

**Body Condition Chart**  
**Canine**

**1. Emaciated**



Ribs and lumbar vertebrae obvious, pelvic bones and all other bony structures obvious and prominent. Tail base prominent and bony. Accentuated concave abdominal tuck. Accentuated, severe hourglass shape to waist. No discernable body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.

**2. Thin**



Ribs and lumbar vertebrae easily seen with no fat cover. Pelvic bones obvious. Tail base bony with little soft tissue. Marked concave abdominal tuck. Marked hourglass shape to waist.

**3. Optimal**



Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and other bony structures **easily** palpable with **very slight** fat cover. Tail base smooth with thin, soft tissue cover. Concave abdominal tuck. Smooth hourglass shape to waist.

**4. Fat**



Ribs and lumbar vertebrae are difficult to palpate. Pelvic bones are palpable with moderate tissue cover. Tail base has fat deposition with moderate soft tissue cover. Concave tuck is decreased to absent. Minimal hourglass shape to waist with back slightly broadened.

**5. Obese**



Ribs and lumbar vertebrae are very difficult to impossible to palpate. Pelvic bones are difficult to palpate with thick tissue cover. Tail base is thickened from fat deposition with thick soft tissue cover. Abdomen is convex with or without a pendulous ventral bulge. Back is markedly broadened.

**Images Courtesy of Ralston Purina Company**

### **Assessing Body Condition Score:**

Conduct three checks of the dog:

1. Rib Check: Place both thumbs on the dog's backbone and spread both hands across its rib cage. The ribs should be easily palpable with minimal to no hand pressure. Actually feeling the dog is important, as the coat of many dogs will make a visual check difficult.
2. Profile Check: Examine the dog's profile –the abdomen should be tucked up behind the rib cage.
3. Overhead Check: Looking at the dog from overhead, a waist should be visible behind the ribs. Most dogs at a healthy weight should have an hourglass figure.