



Weight-Loss Plateau Troubleshooter

PETSLIKEMINE
WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Why the scale stalls, the fixes in order, and when to bring in the vet

PET NAME	STARTING WEIGHT	CURRENT WEIGHT
_____	_____	_____

First, the reframe: a plateau is normal, not failure, and it is the moment most pet diets quietly give up. As your pet gets lighter they burn fewer calories, so the ration that was a real deficit creeps up towards "just enough". The diet has to keep up with the shrinking pet. Work down this list in order before you ever cut harder in frustration.

SAFE PACE (SLOW IS THE LOSS THAT LASTS)

- Dogs: about 1 to 2% of body weight a week
- Cats: slower, about 0.5 to 1% a week, and never a crash diet
- A flat fortnight inside a steadily falling line is not a stall: read the trend, not the daily number
- Slow protects muscle, and protecting muscle is what keeps the diet responding

WORK THE CHECKLIST IN ORDER

- 1 Re-weigh the food.** The commonest real cause is calorie creep, not metabolism: a heavier scoop, a portion that quietly grew back. Weigh the day's ration in grams.
- 2 Re-audit the treats.** Treats drift back above the 10% budget without anyone noticing. Count them again for a few days.
- 3 Hunt the hidden calories.** The "barely eating" pet is often topped up by a partner, a child or a neighbour. Re-brief the whole household and the dog-walker.
- 4 Recalculate to the new weight.** They are lighter now, so the target ration is lower. Re-run the Feeding Calculator with today's figures and step the grams down gently.
- 5 Still stuck for weeks? See the vet.** If the food is measured, treats are counted, the household is on board and you have recalculated, it is time to rule out a medical brake and consider a therapeutic weight-loss diet.

WHEN IT IS NOT THE MATHS: THE VET CHECK

A genuinely watertight plan that still will not shift weight is the signal to rule out a medical cause, most often an underactive thyroid in dogs (easily checked with a blood test) or, less commonly, Cushing's. Your vet may also suggest a weight-loss diet built to keep a pet fuller on fewer calories: one option among several, with a real upside (it makes the deficit easier to live with) and a real downside (cost).

ONE THING YOU MUST NOT DO, ESPECIALLY WITH A CAT

Do not crash-cut the food in frustration. A cat dropped onto far too little food, or one that stops eating, can develop hepatic lipidosis (a fatty liver) that turns life-threatening within days. An overweight cat that will not eat for 24 to 48 hours is an emergency and a same-day vet call, not a diet that is finally working.

WHAT I CHANGED THIS TIME, AND THE RESULT

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. Re-weigh the food, re-audit the treats, find the hidden calories, recalculate to the new weight, then bring in the vet. Hold the pace and read the trend. A wellbeing aid, not a substitute for veterinary advice.

A PLATEAU IS NORMAL: WORK THE LIST, DON'T CRASH-CUT