Dear Newbie

Advice from Lean Eaters

Precision Nutrition
High-five, Lean Eater!

You’re now a few weeks into Lean Eating. We’ve already given you some of our own Lean Eating best tips to set you up for success this year. But as the Chinese proverb says:

“If you would know the road ahead, ask someone who has traveled it.”

Good news: You don’t need to write Dear Abby! We have thousands of Lean Eaters who have walked the road before you, and are happy to share some of their “best tips” for success.

In fact, at the end of their Lean Eating journey, they had an assignment: Write a “Dear Newbie” letter and give advice to new Lean Eaters. Though each Lean Eater’s journey was unique, their letters had many common themes.

Here, in the words of those who’ve gone before, are what Lean Eating veterans think you should know.

Dear Newbie...

You are worth it.

One of the key points of advice Lean Eating alumni have to offer is that **the time and energy you invest in your health is perhaps the greatest self-investment you will ever make.**

Your commitment to YOU by signing up for Lean Eating this year is a feat in it of itself. Your body is thanking you for that and will return the favour in kind!

“I have learned that **often the most loving thing you can do for yourself isn't necessarily the easiest.**”

“Being in LE for me and following my habits and doing my workouts and my daily lessons... this was all an act of self-love. Usually, I’ve been so busy taking care of everyone else, and nourishing myself with food. I recognize now that I deserve more than just shoving something really yummy in my mouth – let’s face it: That doesn't take much time, care or effort. But giving myself time to exercise my body and cook wholesome food – *that* takes time and effort. **I AM worth it, and SO ARE YOU!!**”

“What LE most taught me was that I AM worth the effort. That it is OK for me to truly nourish and truly care for/about myself. It is OK to be beautiful and not have to hide. Today I am free in my mind and in my body. My heart is light. I don’t have the words to express my gratitude for having gone through this program and reading the daily lessons and doing the work. I got so much – I got me!”
You can do this.

Bring your “can-do” attitude! Lean Eaters can’t stress this message enough!

The body follows the mind. Think about that: Every single action we do starts with an initial thought. You have a powerful weapon there so use it to your advantage best you can.

And our alumni understand that believing is not always easy at first! Like any habit, it begins with practice. This is a habit we explore much more in Lean Eating throughout the year.

“Trust that you deserve it, trust that it is possible, you can do it. Even when you feel you can't.”

“When I started LE and I read our first exercise program I completely freaked out! I never thought that I would have the motivation, time or capability to exercise consistently. But I did. And I know you can, too.”

“This program has worked for so many people. Believe that it will work for you. Not only will that make everything less stressful, but I also truly think that ‘believing’ I was going to lose fat was a big part of my body being able to let it go. It was like I stopped struggling with and fighting against myself.”

“No matter what excuses your mind would like to throw at you, just notice the conversation that comes in your head and all the reasons why you can't. Don't do anything with those reasons, other than notice them. Then, do it anyways. I'm not saying to push through pain or injury, but definitely move through and past the excuses and the brain telling you what you can or can not do, because you can do so much more than you think is possible.”

Trust the program.

Lean Eaters recall having doubts about the program, especially at first. They weren’t sure if it would work for them. They often thought the concept or tasks were kinda crazy.

Their advice to you: Relinquish any worries and just trust the program. You will be far more successful if you don’t waste brain energy “doubting” what clearly works.

“You may also be tempted to think at the beginning that for some reason you have some special situation that Lean Eating has never seen and therefore hasn’t planned for (because you’re too fat, already on the lean side, too educated about nutrition and fitness, not educated enough, too advance in training for the “simple” workouts or too much of a workout rookie to handle the “tough” workouts). No matter where you start from, completely set aside what you think you already know and put your total trust in the coaches and the program they are guiding you through. Follow the process as best you can and set aside any counterproductive wondering and worrying.”
“Believe that PN has done their research and knows exactly what they are doing. They are not asking you to do anything that you cannot do. There are no gimmicks, no quick fixes - just great advice, a ton of knowledge and a wonderful place to visit and support whenever you need it. This ‘trip’ is amazing and worth every last dime of money and every minute of time you put into it.”

