

Theme: The De-chonking

- *The importance of healthy weight in cats* -

Did you know?

It's thought over 50% of cats in the UK are overweight. Cats who are overweight have a poorer quality of life, keeping your cat at a healthy weight is a key responsibility of being a cat owner.

Although beloved by the internet 'chonk' or overweight cats are a real problem we see with cats in our care and with owners searching for advice. [Sooty came into our care earlier this year weighing a massive 10kg!](#)

Like in humans, excess weight in cats can cause health problems so it's important they maintain a healthy weight. Obesity in cats can increase the risk of diabetes, osteoarthritis and heart problems, so it's important to tackle the problem as early as possible. Overweight cats also can't partake in normal cat behaviours such as grooming as due to their increased size they can't reach all areas easily, this often leads to stress and other health issues as well as hairballs in long haired cats.

Thoughts to get you started

- What's the best way to communicate that being 'chonky' is not a desirable trait for a cat?
- What are some slippery slopes for owners that could lead to them overfeeding their cats?
- What would a healthy-cat exercising and dieting regime look like?

5 top tips for keeping your feline fit and healthy:

- Weigh out cat food on a daily basis, being careful not to overfill bowls. If giving cat treats, reduce the overall amount of food given at meal times
- Encourage your cat to exercise with toys such as fishing-rod toys or placing their daily ration of food inside a fun feeding ball to encourage activity
- Avoid giving your cat treats intended for humans, such as milk, cheese or chocolate. Many cats cannot digest cow's milk products and chocolate contains a compound that can be toxic to cats
- Never starve overweight cats or put them on a crash diet. A gradual, steady decrease in bodyweight is ideal and it may take up to a year for a severely overweight cat to reach their ideal body condition
- If your cat is overweight, seek advice from your vet before embarking on any change of diet

Resources

- [Is your cat overweight blog](#) inc infographic
- [Diet information including downloadable guide](#)
- [Diabetes in Cats](#)
- [YT: What should I feed my cat?](#)
- [YT: Feeding enrichment](#)
- [YT: How to play with your cat](#)

Theme: Ain't misbehavin'

Did you know?

Common cat behaviours are often seen as your cat acting up or purposefully misbehaving when they are often displaying natural behaviours in the best way they can, or have an underlying medical condition.

It's really important to understand why your cat might be weeing on the carpet, loves scratching your sofa, has started hiding more or persistently wakes you up at 4am. Sometimes the cause can be a health issue, or that they may have a scratch post but prefer to scratch horizontally and need a scratch box.

Thoughts to get you started

- What could stress your cat and cause them to 'misbehave'?
- How would a cat let their owner know about the main needs they have?
- How could you organise your home to better suit your cats' needs and ensure they are not stressed?

Resources

- [Why is my cat scratching?](#)
- [Toileting outside the litter tray](#)
- [Why does my cat wake me up at night?](#)
- [Why is my cat hiding?](#)
- [Why is my cat ambushing me?](#)
- [Cat Body Language](#)
- [Recognising stress in your cat](#)
- [Why does my cat..?](#)

Theme: Feline Family Planning

- Neutering -

Did you know?

The scale of cats breeding is not to be underestimated – one unneutered female cat can have 18 kittens in a year! Unneutered cats are very good at finding each other and unplanned, unwanted pregnancies are all too common. Cats also aren't fussy, it doesn't matter if they're siblings or only four months old so it's really important to get your cats neutered as early as possible.

Thoughts to get you started

- How would a feline family planning session look?
- Why could the potential multiplication effects of cats having up to 18 kittens in a year be dangerous?
- Why is neutering seen as a potentially dangerous thing for cats, although it is perfectly safe?

Facts to dispel the neutering myths

- Cats can start breeding from just four months of age – meaning kittens have kittens!
- Kittens can be safely neutered at four months of age or earlier
- Cats will readily breed with their brothers, sisters and parents
- It is not beneficial for a cat to have a season or 'just one litter' before being spayed
- The length of pregnancy in cats is just nine weeks and a female cat can often come into season again just six weeks after giving birth
- A cat can quite easily have up to three litters a year with five or six kittens in each. That adds up to 18 caring homes for Cats Protection to find each year, just for one cat's kittens!
- This level of breeding is very draining and can be harmful for the mother cat
- Neutered cats do not 'miss' their organs or opportunities to reproduce or rear a litter – they are not people!
- Neutering even if a queen is in season, pregnant or lactating can be performed and is best discussed with your vet

Resources

- [Neutering for female cats](#)
- [Neutering for male cats](#)
- [Complete neutering guide and FAQs](#)
- [Financial assistance with neutering](#)

Case studies:

- [Kittens abandoned in bin](#)
- [Carrier bags of kittens dumped](#)
- [Kittens maimed and dumped](#)
- [9 month old kitten has kittens](#)
- [Kittens rescued from house with 17 cats](#)

Theme: The Wanderer

- Microchipping cats -

Did you know?

Microchipping is essential to help cats get back home safely, unlike collars which can come off microchips don't get lost. They can also have their details updated whenever you change your phone number or move house. Microchipping cats isn't compulsory by law, however Cats Protection have been campaigning to make the law follow that for dogs and to make microchips compulsory for all cats. We managed to reunite 2,500 cats with their owners in 2019 but would love to see this number increase!

As well as helping cats return home microchips also enable technology which works off your cats unique microchip number. You can have cat flaps which will allow individual cats to enter or exit at different times, or a feeder that will only open for a specific cat. Pretty cool!

Thoughts to get you started

- How would you design a 'smart neighbourhood' for a microchipped cat?
- What do you think the process is to reunite a lost cat with their owner?
- What campaigns have been successful in getting people to microchip their cats?

[Our Microchipping guide](#)

[Lost cat advice](#)

[Casper reunited with his owner after 55 mile trip!](#)