

How to Keep Your Yorkshire Terrier Fit

Feed your Yorkshire Terrier a diet based on its needs.

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The main thing to remember is that only you can control your Yorkies weight. Unlike humans, who are concerned with health or body image, dogs don't have personal incentives to lose weight. They are hard-wired to eat whenever they can and as much as they can, because before domestication, they never knew where their next meal was coming from. Even though your Yorkshire Terrier is thousands of years away from the original canine eating machine, it is still a dog with a dogs natural inclinations. Nevertheless, its not capable of catching and killing its own food, opening the refrigerator or operating a can opener. The amount of food it gets is up to you.

Dogs that are allowed to become fat at a young age are more predisposed to obesity later in life. Be aware of how much your Yorkie is eating. Yorkies can be sneaky, stealing food from other dogs dishes to supplement their own meal.

Give the dog 10 to 15 minutes to eat, then take the food up until the next mealtime. Besides controlling the amount of food your Yorkie eats, this tactic also helps prevent pickiness. When your dog knows the food will only be there for a given amount of time, it'll be more willing to eat.

If your Yorkie still seems hungry after it finishes its meal, don't weaken and give more dog food. Instead, supplement its diet with canned or frozen (cooked) vegetables, such as green beans or carrots, or even a little canned pumpkin (plain, not the sweetened pumpkin pie variety). Rinse canned vegetables to reduce the amount of sodium in them. Vegetables are low in calories, but they help the dog feel full.

Because dogs are individuals, theres no simple rule you can follow that will guarantee your Yorkie a sleek physique. Within a single breed, gender and age group, energy requirements can vary by about 30 percent, so its easy to overfeed one dog while underfeeding another, even if they're getting the same amount of food. Cast an unsparing eye on your Yorkies body. If its starting to get fat, cut back on the food; if its starting to get too skinny, feed it a little more.

Whether your Yorkie is just right or leaning toward the pudgy side, keep treats to a minimum. Treats are good training incentives, but they shouldn't be given just because. Healthy treats include chopped baby carrots and bite-size biscuits or bits of cheese. Avoid giving junk food like potato chips, however. They're high in fat and sodium, with no nutritional value. Dr. Mackay recommends giving pieces of the dogs regular kibble as treats. Whatever treat you choose, limit the amount you give. Treats should make up no more than 5 to 10 percent of a dogs daily intake. For a Yorkshire Terrier, that's a little less than a tablespoon.

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