

How Can Tony Brady Help Andre Ward and Amir Khan?

Written by Raymond Markarian
Monday, 20 January 2014 13:32



Boxing sounds so scientific sometimes, and I'm even not a fan of science.

And science is the study of skill, not chemistry. And understanding body chemistry is what makes some of the best boxers stronger on fight night. Nutrition and exercises is all made easier with the help of a strength and conditioning coach. And some of the best fighters use a strength and conditioning coach.

Now I get it.

And I learned more about the beauty of proper fitness and boxing in my conversation with Tony Brady, the strength and conditioning coach for Virgil Hunters' fighters in Hayward, CA.

Brady works with Andre Ward, Amir Khan, Alfredo Angulo, and Brandon Gonzales, among others. Brady's mission is to build the better athlete, not the better boxer. He teaches the science of body control and shows how to translate that in a boxing ring.

Brady doesn't teach boxing, he teaches training. He's not in the corner in between rounds advising fighters about fight tactics. He's giving the fighters the tools to succeed before they go in the ring.

The 33 year-old master of fitness looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger before he made Conan the Barbarian in 1982 and talks about building the ultimate athlete as if he was a machine, like another of one Schwarzenegger's characters, in Terminator 2.

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Actually, if you really want to get technical, Brady tries to create the athlete that looks and feels like Robert Patrick's character in Terminator 2, the T-1000.

The T-1000 was a futuristic Terminator built of liquid metal. The T-1000 had the agility of water streaming through cracks in concrete. It was fluid in body, had unmatched speed, and the killer instinct and confidence of an indestructible weapon.

And strength? Ha, strength comes from all those attributes combined.

That's boxing. Hit and don't get hit, stick and move, Tony Brady helps fighters enhance their boxing abilities with his workout assessments. Brady plays his part in building the ultimate weapon with Virgil Hunter. The best part about Tony Brady's strength and conditioning program for average gym-goers like you and me is that his program applies to everyone. We might not throw punches as hard as Andre Ward or as fast as Amir Khan, but we might share the same inefficiencies and do the same workouts. The point being is if we want to improve body control, then we should listen to Tony Brady. This guy knows what he is talking about. Here is my Q 'n A, in which I attempt to get a better sense of what Brady does, and what he brings to the table for a fighter. Ray – How did you get started as a trainer?

Tony Brady – I was into healthy living and I was just trying to educate myself with proper weight training, and then I fell in love with it. I worked with some of my friends who were pro basketball players, on and off.

RM: So, you started working with basketball players and then fighters?

TB: I started at a health club for about two years and I got into boxing because one of my clients, Pooh Richardson was a friend of Joe Goossen. Pooh was working with Joe Goossen a little bit. And Joe put me with "The Ghost," Robert Guerrero. This was back in May 2003.

RM: OK. Tell me about how you met Virgil Hunter.

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TB: This is going way back because I just started working with Virgil this year. I started with Joe Goossen. He liked my work with Robert Guerrero, so then he put me with Joel Casamayor.

RM: OK.

TB: Casamayor was getting ready to fight Diego Corrales, which was on the Evander Holyfield/James Toney card. Casamayor beat Diego in that fight. James Prince, who was Diego's manager at the time, liked our work with Casamayor so he hired us to work with Diego for the rematch. So, I worked with Diego for the rematch with Casamayor, the Acelino Freitas fight, and the Castillo fight, which was a legendary fight and a few others. I became really cool with James Prince when I worked with Diego. They introduced me to Virgil and Andre Ward. I met them both at Andre Ward's pro debut.

RM: OK. So, do you think that you get a better reputation in boxing if your fighter wins? Or is it more about the quality work that you do with the fighters?

TB: To the public eye winning the fights is what gets you a good reputation. But with the boxing trainers, the ones that give you work, it's based on what they see. It's based on results. It's really the quality of the product that you are putting out there and the comfort level that they have working with you.

RM: What does a boxing trainer see in a strength and conditioning coach?

TB: They see your professionalism. They see that you are helping guys and not hindering guys. It opens doors. Having a good relationship with the trainers, fighters, and managers that you work with, is the key.

RM: So what are the types of things that you look for in fighters? Let's say when you started with Amir Khan and Andre Ward, what did you look for in the beginning?

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TB: I do assessments. My main expertise is based on movement assessment and seeing how the body is imbalanced. If they have too many muscles that are out of balance or if they have any injuries in the past or just injuries waiting to happen, I look for stuff like that. I try to build their weaknesses and keep the guy healthy.

RM: So, it's really based on the athlete on a case-by-case basis.

TB: Yes. It's definitely case-by-case. Some guys have more issues. I can improve anybody. I can take the best athletes in the world and make improvements. But if you have a guy with a lot of weaknesses then we have to make adjustments that will take more time. You want the guy that always wants to improve. And I can help him do that.

