



Beware of This Common Pet Owner Mistake

We humans aren't the only ones who need to watch our waistlines. Maintaining a healthy weight is essential for a long and fulfilling life for our pets, too. But they don't have control over their weight; we, the pet owners, do, and we often overfeed our four-legged friends. In an interview for petmd.com, Dr. Jim Dobies, a veterinarian in Charlotte, North Carolina, said one of the simplest ways to gauge a pet's weight is to stand above it and look down. Both cats and dogs should taper in between their abdomen and their hip socket.

"You should be able to feel their ribs but not see them. If you can see them, they are too skinny," Dr. Dobies said. "If you can't see their ribs, and place your hands on the side of their chest and still can't, they're overweight."

Pet owners can also use body condition score charts from sources such as www.mypetsdoctor.com. These score images of a dog or cat at different weights according to how healthy they are and provide a visual guide to measure your own pet against. Feeding our pets the correct amount is critical to warding off issues that arise from obesity, such as congestive heart failure, some types of cancer, and musculoskeletal problems.

Start by consulting your pet food packaging, which typically provides a recommended serving based on an animal's size. Pay careful attention to the wording and whether the serving amount is per meal or a daily total to be divided into meals. Two meals are recommended for most adult dogs, while more frequent feedings are suggested for puppies. For cats, petmd.com recommends between 24 and 35 calories per day per pound.

Thinking of Buying a Home?

Get My Free Guide!

Buying a home is a complex process with many factors to consider. Prepare for the decisions you'll need to make along the way by requesting my free guide. Just call and I'll send it right out to you.

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Remodels: What's Good for Resale and What's Not

You want to get the best price for your house. You're willing to do some remodeling – if it will deliver significant ROI. What's worth the effort? Here are three projects worth considering and three that you can skip.

The Kitchen: Kitchens sell homes. If your culinary center is looking worse for the wear, it will likely turn off potential buyers. Updating your kitchen is a good way to increase the value and appeal of your home.

Bathrooms: These areas are also high on buyers' priority lists, so they should be on yours, too. Focus efforts on the master bath and the powder room.

Curb Appeal: First impressions are important and the front of your home is the first thing buyers see. Make efforts that will boost curb appeal, such as repainting the exterior, adding plants, and sprucing up the entry with a new door. These projects can often be completed at low cost but offer high return.

Pools: While you may enjoy countless hours of fun in your pool, this feature probably won't pay for itself in home value increase. In fact, it could be a turnoff for some buyers.

Wine rooms: While they may sound elegant, wine rooms or other original-design spaces are often too niche. Their limited audience makes them a poor investment choice.

Removals: Just because you never use that fireplace doesn't mean you should demolish it. Removing features is typically not a good investment. Potential buyers may wish it were still there, and you aren't likely to recoup the cost of removing the feature.

For expert input on your remodeling efforts, contact our office. We can discuss the projects that could get the best return on investment and what I've seen in demand in your market.

The Ultimate Back-to-School Shopping Hacks

Back-to-school shopping doesn't have to be stressful or costly if you have a plan and stick to a budget.

If your child's school provides a supply list, use it to find deals in stores or online. Take an inventory of what your child already has and compare prices before heading out to shop. Follow thekrazycouponlady.com or download her app to get the scoop on the latest deals.

But don't shop too early. The best prices on school supplies show up in late August and early September. Many states also have sales tax-free weekends in the fall.

When you shop, consider midyear replacements your children will need. Stock up at Costco while things are on sale and stash the extra supplies away for next semester.

And wait a bit longer to get the best prices on clothes. The best time to buy fall clothes is in October, especially over Columbus Day weekend.

Do a combination of online and in-store shopping. For variety and value in clothes and backpacks, look online. But



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So thanks for continuing to pass this newsletter on to people you care about.

basics like notebooks, pens, and binders are cheaper in-store. Include office supply chains in your shopping plan as they sometimes offer great deals. Shopping at Target? Check out Raise.com, where you can get great deals on used, discounted gift cards. Also, don't forget the dollar stores. Check these first, then finish your shopping at the larger retailers.

Lastly, consider pooling resources with other parents to buy in bulk and divvy up supplies among yourselves or swap any items left over from last year.



Wondering What's Happening in Your Neighborhood?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for? Do I need a house inspection? These are all critical questions that shouldn't be overlooked when thinking about buying or selling your home.

Whether you're curious about prices in your area, whether it's an excellent time to sell, or just need an expert to answer your questions, I can give you the tools and offer guidance through the entire buying or selling process.

Just give me a call at 978-478-8656 to arrange an appointment.



Worth Reading

How to Tell If You Have a Headache, Sinus Pain or a Migraine

By Beth Krietsch
Huffington Post US

Not all headaches are the same. Knowing if your pain is caused by a tension headache, a sinus headache, or a migraine can help you determine the best treatments. Tension headaches can be soothed with over-the-counter medication or a nap, but persistent tension headaches or migraines require more intensive treatments. This article can help you understand what's causing your pain, but be sure to ask for medical advice.

