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A New Year is always a busy time as we all get back in to the swing of things and work at sticking to our New Year resolutions, but don't forget the New Year is also a good time to make a few changes to help to improve the health and happiness of your pet.

Obesity in Pets

With pet owners admitting to feeding their pets tit bits such as crisps, cheese, leftovers and biscuits, it's no wonder that over 50% of pets in the UK are currently overweight.

If you've been to the Veterinary Surgeon and found out that your pet is overweight, or are concerned that your four legged friend has become a bit chubbier, here are some easy pointers to get your pet in tip-top shape.

Please note: *Before beginning any slimming plan, you should consult your Veterinary Surgeon.*

Feeding

Step One: Calorie counting! Just like us humans, the recommended daily intake of calories for pets will differ according to weight and height, and for pets, breed.

To make sure you are not overindulging your pet, make sure you ask your Veterinary

Surgeon for advice on just how many calories your pet requires, then simply check food packets and ensure that you are feeding your pet just the right amount of energy to stay happy and healthy without exceeding requirements.

Step Two: Divide your pet's meals into smaller portions and feed in the morning, and evening rather than leaving them all day to have one large meal at night when they are often less active and consequently less likely to burn off calories!

Step Three: Avoid tit-bits and too many pet treats. It all comes down to a bit of self restraint when those big adorable eyes are looking up at us as we enjoy a tasty snack... pleading with us to either share it or find a pet treat so that they are not left out, so be strong and don't give in - if your pet needs to slim down you will be doing him no favours!

Exercise

Lots of walks will help burn off those extra calories but remember don't overdo it as, just like us, our pets need a gradual introduction to an exercise plan.

Cat and dog toys such as a catnip mouse or ball are a great way to encourage your pet to be more active through play. What's more, playing with your pet will also help strengthen your relationship and build that all important owner/pet bond.

Have fun! There are lots of things that we can do with our pets to keep them active, ranging from agility competitions to flyball so why not check out our 'guide to fun activities to do with your pet!'

General Pet Slimming Tips

- Stay strong! Don't give in to begging and make sure you stick to giving your pet set meals and healthy treats only.
- Well-meaning friends, family and neighbours should also be aware of your new slimming plan as we all know pets (cats in particular) are masters of popping out for a second dinner!
- If you feed your pet dry food then remember it is much more filling than it looks as it swells up when it reaches your pet's stomach, so read the instructions as what may look a small amount is more than often substantial enough to fill your pet up.

