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**11 ways to help your pet - and you - lose weight and get fitter this New Year**

It’s always a top resolution amongst Brits, but it’s not only pet owners who should be thinking about losing weight and getting fitter this New Year. 

At the start of [National Obesity Awareness Week](https://nationaltoday.com/national-obesity-awareness-week/), [nearly half of all UK dogs](https://www.pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice/pet-health-hub/conditions/obesity-in-dogs)and up to [53% of cats](https://www.animaljournal.co.uk/article/health/chonky-cats-internet-sensation) are overweight or obese - as are around [two-thirds](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn03336/)of the English population aged 16 and over.

Not only is this likely to shorten lifespans and impact everyone’s ability to enjoy everyday activities, such as exercise, but it also puts us at greater risk of conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, high blood pressure and cancers.

So, to help keep your pet and you at a healthy weight – and those costly vets’ bills down - experts from global pet brand [PetSafe®](http://www.petsafe.com/UK) share their 11 top tips to help us all live longer and happier lives. And they’ll really help our waistlines and mental wellbeing, too.

1. **Measure food portions for the weight they should be, not for the weight they are**

This might seem obvious but feed the recommended amount for what your pet should weigh, not what they actually weigh - and stick to it.

Reducing his calorie intake is the first step to help your pet lose weight. If he eats more calories than he burns, he’ll gain bulk. Chances are, he’ll need less food than you think.

Also stop sharing calorie-heavy table scraps. It may be a tough transition at first, but it really will make a difference.

1. **Fill up on protein and cut back on carbs**

The amount of pet food you serve is just one part of a good weight loss plan – its quality also matters.

Lots are full of fillers that increase calories but not nutrition, so consider switching to a low-carb, high-protein food to enhance your pet’s fitness – giving him the right amount of nutrition and energy, without those empty calories.

Speak to your vet about choosing the right dog food for weight loss and check out foods’ nutritional values on websites like this [one.](https://petfoodexpert.co.uk/)

1. **Fill them up on fibre**

Help your pet feel fuller for longer without putting on weight by gradually adding high fibre snacks and mixers to his food. Cooked carrots, green beans, broccoli, spinach and lettuce are all excellent sources to help your pet achieve the recommended daily intake – that’s 2% to 4% for dogs, and up to 8% for cats – for easy weight loss. It’s a great diet tip for owners too.

1. **Keep bowls full of water and add it to dry food**

As with humans, pets may turn to food when, in fact, they’re thirsty - so make sure their water bowls are topped up with fresh, clean water. And add it to food, so that your pet feels full, even when eating smaller portions.

For more reluctant drinkers, there are a number of quick and easy ways to help increase water consumption, such as keeping water bowls clean, having multiple bowls located around the house, taking water out and about with you and adding flavour, such as low sodium chicken broth, beef or bone broth to water. And as cats and dogs love running water, [pet fountains](https://uk.petsafe.net/collections/pet-fountains) also encourage them to drink more.

1. **Reward with fun, not food**

If your pet already has a high-quality food but is still gaining weight, they’re maybe enjoying too many treats throughout the day.

Yes, use food as a reward during training but choose high-protein options, such as chicken, cut into small pieces, and only give one when earned. And swap a biscuit for a game of fetch or a tummy rub.

1. **Up your pace and distance**

Another way to help manage weight is picking up the pace of daily walks – and it also works wonders for human fitness and weight loss too. Start slowly and gradually and build up - increasing pace and distance as you both become fitter.

If you add 30 minutes of brisk walking to your daily routine, you could burn about 150 more calories a day. The more you walk and the quicker your pace, the more calories you'll burn – it’s the same for our dogs. Increasing exercise is also great for keeping their minds active – not to mention reducing our stress.

For those looking to really increase their fitness – and that of their dog – there are also lots of canine fitness classes and running groups, such as [Canicross UK](https://www.canicrossuk.com/), a nationwide off-road running group, suitable for all abilities, with your dog.

1. **Feed them separately**

Separating your pets for mealtimes can also help to reach weight loss goals. They can sometimes overeat because they view other pets as competition and if you’re feeding a special diet food to one, you’ll want to make sure the others aren’t eating it. It’s also easier to see what and how much each is consuming individually.

