

Weight-loss Project Aims to Help Cat Fight Obesity

An exercise and feeding plan will help Alice, a 26-pound cat, lose weight.

Soraya Gutierrez

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Alice, a 26-pound cat surrendered to the Rhode Island SPCA, is following a program designed to help her reach a healthy weight. A cat that grew to a point where she was unable to groom herself might help veterinarians spread the word about the risks of overfeeding and obesity in pets. Alice, an 8-year-old spayed domestic shorthair cat weighing 26 pounds, was surrendered to the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Lab tests show that the cat is in good health, however, her size makes it extremely difficult for her to move, said Amy Karls, DVM, a practice development veterinarian at Hill's Pet Nutrition. Karls helped the shelter staff to implement a new feeding program for Alice to help the cat reach a healthy weight and better quality of life.

The cat exercises by taking short walks to the extent that she can walk without causing breathing problems, Karls said. The goal is for Alice to drop to 15 pounds.

Alice the cat's size makes it difficult for her to move around comfortably. To get there, Karls designed specific feeding instructions, which include detailed portion sizes and weekly weigh-ins for the cat. She plans to work with the shelter during the next four to six months to oversee the weight loss program for Alice. "She currently requires some extra grooming maintenance, as she cannot reach many areas to clean herself," Karls said.

The goal is to see Alice the cat drop to a comfortable size, Karls said, so that she then can be adopted to a loving family that will properly take care of her. The weight-loss program is in the early stages, and Karls said it will be some time before measurable changes are available to report. The cat's food is being donated by Hill's Pet Nutrition.