

Star of Animal Planet's My Big Fat Pet Makeover: I PUT PETS ON DIETS!

Trainer Travis Brorsen is helping some four-legged friends live happier, healthier lives

As an animal trainer, Travis Brorsen has seen it all when it comes to owners spoiling their pets with food. "I have clients who have raw food delivered daily," he says. "Or ones who feed them filet mignon or whole chickens." The problem, he says, is when they overdo it. "Overfeeding a pet," he says, "is just as harmful as underfeeding." Travis, 38, would know: The NYC-based trainer of nearly a decade is starring on the new Animal Planet series *My Big Fat Pet Makeover*, which shows what happens when he puts overweight dogs, cats and pigs on diets

and teaches their owners how to use positive reinforcement training methods to help them shed pounds. "Ultimately, excluding medical issues, the owner is responsible for their pet's size."

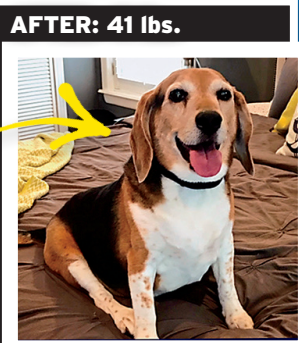
When a pet is carrying extra pounds, there's a potential for danger. "Osteoarthritis, liver disease, UTIs, even some forms of cancer" are some of the risks, says Travis. As with humans, "there's not a one-step formula for every animal," he admits, "but we have to believe that the changes can be made in any capacity with our pets. Hope should never be lost."

— Reporting by Jaclyn Roth



TRAVIS AND STELLA
"People will say, 'Oh my gosh, your pet is so fat, it's so cute!'" says Travis, with Stella, a mixed breed who slimmed down with his guidance.

BEFORE: 59 lbs.

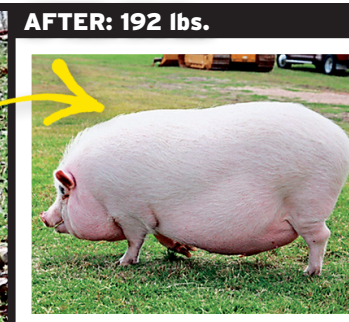


FLETCHER THE BEAGLE, 13

PACKING ON THE POUNDS: A few years ago, Natalie and her husband, Jim, noticed Fletcher's "belly was dragging on the ground." He was being sneaky, too. "We came home to find the refrigerator open and Fletcher feasting on everything inside!"

BAD DIET: Between sneaking snacks, eating some of Natalie and Jim's other dog's food and being accidentally overfed (Natalie and Jim weren't measuring his chow correctly), Fletcher was eating six times his daily food allowance!

SUCCESS STORY: Travis helped Natalie and Jim regulate Fletcher's serving sizes and curb his snacking, and they began taking him on brisk walks. "He's gotten slimmer, and his energy is through the roof," says Natalie.



BABY THE PIG, 1

PACKING ON THE POUNDS: Growing up on a ranch with other animals, Baby, a potbellied pig, was helping himself to chicken scratch, horse feed and cat food. "We had to [take a hard look at] environment," says Travis.

ROUGH START: Baby's owners, Eryn and Dune, watched their beloved pig backtrack when his food supply was initially reduced. "His body was telling him he was starving," explains Travis, "so he was finding other things to eat outside. We had to restructure our plan."

END RESULT: Baby hasn't quite reached his goal yet. "Just like with humans," says Travis, "some animals need more motivation than others."



BEAU NUGGET THE CAT, 10

PACKING ON THE POUNDS: "He loves to eat. He cries, telling me he wants more food, so I give it to him," says owner Valerie, who was feeding Beau Nugget four times the recommended amount of cat food every day.

UPHILL BATTLE: Like many pet moms and dads, Valerie equated feeding Beau Nugget with "showing love," says Travis.

SLIMMED DOWN: Travis had Valerie and her husband, Rick, place Beau Nugget's food on top of a cat tree, so he had to work for it. "Now," says Rick, "you can see some of his bones."



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: R/R (3); DISCOVERY CHANNEL; R/R (6)