

Dog Takes On Fitness Challenge and Wins

The first dog to enroll in Hill's PetFit Challenge in 2008 lost 22 pounds.

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Zeb, a 9-year-old Labrador Retriever, lost 22 pounds after enrolling in the 2008 Hill's PetFit Challenge, according to Hill's Pet Nutrition of Topeka, Kan.

He first weighed in Jan. 20, 2008, at 104 pounds. By May 12, Zeb weighed 82 pounds. As of Dec. 17, he weighed 86 pounds.

New orthopedic issues caused Zeb to slow down a bit in recent months, which explains the slight weight gain, but overall, he is doing well with his weight, says Zeb's veterinarian Rick Marrinson, DVM, owner of Longwood Veterinary Clinic in Longwood, Fla.

Marrinson attributes Zeb's success to a combination of a thorough veterinary healthcare team recommendation, coupled with full pet owner acceptance.

"The owner first admitted she was the problem," Marrinson says. "The key was getting her on board, and then we could sit down and have an honest conversation about what to do next."

The PetFit Challenge encourages veterinary healthcare teams and their clients to make positive changes in their dog's lifestyle through regular veterinary weigh-ins, feeding the right food, monitoring feeding, and championing regular physical fitness.

"I'll be honest. At first it was hard to deny Zeb the lifestyle routine he had previously enjoyed," says Diane Bonheim, Zeb's owner. "I realized that by following Dr. Marrinson's recommendation, Zeb would not only look better, he would feel better too, and the changes have been incredible."

Hill's PetFit Challenge is part of the American Veterinary Medical Association/Hill's Alliance for Healthier Pets — Obesity Awareness and Prevention Program.