“You’re gonna think that some of the exercises are weird or pointless. You might disagree with some or the lessons or assignments. Some of them are hard, and that's pretty freaking scary. Just allow yourself to be a kid and trust that there's a point to it all. The biggest relief is to hand over the planning, the thinking the managing to someone else and just focus on doing your very best. Cherish that.”

“The results here don't come by accident. Hundreds of people have said you have to trust the process and one of the first pieces of guidance we get from PN is ‘Do what we say’. Don't overintellectualize. These guys and gals are pros and they really, really know what they are doing. You can save your energy for other things when you just give in – hard as that is!!”

“You simply cannot fail if you just do your daily habit, lesson and workout. Simple, and not always easy. I went into LE thinking that I already knew most of what there was to know. I was wrong. I had to submit myself, focus on the taks for that day, and trust.”

Fear and struggles are normal.

Lean Eaters will be the first to tell you that all of the emotions you’ve felt the last few weeks — the good, the bad, and even the ugly — are normal. They felt those emotions too.

They'll not only reassure you that these emotions are normal, but they’ll go so far as to tell you that “messy emotions” are a key part of the change and growth process. The wacky feelings get better and you’ll have plenty of support to help work through them.

“If you find yourself feeling a bit uncomfortable, just know that you are not broken or doing it wrong. In fact, you can be assured that you are on the right track because change rarely happens in the comfort zone. Discomfort will foster the change that will happen.”

“Some lessons may require that you answer some questions about yourself that at first make you uncomfortable. Believe me: this is a really good thing! Read them and do them! Dig deep, be honest with yourself, and share! The magic really happens when you put your thoughts and feeling into words.”

“Feeling daunted, nervous, doubtful, insecure, scared, all of it — is totally normal. I found I had to release all these emotions, or rather, feel them, and be OK with them in order to proceed. Gradually, as the weeks ticked by, these emotions were replaced by confidence, clarity, a sense of calm, self-efficacy (which had been long absent), joy, and strength.”
“I embrace fear and even failure now, because it's absolutely valuable to me in the learning process. The fear of failure, the fear of being wrong, and the fear of looking bad have made me miss out on a lot of opportunities in my life.”

“You are not broken. You are okay. You are amazing and awesome. There are going to be times when you feel down, when you're struggling, when you think you suck, or that you should've tried harder. So when those hard days come and you feel like a failure, well, you're not. It will get better.”

“Learning about yourself and changing is so courageous.”

Focus on behaviours.

Lean Eating alumni will reassure you that you're going to see tremendous results this year... but only if you focus on the behaviours.

Body composition stuff is a slow process. It's much like boiling water. You can have the burner to the right temperature, the pot on the stove, and the water heating up, but you won't see any signs of bubbles until that critical temperature point. Same thing can happen in your body.

So instead of putting energy and time (which most of us don't have a lot of, right?) into watching for bubbles, focus on the Lean Eating “plan” and execution! If the burner is on, that water is going to boil!

“I always focused on behaviours, and not actual outcomes. I spent energy only on things I could control. I knew I wanted to do better each day and week. I had no ‘must lose X lbs by X date’ goals. That didn’t work for me. Make the journey yours, but lead with gratitude rather than looking for problems (which is far easier)”

“You are not a number! Many, many weeks the scale may not move, but your body is changing (shrinking). Believe me on this one.”

“Don’t be obsessed with the numbers. Truly look into how you feel. This is the most important transformation. And in the end, feeling positive is what fuels us to continue. The numbers follow (and fall!)”

“Take a deep breath and get ready to be patient! The body composition changes you want will happen... but not in the first 2 weeks.”

“Savour every moment and nurture every seed of growth! I know it feels slow in the beginning, but incredible things are happening, even if you don’t see it right away.”

Strive for consistency, not perfection.

Nothing in life is perfect. Including you.
There will always be both successes and struggles. All are opportunities for growth, and often the challenges actually create our successes. Lean Eaters will tell you to embrace this concept in your Lean Eating journey! Throw “perfection” out the door and strive for consistency, learning, and persistence instead.

“Be kind to yourself. Don’t beat yourself up for not knowing or doing everything right. You’re here because you want to learn. Learning is sometimes achieved best by struggling at first.”

“It’s easy to lose perspective. A cold might knock you out for a few days, or an upcoming business trip may make lessons and habits difficult. Take care of your body the best you can. This detour will soon be a tiny blip in your journey.”

