



HOW TO CHECK YOUR CAT'S SHAPE

- With your cat standing in front of you, gently run your fingers along the side of your cat. Can you see and feel the ribs?
- If you can feel the ribs, how easy are they to feel?
- If you can very easily feel the ribs, spine, hips, or other bony prominence such as the shoulders, your cat may be too thin.
- What if there is a thin layer of fat covering the ribs? If you can feel the ribs with some very light finger pressure, then your cat is likely to be in good shape.
- If you cannot feel the ribcage, can you feel the indentation of the waist when you run your fingers along the backs and sides?
- If you can feel the waist indentation, your cat may be fine or just slightly overweight.
- If you cannot feel the waist indentation and there is a rounding to the belly area, your cat is likely to be overweight.
- Move your hand over the lower back and hips. Can you feel a significant layer of fat or padding in this area? If yes and there is a marked drooping of your cat's belly, your cat is likely to be very overweight.
- If your cat is too thin or too heavy, ask your local vet for advice. The vet will look for any underlying health problems as to why your pet may be too thin or too heavy. If there are no underlying health issues, a change of diet and lifestyle suitable for your individual cat may be suggested.
- Many vet practices run free weight management consultations led by the veterinary nurse who can check whether your pet is overweight or not. Give your local practice a call to see what services they provide. An increasing number of pet shops are also offering free weight checks.
- Once your cat is in ideal condition, continue to monitor its weight and body shape. If you think weight is creeping back on, take steps to ensure your pet is getting enough exercise and you or anyone else in your family is not over feeding.
- It can be a challenge for your pet to stay in peak physical condition, particularly if there are lifestyle changes. Humans often over indulge at Christmas or on holiday. The same will often apply to your pet. Be mindful of these lifestyle changes and try to keep your pet's routine as consistent as possible.