVM&S MRCVS. This sheet explains and records. It does not diagnose or prescribe. Always follow your own vet's instructions.

How to use. Weigh them, write the number and date, and run your hands along the ribs and back so you know what they feel like now. That is your baseline, and the trend is what catches a problem early. A wellbeing aid, not a substitute for veterinary advice.

WEIGHT LOSS IN AN OLDER PET IS NEVER "JUST OLD AGE"