


BODY CONDITION SCORING CHART AND BODY FAT PERCENTAGE ESTIMATOR FOR DOGS



Ribs/Pelvic Bones/Lumbar Vertebrae	Waist (Viewed From Side, Viewed from Top)	Overall Body Appearance	Body Fat Percentage	Body Condition	
All visible from 20+ feet away as bony protrusions.	Steep and drastic abdominal tuck immediately behind rib cage. Very pronounced waist. Hip-to-waist ratio approximately 1.7:1 or greater.	Little or no visible muscle mass and no noticeable body fat whatsoever.	0-4%	Emaciated (BCS 1)	
Most visible from 5-20 feet away as bony protrusions.	Significant abdominal tuck immediately behind rib cage. Pronounced waist. Hip-to-waist ratio between 1.5:1 and 1.7:1.	No palpable body fat and minimal visible muscle mass.	4-9%	Underfat (BCS 2)	
Some may be visible without palpation, but not obviously so. All easily palpable with no palpable body fat.	Obvious abdominal tuck. Obvious waist. Hip-to-waist ratio between 1.4:1 and 1.5:1.	Few, if any, obvious bony protrusions but no obvious lack of muscle mass, if any.	9-15%	Lean (BCS 3)	
Not visibly protruding, but easily palpable with only minimal body fat covering.	Abdominal tuck is clear to the naked eye but moderate. Clearly identifiable waist. Hip-to-waist ratio between 1.3:1 and 1.4:1.	No obvious bony protrusions. No obvious accumulations of body fat. No obvious lack of muscle mass.	15-20%	Fit (BCS 4)	
Adult Dogs With BCS < 5 Live 16% Longer Than Their Overweight Peers.					
Not visible, but palpable without excess body fat covering.	Minimal abdominal tuck is clear to the naked eye. Identifiable waist. Hip-to-waist ratio between 1.2:1 and 1.3:1.	No obvious bony protrusions and no obvious lack of muscle mass. Accumulations of body fat are minimal.	20-24%	Moderate (BCS 5)	
Not visible. Palpable under moderate amount of fat covering.	Some abdominal tuck may be present, but it will not be obvious. Waist is discernible but not prominent. Hip-to-waist ratio between 1:1 and 1.2:1.	Moderate accumulations of body fat and lack of visible muscular definition.	24-29%	Slightly Overfat (BCS 6)	
Not visible. Palpable, but only with considerable effort under significant fat covering.	Minimal abdominal tuck, if any. Minimal identifiable waist, if any.	Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area, base of tail, and/or waist. Minimal abdominal distension.	29-35%	Moderately Overfat (BCS 7)	
Not visible and not palpable, except perhaps with significant effort.	No abdominal tuck. No waist.	Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area, base of tail, and/or waist. Noticeable abdominal distension.	35-40%	Seriously Overfat (BCS 8)	
Not visible and not palpable, regardless of effort. Heavy fat deposits.	No abdominal tuck. No waist.	Heavy fat deposits over thorax, spine, base of tail, neck, and limbs. Obvious abdominal distension.	40+%	Grossly Overfat (BCS 9)	

The informational content contained in this document is based upon data derived from the following studies: (1) Laflamme, D. 1997. Development and validation of a body condition score system for dogs. *Canine Practice* 28(4): 10-15. (2) Burkholder, W.J. 2000. Use of body condition scores in clinical assessment of the provision of optimal nutrition. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* 217(5): 650-654. (3) Mawby, D. 2004. Comparison of various methods for estimating body fat in dogs. *J. Am. Anim. Hosp. Assoc.* 40: 109-114. (4) German, A. 2006. A reliable tool for owners to assess the body condition of their dog or cat. *J. Nutr.* 136: 2031S-2039S. (5) Lawler, D. 2002. Effects of diet restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* 220:1315-1320. © Varsity Pets, 2013