“I spent a good portion of my life before Lean Eating trying to be perfect. I was afraid that if I wasn’t perfect, I would be rejected. I often watched with envy the people that could laugh at themselves and was amazed when other people embraced them in spite of their mistakes, but I was sure that kind of mercy was not meant for me. I filled my time trying to be what everyone else expected of me and somewhere along the way, I lost myself. Lean Eater, LET GO OF PERFECTION.

Perfection is like a mask. It may be beautiful and ornate, but its purpose is to hide the identity of the one holding it. The problem with perfection is that it is unattainable. When perfection is the standard by which you measure yourself, you will fall short 99.9% of the time and you will always feel like you are coming from behind. You will always feel like you have to prove yourself and not measure up. And even though that mask is heavy, I picked it up and put it on day after day.

If you have one of those pretty little masks, put it away. You won’t be needing it this year. Try on persistence instead. Persistence continues on in spite of interference. Nobody here is expecting you to have everything figured out (you wouldn’t be here if you did). All that is expected of you is to show up and keep putting one foot in front of the other no matter how graceful (or ungraceful) the step is. I know it’s hard to put that mask down, but you’ll be able to see much clearer without it.”

Reach out to your team.

The message from LE alumni matches what we know from our own research: In any endeavour, you need support for success.

Your coach, your mentors, and your teammates all have so much support and encouragement to give you. Don’t ever hesitate to ask a question, start a conversation, or reach out for help. You’ll always be heard! And you won’t regret it.

“The amazing feedback, support, and encouragement that you will get from your team is like the icing on the cake. I wish I’d figured this out a lot sooner.”
“You're not cruising through this alone. Not only have many gone before you, but there are others who are going through the exact same thing as you are, this very moment. You don't have to be alone if you don't want to be. Use those forums to reach out. You'll probably realize that there are a few people who relate to your mindset, your experiences, and suddenly the world doesn't seem so intimidating anymore.”

“I have learned that I can open myself up. Share the ugly, sad bits and the things that make me scared. And it's okay because I have strong compassionate people around me. I don't feel so fearful of just being myself.”

“Whatever you are worrying about, unsure about, think you're terrible at, have no confidence in – most of your teammates probably feel the same way. Take a breath of courage, and post your question on your private forum for instant peer validation! Once you get comfortable together, your team will be a constant source of knowledge and support.”

It’s a full-body transformation.

Finally, the message is clear in the words of our alumni: The successes you’ll achieve this year will extend far beyond fat loss.

In Lean Eating, plan to improve your health, body composition, and your performance – in many areas of life. While every client's transformation is different, they all have one thing in common: a transformation to their outsides and their insides.

Our alumni, your coaches, and the entire PN staff hope you are ready and excited about creating your own full-body transformation.

“LE has been life changing for me and has improved me mentally, emotionally, and of course, physically.”

“Many of us signed up to change on the outside. But the inner change, to me, is the greatest LE gift.”

“I just love life now that I've faced my issues. Whenever I'm off track, I go to my bedroom and read the poster I made of my “fitness mission statement”. Pulls me back to where I want to be. To the heart of my values and beliefs. Whether it's eating, exercising, doing work, dealing with others, whatever, I've cut the crap and got to the heart of it.”

“Living life and dealing with what comes, figuring out new ways to deal with old issues – these are the things that show who we are now.”

“Fear is what kept me in that failure holding pattern of bad coping skills. Let me tell you, the fear of what might happen is nothing compared to the freedom of self-discovery. Today, I am more than a physical transformation. I have found healing, freedom, and restoration. I thought I had a fat issue, but what I realized is that I had a faith issue. I thought I joined LE to become skinny; what I got was a transformation from the inside out. The healing came first, and the physical transformation was a side effect.”
“It’s not really about the food: Following the habits is easy. Learning and accepting why you poison your body with less-than-nutritious eats is not. Being open to sitting with my emotions and understanding my triggers was the truly hard work of this year. Do the homework – really, take the time to mentally do the work – it will bring about more changes than any meal plan or gym session ever could.”

“Lean Eating is about so much more than what to eat and how many reps to do. Lean Eater: Lean in and be amazed at the strength you never even knew you had!”