

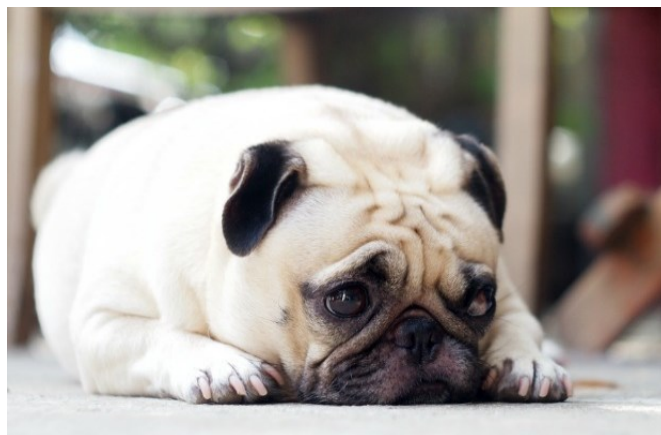
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Diary of a Fat Dog

by Caitlin Ultimo

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As an owner of a dog that tends to tip the scales, I have a hard time hearing the term “fat dog.” Sure, he may be a bit overweight at 15 pounds, but I think he is just about the cutest chiwennie around



—aside from his sister, who was blessed with the slender genes, weighing in at a healthy 12.9. Still, the challenges my pup faces are real and I want to do anything and everything I can to help him.

“Many of my pet owners complain that they feel embarrassed that their pets are overweight and that they are judged by the overall care the pet is getting by their waistlines,” says Dr. Stephanie Liff, DVM and partner at Brooklyn Cares Veterinary Hospital.

Here, we imagine a day in the life of a fat dog, and offer a few suggestions from Dr. Liff, on shedding the pounds—and the unseemly label.

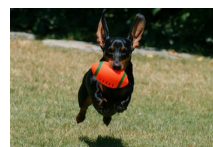
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9:00 AM: *Harness on, mom by my side and my tail wagging. I love to see all the people out and about. Oh, some kids, let me greet them. I waddle up and one points, "Look at the fat one, is she pregnant?" "No, he is not pregnant," responds my mom.*

1:00 PM: *Someone comes by the back stairs outside; I must jump on the chair to bark out the window. Sometimes it takes a few tries to get up.*

3:00 PM: *I love my bones! Chewing is the best.*

6:00 PM: *Oh yay! It's dinner time! Eating is divine. I must nibble up every last bite.*

9:00 PM: *My favorite toy is this long furry fox, let me grab it and whip it around. My mom throws it for me, but I only chase it for a bit—all that running around is exhausting.*

10:00 PM: *It's bedtime, what a day. My sister jumps up into bed, but my mom picks me up. It's too high for me.*

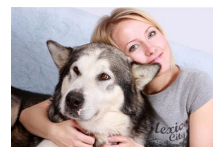
According to Dr. Liff, overweight pets fall into two categories: Those that cannot help it due to a metabolic issue such as hypothyroidism or suffer from diseases that limit their ability to exercise; and those that just eat too much.

"I have great success in most cases when dogs are overweight because they are getting too much to eat, by putting them on a meal plan and sending my owners home with a measuring cup and a line distinguishing how much they should feed," shares Dr. Liff. "Many people are just eyeballing the food and don't realize how much they are actually putting into their dogs. If the client is already measuring, I recommend they decrease the volume of food they feed by 25 percent to initiate weight loss."

"In my pets who haven't historically had a weight problem, I focus on getting an accurate history of what is going on in their life," says Dr. Liff. "One common example of 'unexplained' weight gain is with pets living in homes with young kids. Once the baby is in the high chair and eating on its own, many of those dogs will put on a couple pounds because they are working as the clean-up crew!"

Aside from regulating the amount of calories your dog is consuming, Dr Liff suggests looking at the kind of food you feed your dog. "Most pet food companies have created weight control options—low calorie, high fiber—and these can be very helpful. That same idea applies to the kinds of treats you feed him—think low calorie options like carrots and ice cubes."

the Snow



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by **Maddiegirl**
1 Replies | 0 Paws Up



Introduce Yourself!

by **Rebecca**
42 Replies | 0 Paws Up



Our Kitties are Missing their Fur Daddy

by **troublesniffer**
1 Replies | 1 Paws Up

“And don’t forget about exercise,” says Liff. “The more your pet burns and the less they intake will all make for a successful weight loss plan.”

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