

How Much Do Fauves Weigh?

by Laura Liscum, PhD | August 2025

There was a recent query in the *Basset Fauve de Bretagne in the USA* Facebook page asking how much Fauves should weigh. The person who posted has a Fauve weighing 44 lb. Seventeen people responded to the post; their Fauves had weights ranging from 24 to 44 lb, with a mean of 33 lb. This is a small sampling of the Fauve population but it likely reflects the range in the population as a whole. From my experience in the PBGV community, the dogs shown in conformation (I call them the supermodels) tend to weigh less than the typical pet. Sounds a lot like the human community. Full disclosure – my Tess came from a show home two years ago weighing 27 lb. She now weighs 33 lbs, right at the mean of that small Facebook sample. I think that Tess at 33 lb is a bit overweight. Why do I think that? The knuckle test.

At the 2016 PBGVCA National Specialty in Indianapolis. I heard a seminar by Valerie Parker, DVM, Professor of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at the Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center. Dr. Parker is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (DACVIM) and the American College of Veterinary Nutrition (DACVN). She had many tasty tidbits of information on how to evaluate your dog's weight and calorie needs. Her suggestions of 10 years ago are still relevant today.

Pay attention to your Fauve's body condition score. Is your Fauve too thin, overweight, or just right? Veterinarians use a 1 to 9 scale to evaluate dogs, in which 1 is emaciated, 5 is ideal, and 9 is obese. Dr. Parker demonstrated an easy way to determine where your dog fits on this scale. Make a fist and run a finger from your other hand over the knuckles of the fist. Now run your finger over the ribs of your dog. If the ribs are easy to feel, like the knuckles of your fist, then your dog is probably underweight with a score of 3. Next hold your hand out flat with the palm down. Run your finger over the knuckles. The knuckles should be palpable and without any fat covering. This is how the ribs feel of an ideal dog with a score of 5. Finally hold your hand out flat with the palm up. When you run your finger over the knuckles there will be a fat cover. That is how the ribs will feel of a heavy dog with a score of 7. This knuckle test of fat cover over the ribs is more accurate than simply looking at your dog's waist since a heavy dog who needs to shed some weight may still have an abdominal tuck.

How many calories does your Fauve need? Dr. Parker estimated the required calories per day for the typical 33 lb. (15 kg) dog. The first step in making this estimate is calculating the dog's resting energy requirement (RER).

$$\text{RER} = 70 \times (\text{body weight in kg})^{0.75}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{A 33 lb. dog weighs 15 kg} \\ &15 \text{ raised to the } \frac{3}{4} \text{ power is 7.6} \\ &7.6 \times 70 = 532 \end{aligned}$$

This means that a 33 lb Fauve who snoozes all day on the recliner will burn 532 calories. However, one who is quite active throughout the day may burn 1.6 X RER, or 850 calories. A Fauve who needs to lose weight should be held to 1 X RER. If your Fauve is an active triathlete, then he/she might need 2 X RER on training and competition days.

Dr Parker's method of calculating a dog's calorie needs can be found here:

<https://vmc.vet.osu.edu/services/companion-animal-nutrition-support-service#calculator>

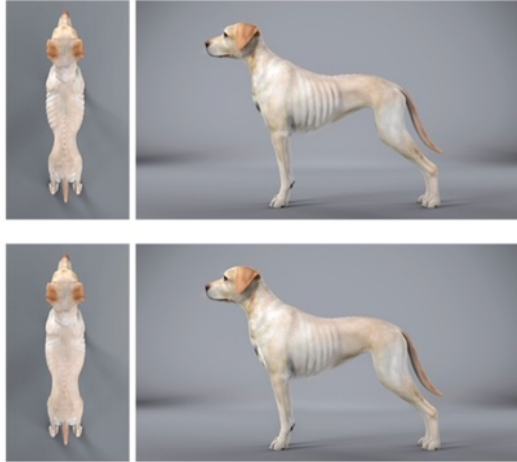
What about my specific dog? Most of Dr. Parker's two-hour seminar was focused on the healthy dog. If you have a dog (or cat) with a specific health issue and you want to consult a veterinary nutritionist about the best diet, go to the American College of Veterinary Nutrition website (www.acvn.org) and click on the ACVN Diplomate directory. Sort the list by State/Province to find a nutritionist near you. In most cases, specialists are located at veterinary schools or tertiary care animal hospitals. However, many offer telephone consultations with pet owners and veterinarians to provide nutritional plans for pets with medical conditions and to customize home-cooked diets.

Food for thought. What constitutes a quality complete and balanced diet? Where do I find the calorie content of dog food? What if I want to cook for my Fauve? Are dietary supplements necessary? These are questions that we will address in the next BFdBCA newsletter.

See the **Purina Institute Body Condition System** below to help you assess your Fauve's ideal weight. This visual guide can help you determine whether your dog is underweight, at an ideal body condition, or overweight—an important step in maintaining lifelong health and fitness.

BODY CONDITION SYSTEM

TOO THIN



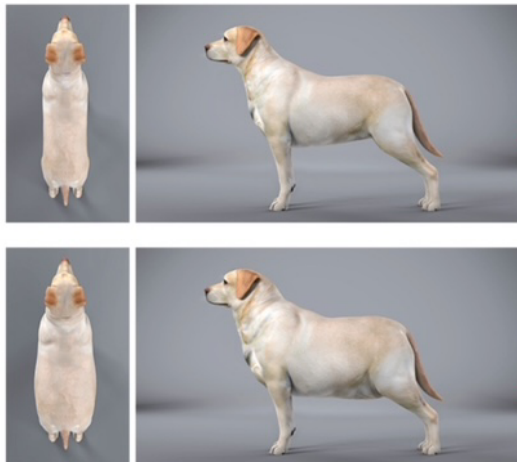
- 1** Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance; no discernible body fat; obvious loss of muscle mass.
- 2** Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones easily visible; no palpable fat; some evidence of other bony prominence; minimal loss of muscle mass.
- 3** Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat; tops of lumbar vertebrae visible; pelvic bones becoming prominent; obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

IDEAL



- 4** Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering; waist easily noted when viewed from above; abdominal tuck evident.
- 5** Ribs palpable without excess fat covering; waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above; abdomen tucked up when viewed from the side.

TOO HEAVY



- 6** Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering; waist is discernible viewed from above, but is not prominent; abdominal tuck apparent.
- 7** Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover; noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail; waist absent or barely visible; abdominal tuck may be present.
- 8** Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure; heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail; waist absent; no abdominal tuck; obvious abdominal distention may be present.
- 9** Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail; waist and abdominal tuck absent; fat deposits on neck and limbs; obvious abdominal distention.

The BODY CONDITION SYSTEM was developed at the Nestlé Purina Pet Care Center and has been validated as documented in the following publications:
Lafrenière DP. Development and Validation of a Body Condition Score System for Dogs. *Canine Practice* July/August 1997; 22: 10-15.
Manly DJ et al. Comparison of Various Methods for Estimating Body Fat in Dogs. *J Am Anim Hosp Assoc* 2004; 40: 109-114.
German AJ et al. A Simple, Reliable Tool for Owners to Assess the Body Condition of Their Dog or Cat. *J Nutr*. 2006; 136: 2031S-2033S.
German AJ et al. Comparison of a Bioimpedance Monitor with Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry for Noninvasive Estimation of Percentage Body Fat in Dogs. *APVR* April 2010; Vol 73, No. 4.