RM: So what is it that you like about working with boxers?

TB: Well, it's a different type of sport. When I worked with Diego he said that he had no problem dying in the ring, and he meant it. I always took that with me. It's a very dangerous sport. So, I take a lot of pride and responsibility in getting my fighter in the best shape for a fight.

RM: So you take it really personally?

TB: Definitely. And I like to work with guys that don't fight for a paycheck. I like to work with guys that are trying to prove themselves on fight night.

RM: But you have to build trust.

TB: Definitely. These fighters have worked with a lot of guys that do what I do. I have to show that I can help them and create different results than the other guy.

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RM: What is it that you do differently than the other strength and conditioning coaches out there?

TB: Well, I am very good at finding weaknesses and making improvements. I want to create a better athlete, which will translate in the ring. I am trying to find a way to improve a guy's body so he can perform at a higher level. I want to raise the bar for each particular athlete. I think some trainers suck the energy out of a fighter.

RM: So you are trying to build the better athlete, not the better fighter?

TB: The better fighter happens in the ring. The better athlete is what I'm working on.

RM: OK. I see.

TB: There are many different elements to athleticism.

RM: Yeah.

TB: Speed, power, balance, endurance, strength, flexibility, all different elements. Any good routine will have all of those elements.

RM: OK. I got it... OK. Look, I've known Virgil Hunter for a long time. And it's funny because I remember doing an interview with Virgil before Ward's fight with Chad Dawson, and he said at the time that he didn't want a strength and conditioning coach to work with any his fighters. But you came around, and started to work with all of his fighters.

TB: Yes.

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RM: I recently asked Virgil why he changed his approach and he said that he likes working with you because you show results. Can you tell me more about your relationship Virgil? How do the two of you work together to build the better athlete?

TB: Virgil discusses with me how he wants a guy to improve in the ring. If he says a guy needs to work on his legs or his balance, then I will find creative ways to improve that guy's athleticism so it can translate to Virgil's training. If Virgil is asking the fighter to do things in the ring that his body does not necessarily want to do, I will find ways to improve that element of athleticism so it can translate to boxing.

RM: OK. So what are the things that you are working on with Alfredo Angulo?

TB: Well, with Angulo, I want to get him as explosive as possible. I want to get him to move off of his legs side to side, and keep up with the guys that are more active in the ring. He has to cut the ring off. He has to stay with guys like Lara, who is a prime boxer.

RM: And what about Amir Khan?

TB: With Amir, his movement is great. But I want to build his body through his legs because he is moving up a weight class. He is at 147 now. So I have to build his body up without slowing him down or losing any of his attributes. We are just trying to make him a better athlete at a higher weight class.

RM: And that comes from the legs?

TB: It starts from the legs but the whole body is involved. You have to transfer the power through the legs, to the core, and the rest of the body.

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RM: And what are the things that you are working on with Andre Ward?

TB: Andre has a great foundation in place. But he has had injuries. In the last camp we were just trying to get him comfortable. Now I can build on his strength. With Andre, we are trying to take it up another notch.

RM: Yeah.

TB: And improve all of his athletic elements too. I try to improve the athleticism of every guy.

RM: What's your goal?

TB: My overall goal is to work with guys that win championships. I want the fighters that I work with to apply my material and provide positive results.

You can follow Ray Markarian on Twitter at @raymarkarian or email him at Raymond.markarian@yahoo.com

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deepwater2 says:

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I am a huge fan of science, especially the sweet science. I think chemistry is a branch of science, so I am not sure what this author is saying, maybe I am still drowsy from the Pascal Bute fight.. Mackie Shilstone is the man. Please read some of his books. He has a 6 week program , 4 weightlifting days a week centered around boxing. Light weight, hi reps, a lot of core exercises mixed with speed drills, long runs and short sprints. Whey protein, L-Glutamine, creatine, Multi-vitamins are all you need. No Conte or Ariza potions needed . I do these 6 week programs and I am in tip top condition time and time again.

amayseng says:

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Agreed, I was on a thread last week talking about Shillstone and how I would use creatine as well. great supplement.

Radam G says:

Ditto, deepwater2! A lot of these nowadays C&S coaches are meddling con men and snake oil salesmen seeking publicity and control, and peddling health-ruining roids and PEDs. Holla!

dino da vinci says:

I think the Celtics had just won their 7th consecutive NBA title, and a hypnotist was trying to get Red Aurbach to let him work with them, promising to make them a better team. Listen you bleeping idiot, we can't win 8 titles in 7 years! Declared Red.

Andre Ward is Boston Celtic Dynasty Great. He hasn't lost since Clinton was President. Who wouldn't want to attach their brand to him as well? The only thing that gives Brady credibility (And a lot of credibility at that), is Virgil Hunter. If Virgil Hunter welcomes him, the man has real

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value, because Virgil doesn't buy anything Virgil doesn't need.

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