













# RABBIT SIZE-O-METER

- Your pet is a healthy weight
- Seek advice about your pet's weight
- Seek advice as your pet could be at risk

## PLEASE NOTE

Getting hands on is the key to this simple system. Whilst the pictures in the Rabbit Size-O-Meter will help, judging whether your pet is the right weight purely by sight alone has its difficulties. A long coat can disguise ribs, hip bones and the spine, while a short coat can make a rabbit's appearance more irregular and highlight these areas. You will need to gently feel your pet which can be a pleasurable bonding experience for both of you!

Size-O-Meter Score:				Characteristics:
<b>1</b>	<b>VERY THIN</b> More than 20% below ideal body weight			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hip bones, ribs and spine are very sharp to the touch</li> <li>• Loss of muscle and no fat cover</li> <li>• The rump area curves in</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>THIN</b> Between 10-20% below ideal body weight			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hip bones, ribs and spine are easily felt</li> <li>• Loss of muscle and very little fat cover</li> <li>• Rump area is flat</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>IDEAL</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hip bones, ribs and spine easily felt but are rounded, not sharp – Ribs feel like a pocket full of pens!</li> <li>• No abdominal bulge</li> <li>• Rump area is flat</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>OVERWEIGHT</b> 10-15% above ideal body weight			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure is needed to feel the ribs, spine and hip bones</li> <li>• Some fat layers</li> <li>• The rump is rounded</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>OBESE</b> More than 15% above ideal body weight			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very hard to feel the spine and hip bones – Ribs can't be felt!</li> <li>• Tummy sags with obvious fat padding</li> <li>• Rump bulges out</li> </ul>



## RABBIT SIZE-O-METER

### YOUR RABBIT SCORE: RESULTS:

#### VERY THIN

**1**

Your pet is very likely to be underweight. Your pet may have a naturally lean physique but we recommend you speak to your local vet to rule out any underlying medical reasons such as dental or kidney disease. If your pet is healthy but otherwise underweight, your vet is likely to advise some dietary and lifestyle changes.

#### THIN

**2**

Your pet is thin and potentially underweight. Your pet may have a naturally lean physique but we recommend you speak to your local vet for a health check up. If your pet is healthy but otherwise underweight, your vet may advise some dietary and lifestyle changes.

#### IDEAL

**3**

Congratulations your pet is in ideal body condition! This is great news, as being at its ideal weight increases the chances of your pet living a long and healthy life. To keep your rabbit in tip top shape, monitor its weight and body condition on a regular basis (eg. once a month) and be careful what you and everyone else in the family feeds it. Remember any changes in lifestyle (eg. reduced exercise, recent surgery, extra treats, or even factors such as stress) can result in weight change.

#### OVERWEIGHT

**4**

Your pet is potentially overweight. Being overweight is unhealthy for pets as it can lead to a shortened life-span, high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis, cystitis and other health complications. Speak to your local vet for advice and a thorough health check-up. The vet will look for any underlying medical reasons as to why your pet may be too heavy. If there are no underlying health issues, a change of diet and lifestyle is likely to be suggested. Many vet practices run free weight management consultations, ask about these services when you ring to book an appointment.

#### OBESE

**5**

Your pet is likely to be obese and this can have serious medical implications. Being overweight is unhealthy for pets as it can lead to a shortened life-span, high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis, cystitis and other health complications. Speak to your local vet for advice and a thorough health check-up. The vet will look for any underlying medical reasons as to why your pet may be too heavy. If there are no underlying health issues, a weight loss programme will probably be individually developed for your pet and should include diet and lifestyle changes.

### CHECK OUT OUR TOP 5 TIPS FOR FEEDING YOUR RABBIT.

- 1 Always provide access to fresh water from a bowl or metal tipped feeding bottle, check the bottle regularly to make sure it's working properly.
- 2 Ensure your rabbit has an unlimited supply of good quality hay or grass which are an essential form of fibre for rabbits. They are great for their teeth, digestive system and keep them occupied. Lawnmower clippings should be avoided as they ferment rapidly and can cause digestive disturbances.
- 3 Buy specialist rabbit food – ask your vet or pet shop for advice.
- 4 Feed leafy vegetables which are good for their teeth and provide variety. Root vegetables including carrots aren't good for rabbits, so only use them as occasional treats.
- 5 Rabbits can get fat quickly if they're not eating the right food or not taking enough exercise. Use our Rabbit Size-O-Meter every four weeks or so to check your rabbits body condition.

#### REMEMBER

To make the most of advice on weight management offered by many vet practices and pet care professionals.



[www.ukpetfood.org](http://www.ukpetfood.org)

For more information on the Rabbit Size-O-Meter and tips on how to prevent weight gain visit [www.ukpetfood.org](http://www.ukpetfood.org). In addition to providing useful tips on how to keep your pet healthy and happy, a team of veterinary nutrition experts are on hand to answer your pet nutrition questions in the 'Ask the Expert' section.