



Healthy Weight for Your New Corgi

Let's talk about your corgis weight..... **A healthy corgi should have a clearly defined waistline and an obvious abdominal tuck just after its rib cage.**

If you've never seen a corgi that looks like this, you're not alone. That's because we, as a society, have normalized fat dogs. By using phrases like "thick", "chonker", and "big-boned", we've altered our perception of reality.

Fat is the new normal and healthy is the new unhealthy. We can no longer see the extra weight for what it really is. Dangerous. Is that "thick" corgi still cute when they develop life-altering heart problems, joint problems, diabetes, or cancer? This isn't hypothetical. This is a reality that many corgi owners are facing every single day. To make matters worse, corgis are known for having extremely large appetites and, if given the opportunity, will quite literally, eat themselves to death. This means corgis are especially prone to overeating and becoming overweight. It is our responsibility as pet owners to monitor our dog's daily calorie intake, exercise regiment, and body condition score to ensure they live long happy, and healthy lives. We owe it to our dogs to do better. We must do better.

Why Your Corgi's Weight Matters

The #1 health problem facing corgis today is OBESITY.

Corgis are commonly known to develop hip dysplasia, intervertebral disc disease (IVDD), as well as general hip, joint, and back problems caused by their conformation.

Sadly, obesity only exacerbates these underlying problems within the breed.

Along with these complications, other known [health risks](#) associated with dog obesity include:

- Damage to joints, bones, and ligaments
- Higher risk of diabetes
- Heart disease and increased blood pressure



- Increased surgical and anesthetic risk
- Increased risk of cancer
- (Most Importantly) Decreased quality and length of life

How To Determine Your Corgi's Body Condition Score

Your Corgi's Weight Doesn't Matter

First and foremost: Weight doesn't matter.... I say this because your dog's weight is not an accurate representation of its body condition. I often see people post pictures of their obese dog along with their dog's weight as a way to defend/validate their dog's "healthiness".

"Corgis should be between 25-30 lbs and mine is 26 lbs, therefore she is healthy"

What those owners fail to realize is that 25 lbs on one corgi may be severely overweight or underweight for another. Every dog has a different ideal weight based on its body structure, lifestyle, and metabolism.

A scale is not a reliable way to determine your dog's body condition or healthiness.

So, why does my vet weigh my dog then? Vets weigh dogs so they can give the appropriate amount of medication (if needed). The scale is **NOT** used to determine if your dog is at a healthy weight. This is why every vet visit should have a hands-on physical examination of your pup!

How To Score Your Corgi's Body Condition

So, how should you determine your dog's [body condition score](#)?

Simply put, you should use your eyes, your hands, and a healthy dose of brutal honesty.

Every corgi should have a clearly defined waistline, similar to an hourglass shape, with a visible abdominal tuck just behind their rib cage.



Body Condition Score



UNDER IDEAL

- 1 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.
- 2 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
- 3 Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

IDEAL

- 4 Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
- 5 Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

OVER IDEAL

- 6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
- 7 Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.
- 8 Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.
- 9 Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.

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Visually, corgis can be surprisingly deceptive due to the “fluffiness” of their coats. Therefore, it’s important to be as hands-on as possible:

- Run your hands vertically from shoulders down to their rump. Does your corgi have 3 clearly defined sections of their body: rib cage, abdomen, and thighs? These three sections of their body should be easily seen and easily felt.
- Check their ribs
When you place your hands on their rib cage, you should easily feel their ribs with little to no fat covering them. You should be able to count and clearly feel each rib with your fingers without having to apply much pressure.



- Look at their abdomen

When viewing your dog from the side, their stomach should tuck in and up after their rib cage.

When you are assessing your dog's body condition, it's not the time to make excuses. It's incredibly important to be brutally honest with yourself about your dog's physical condition. If your dog's midsection is a straight line with no definition (hotdog shaped), balloons outward, or their ribs are difficult to feel, you should start them on a corrective meal plan and an exercise regimen.

How often should I check-in?

Ideally, you should be assessing your dog's body condition at least once a week, if not every day. I personally assess my dog's body condition every morning before breakfast and adjust their meals for the day accordingly.

What Should I Do If My Corgi Is Overweight?

Change Your Perception

It's important to recognize the myths we often tell ourselves as pet owners.