More:

<https://tinyurl.com/worth0819a>

Side Hustle Ideas: 176 Ways to Earn Extra Money (While Working Full-Time)

Hack The Entrepreneur

This directory could lead you to your latest side hustle. It offers 176 ways you can make extra cash, organized by your interests, skills, and expertise. There's more than just rideshare possibilities. Options range from a variety of writing jobs to bookkeeping, accounting, and decluttering. Depending on how you work these, you may not need a full-time position. **More:**

<https://tinyurl.com/worth0819b>

15 Laundry Room Ideas to Make It the Most Functional Room in Your Home

By Caroline Utz
Good Housekeeping

A dreary laundry room can make sorting and folding loads of clothes even more daunting. This slideshow provides tips for making that room functional and fashionable. Much of the advice, like installing curtain rods or adding a bookshelf, is about increasing space. Other advice, like purchasing matching storage containers, is more cosmetic. **More:**

<https://tinyurl.com/worth0819c>

Property Appeal: What Makes a Home Safe?

Location. Layout. Landscaping. A host of home features affect a property's appeal. One quality that tops many "must-have" lists is safety. What should buyers look for if they want a home that offers the best safety possible for themselves and their families? Several features can improve the safety of a home to make it more desirable. As a bonus, these devices can also reduce the cost to insure a home. If you want to modernize your home with innovative safety measures or are looking for a new home with the latest safety features, consider these list toppers.

Smart Devices

The internet of things has taken home security and convenience to a new level. Homeowners are empowered with a host of tools and systems to keep their homes safe. In fact,

technology has become so prevalent that few items aren't equipped with smart features. Appliances offer improved safety and efficiency. Garage doors offer additional security. High-tech lawn systems prevent overwatering and flooding. A few devices are particularly desirable for homeowners interested in boosting the safety of their surroundings. These include:

Water alerts: Did you know one of the most common homeowners insurance claims is water damage? Smart leak-detection sensors can now prevent these calamities. They alert homeowners of leaks so they can take immediate action to prevent damage.

Fire detection: What happens if no one is home to hear the smoke detector? A smart fire detector will alert a homeowner via a Wi-Fi-connected device anywhere in the world. This can improve emergency response times and minimize damage.

Burglar deterrents: Smart technology has enhanced security on many fronts. Homeowners can deter thieves with timed lighting, access smart door locks to maintain tighter security, and monitor video surveillance from anywhere.

Wondering what features make the most sense for your market? Contact our office. We can review current trends and determine what safety features to look for in your next home.



When Your Kitchen Counters Become a Catch-All

Sometimes we can barely see our kitchen counters under the clutter they've collected. Want to clear them? Here are a few tips to help you organize and de-clutter your countertops. Start with an assessment. Are you short of counter space or cupboard space? If it's counter space you need, look at the appliances on your counter and decide if all of them are necessary. Tuck away the ones you use infrequently.

Clear fruit and veggies from the counter by putting them in hanging baskets. Hang utensils on the wall to clear the counter while putting the implements you need within reach.

If it's cupboard space you're short of, think about adding shelves to the ends of cabinets for extra storage. And check out Pinterest. It offers wonderfully clever gizmos for maximizing storage space by hiding pot lids, cutting boards, utensils, and whatnots behind doors and out of sight.

Over-the-door organizers are inexpensive and practically double your storage, giving you tons of room to stow all kinds of things. A wall-hanging magazine rack will keep your counters clear of all the paper stuff you love to save.

How to Roast the Perfect Marshmallow

For many, roasting a perfectly golden marshmallow is the elusive goal of campfire cooking. But it's not unattainable. It just requires some thought.

Building the right fire is key. Marshmallows cook better when roasted slowly, so you'll need to wait until your fire has glowing coals that can heat your marshmallow. There's no clear consensus about whether your roasting stick should come from a tree branch or a store; just be

sure that it's about an arm's length, and hold the tip with the marshmallow about six to eight inches above the coals.

Be patient while roasting, maintaining a constant, slow rotation. Expect to wait about four minutes to create the perfect roast before placing the gooey deliciousness in your mouth or squishing it into a s'more. Yum!

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

How do I know if I've found the right house?

Buying a house is probably the most significant purchase you'll ever make. With so many options, it can be challenging to choose just one. To determine whether a home is right for you, ask yourself a couple of key questions about each property.

Does the home meet my must-haves? Write down a few deal breakers that a property must offer, and stick to these priorities to determine if a home is a good fit.

Does the home offer potential? Consider your future needs. If you're planning any life changes, keep these in mind. As you weigh its potential, also consider any "wants" that the home doesn't have. If it meets all your must-haves but is lacking a few wants, does it have potential? For example, paint colors and carpeting can be changed. The number of bedrooms is harder to adjust.

I'd be happy to meet with you and discuss what you're looking for in your future home. Just give me a call to get started.

The Coco, Early Report

Coco, Early & Associates

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Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9×9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3×3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

Cannellini Bean and Corn Salad

Here's something simple and fresh, perfect for your next potluck or BBQ.

Serves 5

1 shallot, finely chopped
 2 lemons, juiced
 2-3 tablespoons quality olive oil
 1 15.5 ounce can of cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
 2 cups fresh corn, grilled then shucked
 1 large tomato, chopped
 2 tablespoons chopped basil
 Salt and pepper to taste

Place the chopped shallot in a small bowl with lemon juice and set aside.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the beans, corn, tomato, and basil.

Whisk the olive oil and lemon together. Pour over the salad, season, and toss.

Serve at room temperature.

Adapt this recipe to suit any taste or occasion by adding cheese or shredded chicken.

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