1. **Take it slow and steady**

Weight gain doesn’t happen overnight, and unfortunately, neither does weight loss. And nor should it. Most healthy pets should be able to reach their target weight within six to eight months.

Dogs and cats shouldn’t lose more than 1% to 2% of their bodyweight each week, with quick weight loss sometimes causing nutritional deficits, behavioural problems and serious illness. So set realistic expectations, be consistent and take your time.

Gradual habitual changes are most safe and impactful, so make mutually beneficial lifestyle changes that integrate exercise and a healthy diet into everyone’s daily routine.

1. **Weigh-in regularly**

Most vets will welcome you dropping by, free of charge, for a monthly weigh in in support of their weight loss journey – and it’s also rewarding to celebrate progress and ensure you’re on the right track.

If your pet is small and can be held, you can do this at home by weighing yourself with and without him and calculate the difference.

1. **Encourage indoor cats to move more**

Indoor cats are often disinterested in exercise, which can lead to weight problems. But there are many easy ways to encourage them to move more to achieve the recommended 30 minutes.

Move around their bowls and litter box so they have to seek them out – put them on different floors, so they’ll have to walk up and down the stairs. Also turn mealtimes into playtimes by introducing [treat toys](https://uk.petsafe.net/collections/cat-toys/products/funkitty-twist-n-treat) and [feeding balls](https://uk.petsafe.net/collections/cat-toys/products/funkitty-fishbowl-cat-feeder-toy) and make her trade some physical effort for food – and they [provide mental stimulation](https://uk.petsafe.net/collections/cat-toys), too.

And remember, pet walks aren't just for dogs - cats can benefit from a stroll out too. Use [a harness and lead](https://uk.petsafe.net/products/easy-walk-cat-harness) and, as with dogs, train her with healthy treats.

1. **Rule out any medical conditions**

If you’re doing everything you can and your pet’s still not losing weight, visit your vet to rule out any medical conditions. Weight gain and lethargy can be symptoms of a number of conditions such as hypothyroidism, arthritis and Cushing’s Syndrome.

PetSafe® Brand’s Rob Steele said: “Around [half of us Brits](https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2022/12/28/how-many-britons-have-made-new-years-resolutions-2) have made resolutions to do more exercise, improve our fitness, lose weight and improve our diets this New Year – so let’s do the same for our pets.

“At the start of National Obesity Awareness Week, we know that the disease is one of the [top five issues facing pets and humans in the UK](https://www.pdsa.org.uk/what-we-do/pdsa-animal-wellbeing-report/paw-report-2022/diet-and-obesity), which has a hugely negative impact on everyone’s health, welfare and quality and length of life, and what better time than now do something about it?

“For owners trying to manage or reduce their dog’s weight, food is most important. Weight loss for dogs – and humans - is 60% to 70% diet and 30% to 40% exercise. For cats, it’s about 90% what and how much you feed, and just 10% activity.

“So, sort out their food and then take this opportunity to get outdoors and become fitter and healthier together – whilst enjoying quality time and making lots of lovely memories.”

For further information visit [www.petsafe.com/UK](http://www.petsafe.com/UK)

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

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**About PetSafe® Brand**

PetSafe® Brand is a global pet product expert renowned for developing high quality, reliable product solutions that strengthen the bond between pets and pet parents.

Following its launch in 1998, the PetSafe® brand was quickly and solidly built around the provision of trusted training solutions, with innovative ideas in Containment, Training and Bark Control. Whilst these popular categories remain today, other product solutions include Pet Doors, Harnesses and Walking Solutions, Pet Fountains & Feeders, Cat & Dog Toys, Waste Management and a Travel, Access & Mobility range.

Its in-house teams of engineers and innovative design specialists are constantly researching, testing and developing new products, working closely with pet behaviourists, veterinary professionals and every day pet parents to ensure products are effective at keeping pets healthy, safe and happy.

Visit [www.petsafe.com/UK](http://www.petsafe.com/UK) for further details or connect on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/petsafeuk/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/PetSafeUK) or [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/petsafe_uk/).