- Believing that if our dogs are round and "fluffy" they are happy and well cared for (spoiled).
- Thinking that feeding our dogs shows our love for them.
- Believing that our dog is "starving" if they are "asking" or "begging" for food.
- Feeling that denying our dogs the amount of food they want is abuse or neglect.
- Making our family member "scapegoats" by blaming them for sneaking extra treats

Truth:

It is OUR job as pet owners to care for our dogs and to keep them healthy. By overfeeding and allowing them to become overweight, we are doing them a huge disservice and actively shortening their lifespan.



Understand Serving Size Vs. kcals

Let's talk about another misconception – serving sizes.

“Cups per day” is an arbitrary measurement that doesn't accurately represent how much food your dog is consuming each day.

What *actually* matters is the kcals (kilocalories) you feed per day. This number depends on what kibble you feed, and how much you feed. Some kibbles will be more calorie-heavy and have more kcal/cup than others. You can figure out how many calories are in your dog's food by looking at the nutrition label of the bag. It will usually appear like this “3,725 kcal/kg, 429 kcal/cup “

There is no set number for how many calories your dog should be consuming each day. It really just depends on your individual dog and their body's calorie requirements. If they get an extra treat during the day, I will take those extra calories into account and subtract them from their daily meals.

What if you follow the feeding instructions on the back of the bag and your dog is still overweight?

Well, the serving sizes on your kibble bag can be [misleading](#). The suggestions printed on the back of the bag are based on a “generic dog”. They don't take into account your dog's individual metabolism, activity level, or genetics. Plus, some kibble brands can be extremely generous in their portion sizes with the hopes that you will end up buying more of their products. Do not rely on the back of the kibble bag to tell you how much food to feed your dog. Instead, you should use those recommendations as a “starting point” and talk to your vet about an appropriate daily calorie allowance. You should track how many calories you feed each day and adjust their meals based on the regular body assessments of your dog. Do not depend on what the bag “suggests” or what someone else might be feeding their dog.

I always recommended that you do your own assessments and feed the dog in front of you.



If they are gaining weight— feed less and exercise more. If they are too skinny— feed more.

Talk To Your Vet About Implementing a Lifestyle Change

Before putting your dog on a diet, you should ALWAYS consult your local veterinarian.

If you and your vet determine that your dog is overweight (that means that your dog is at least 10-20% heavier than their ideal weight), you will need to sit down with them and create a weight-reduction plan. Your veterinarian should calculate your dog's ideal weight based on its breed, size, and lifestyle and then help you structure a meal plan that is best suited for your individual dog.

Keep in mind that your vet may also recommend switching to a lower calorie kibble such as a [prescription kibble](#) if the kibble you feed is calorie-heavy. You and your vet should also discuss a safe weight loss goal per month. Generally speaking, a safe weight loss for most dogs is between [3-5% body weight loss per month](#). If your dog is significantly overweight, your vet could recommend a target weight higher than your dog's ideal weight to start.

After your dog loses the initial weight, a re-evaluation will likely be necessary to determine whether further weight loss is needed.

Your weight-reduction plan should include

1. A clearly defined daily calorie allowance
2. A breakdown of k/cals in your dog's food + feeding instructions
3. An exercise regimen to encourage weight loss
4. A list of low-calorie treats you can use such as cucumber, carrots, or green beans.
5. A measurable end goal

Keep in mind, your dog losing weight is not as simple as placing them on a "diet". It's about implementing permanent meal and lifestyle changes to ensure the health and happiness of your dog.



Tools For Success

Every dog diet can be made easier with these two simple tools.

1. Buy a smaller bowl by significantly downsizing your bowl it will look like you are feeding more food even though you are feeding less. This will help you fight those deceptive perceptions we discussed earlier!
2. Buy a kitchen scale or measuring cup

Do not eyeball your dog's serving sizes.

A kitchen scale/measuring cup will help keep food portions consistent and you honest about the amount of food you are feeding your dogs.

It is much harder to cheat when you know EXACTLY how much food you are feeding your pup with every meal.

For example, Kibble A's nutrient info states "3,725 kcal/kg, 429 kcal/cup". If your dog is consuming 215 calories a day, then you should be feeding your dog EXACTLY 1/4 cup in the morning and 1/4 cup at night.

Final Thoughts

Take a look at your pup and feel their midsection. If their condition is not where it should be, consult your vet and develop a weight-reduction plan. Ultimately, you should always strive to feed the dog in front of you. Ignore the portion size on the back of the food bag, your dog's weight, and how much other people feed their dogs.

Use a kitchen food scale or measuring bowl every time you feed your dog to keep yourself honest.