

Shelter Cats Take Weight-Loss Challenge

New York humane group teams with Halo pet food to help seven cats take off some pounds.

Posted: Feb. 12, 2009, 3 a.m. EST

Dixie, above, and Emily, below, will be on a supervised eight-week-long weight-loss program to get in optimal shape. Bideawee, a New York-based nonprofit humane organization, has teamed with natural pet-food company Halo, Purely for Pets to help seven adoptable cats lose weight and get in shape.

The eight-week-long supervised weight-loss program, which began Feb. 6, gradually replaces the cats' current food with a new diet that is being provided and donated by Halo.

Each Monday the cats — Jack, Violet, Suki, Missy, Domino, Emily and Dixie — will be weighed and body condition scores will be assessed by a veterinarian.

While many pet owners know the importance of keeping dogs in shape, it's just as important for cats to get exercise, according to Bideawee. Obesity in cats can result in conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, back problems and joint deterioration.

To track the progress of the cats, visit the Bideawee website.

Bideawee, which means "stay a while" in Scottish, was founded in 1903 and operates at three locations — one in New York City, and two on Long Island (in Wantagh and Westhampton).

Halo is based in Tampa, Fla., and is co-owned by comedian and talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres.