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Living with Irish wolfhounds makes you smarter. No, really. If you're not familiar with the breed, you may wonder how hard can it be to stay one step ahead of a dog. Let me walk you through a few lessons to be learned from these talented instructors....

Stay In The Moment

You're out walking your wolfhound or maybe you're in the kitchen rushing to pitch a meal together. It's been a long day. But you're with your wolfhound. They don't have bills. They don't have

situations on the job. They don't worry and neither should you. Because the moment you let your mind drift to past or future woes is the second that a squirrel will certainly appear. And you'll be in the next county. Or look down after reliving that nasty encounter with the boss today and find a surprising absence of pot roast in your pot. Your hound was in the moment. Now you will be, too.

You Don't Have To Win Every Argument

You're tired and want to plop down on your place on the couch and relax, which is where your wolfhound happens to be, looking extravagantly relaxed. You ask her to move. She's apparently gone stone deaf. You command her to shift over. She snorts. Cheese, maybe? You extend a pinch of it, unashamedly resorting to bribery. She snaps it up because you forgot how long her neck is. She's still there. Finally, you crumple to the floor in defeat. Which is when she gives you a slurpy big kiss. Which is what you really needed all along, it turns out.

Trust Your Instincts

Wolfhounds are famously good judges of character. They know instinctively if someone is a friend or up to no good. They also have the uncanny knack of knowing if something edible is in your pockets. Trust your instincts, too. If you think they're about to dive in up to their eyeballs to snatch it...they probably already have. *Their* instincts told them you were going to waste time mulling things over.

Let Go Of Attachments

Before wolfhounds you may have had heirloom furniture and a nice couch. Now your kids will inherit kindling and maybe a ratty old sofa because Goodwill won't touch it. Wolfhounds have taught you you don't need to get attached to things. You have *them*, after all.

What more do you need? Strangely, the more wolfhounds you have, the more you'll see the wisdom in this.

Age Is Just Number

They may be 3 and you may be 63, but you're both able to walk outdoors in all sorts of weather, day or deep in the darkest night. But you have lumbago and a bum knee, you say. Then they get hyperactive, clobberslap you with a giant paw and, look, now you have *two* bum knees. Surprisingly, you can still walk and boy, do you. Wolfhounds are the great motivator.

Your Body Is A Temple

Wolfhounds are incredible marvels of muscle and sinew, a picture of vigor and power. You? You know a really good pizza when you see one. Your wolfhound loves you. He wants you to eat healthy, too. You see where this is headed. Next time, buy a bigger pizza. And put on your track shoes to give you an edge when they chase you all through the house for that last piece. Or, you chase them.

Let Go of Anger

They just ate your pizza. Your *pizza*. You waited all week for it. You can only afford the good stuff once a week because of *their* food bill. Hanging onto your anger will only hurt you, though. Because if you keep dwelling on it, you won't spot them dragging the groceries off down the hall, too.

Let Go Of What You Think Life *Ought* To Be Like

Before your wolfhound, you may have planned on seeing Paris or thought you'd be able to sleep past 5 a.m. on Saturdays once you retired. Dreams are nice but wolfhounds.... are better. You've been surprised by joy, learned to savor pre-dawn walks, don't blink twice at needing poop bags the size of grocery sacks on those walks and

you no longer mind being a cushion for a 160-pound hound. You're wise in the way of wolfhounds now and your life is very different than what you expected. But it's so much better, too...