



Table 2-5: Giraffe body condition score (Kearney and Ball, 2001)

Score	Description	Notes/Comments
1	No fat can be palpated. Ribs and spine of scapula may be visible. Muscle wasting has occurred.	Emaciated.
2	Cervical vertebrae are visible. Protruding spine. Distinct hollows cranial to hipbones. Crest of ilium is visible. Outline of scapula is visible. Thin legs. Hips appear sunken and shoulders are slim.	Poor condition. Cause for concern.
3	Hipbones prominent. Definite outline of spine. Sacrum is visible. First two cervical vertebrae visible. Chest may appear sunken.	Occasionally seen following a growth spurt in young adults.
4	Tailhead is noticeable and point of hipbone is visible. Slight hollow in center of chest. Sufficient muscling in hindquarters, shoulders, and neck.	Nicely muscled, but with little fat. Commonly seen in growing giraffe over 1.5 years of age.
5	Back and hips rise smoothly to topline with no visible outline or denting along backbone. Some palpable fat around tailhead. Point of hipbone just visible.	Good condition.
6	Back is level and wide. Hipbone not visible, but easily palpated. Smooth chest. Visible thickening in lower neck.	Good condition. Ideal for calves under 1&1/2 years.
7	Slight crease along backbone. Hipbones difficult to palpate. Smooth chest and thick neck.	Overweight.
8	Definite crease along backbone. Tailhead no longer clearly visible. Soft fat palpable along tailhead. Thick neck.	Obese.