



IFBB Pro League's Neil Hill Finds Balance

Neil Hill, aka Neil “Yoda” Hill is a former IFBB Professional League and bodybuilding legend in the United Kingdom, a gym owner, trainer, nutritionist, fitness writer/columnist and considered one of the top contest prep coaches in the world coaching IFBB Pro Leagues’ Flex Lewis, William Bonac, Big Ramy, Steve Laureus, and many more. He was named coach of the year and shared his wealth of knowledge recently at the Gods of Iron Workshop in Columbus, GA this past April.

But when you ask him, Neil says, “I am the same person I have always been – passionate about what I do! I am self-driven. When I was in school I had dyslexia. It was very frustrating for me to not be able to excel in some areas throughout my life, but through the sport of bodybuilding, I found I could be in control so I focus on trying to be the best I can be and have been fortunate to excel at something that I love to do.”

Lessons Learned

I didn't really have a mentor. I grew up in a small village in the middle of nowhere. But I did have magazines to help me learn. I didn't start out trying to be a bodybuilder but after about 18 months, I realized when it comes to common sense I was above average and had the ability to listen to my body. I will say that I admired and was inspired by the physique of Lee Labrada. I liked his proportions and the way he displayed himself on stage. I had no real mentor, not that I wasn't willing to learn, but my methods were seen as unorthodox so I just learned what I could from others and unlike other people that tried to complicate the process, I stuck to the basic foundational movements to help me achieve positive change.

When I first started training, I fell in love with the sport mostly because I could be in complete control of the changes I was striving for. For a time, all I did was lift and train. Bodybuilding was always on my mind – I was

consumed with the sport. So much so that I had forgotten why I started lifting which was because lifting gave me the ability to find myself and I loved my time in the gym. I made myself fall back in love with training again when I realized it was a hobby versus a career. If you don't love training for the right reasons then you don't have balance, if you don't have balance, the foundation of everything you are trying to do is weak. Instead of living my life, I was consumed with bodybuilding, selfish and self-obsessed. It's not healthy physically or emotionally. I found it's better to have a coach or program that can keep you accountable to that balanced lifestyle and later I became that coach for others.

of the movement. It took me 2–3 years to develop the system through trial and error, at the age of 27. The Y3T System can be used by both the newbie and elite athlete because it's a 3-dimensional training program designed to focus on the different muscle fibers. To maximize your efforts in the muscle fiber response, you need to hit all three muscle fibers and this can be done by anyone, beginner to elite. Improved body composition, performance increases and substantial muscle growth with a reduced risk of injury are just some of the benefits and continuous progress can take place because weekly cycling forces the muscle fibers to adapt to a new stimulus every time you train a muscle group.

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Balance

I believe the difference between a good athlete and an extraordinary athlete comes from the athletes themselves. There are differences in how each athlete excels in multiple different ways. I don't want to just say it takes hard work and dedication along with some genetics because, in fact, someone with just average genetics can go on to attain a world-class physique, however, it also takes consistency, living the lifestyle, and finding the balance of what you are passionate about and what makes you want to go to the gym to see those positive results. It's a combination of many things.

I have been asked if the Y3T System can be used for the other categories that are offered in bodybuilding? My answer is, absolutely! When I design a program, it is based on the client. You still go through each of the 3 phases, but the program is adjusted to suit their needs in terms of how long and how frequently each phase is done. Even women find the Y3T System to be effective because the muscle fiber breakdown and activation through different rep ranges are the same. The main difference for women is not the muscle fiber breakdown but rather the hormonal response.

Message

Let me tell you this story – I recently met with a potential new client. The client told me what they were looking for and asked, “If I work with you, how long will it take to become a pro?” My response was, I can't say if you will. Whether you're going to be a pro or not depends on a lot of different variables that will dictate if turning pro is in your future. You can't measure success solely by what you do on stage or a particular trophy. It's not about what you do; it's about consistency, lifestyle habits, understanding what you've learned about yourself, and balance. Otherwise, all you are doing is existing and not in a healthy way, rather than enjoying the process. Many athletes end up not attaining what they could have simply because they don't have balance. People have goals, I get it, they want to turn professional. But what you have to understand is, that being an amateur allows you to nurture yourself and move forward. It allows for a higher percentage of people to be competitive. Once you reach pro status it becomes more difficult and can be a very lonely road.

The Y3T System

When I first started training, I found I was prone to injury due to the high intensity/low rep training I was doing. As I had only been educated through magazines, and at 19 years of age, I believed in order to gain muscle, I must have a rep range between 6–10 reps. This training method was frustrating as I continued to deal with tendinitis over the next 3–4 years. I knew I needed to do something different to reduce the amount of inflammation and tendinitis I was experiencing. At the time I did not know there were different types of hypertrophies and muscle fibers. I played around with a higher rep range not expecting to gain muscle but hoping to rather slow down the muscle atrophy process. Instead, I found that by increasing the reps, I had created a stimulus to maintain and then build muscle! And that stimulus was three dimensional. What is now known as the Yoda 3 Training System, achieves maximum muscle gain by cycling intensities, rep ranges, rest pauses and time under tension with the positive and negative phase

Future of the Sport

I don't know where the sport is going to go. The sport has evolved. I believe classic physique is a phenomenal category because it allows for flow of physique. The newer divisions have enabled the sport to become more attainable to a greater number of people which allows the sport to move in the direction of being acceptable to the mainstream. Bodybuilding itself is not necessarily growing because people have backed away from what it was in favor of the newer categories that are more suited to their physiques. On a positive note, building muscle and the foundation of becoming a builder of the body has grown and we can hope that will lead the sport of bodybuilding to continue to grow as well.

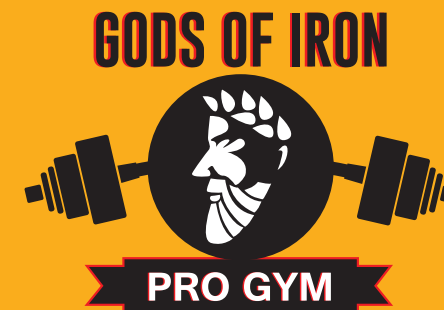
Social Media

I feel as a result of social media, athletes want success today, when in fact going from a beginner to top amateur to professional to top IFBB Pro takes a long time to develop the necessary maturity of physique. Social media has made it no longer about the sport but rather about looking a certain way in order to be accepted. People train because they want to change the way they look, but they see social media and instead of being inspired, I believe people become even more insecure because they don't feel they can match up to what they see posted. What began as a well-intentioned platform to see what's happening around you is in reality not a reflection of truth because people don't realize that what they see is not real. It is the one good picture of 20 that had just the right angle and lighting or has been filtered or touched up.



Words of Advice

Read and educate yourself. There are always going to be conflicting results and different pathways to follow to achieve the desired results. Learn about yourself, learn from people you believe have credibility. Do research if you're going to invest in a coach. Stay in love with what you're doing. If you are patient and consistent you are always going to see positive change. For more information on Neil Hill's Y3T System, you can contact him at neilhill69@btinternet.com



ADAM AND SHEILA ANDLER HOSTED NEIL HILL for a workshop at the Gods of Iron Pro Gym, located in Columbus, GA. Their gym opened in October 2017 with the idea of having a facility that would "focus on the members" with 5000 square feet filled with Arsenal Strength equipment. It's the ideal place for bodybuilders, powerlifters, as well as fitness enthusiasts that want to learn and live a healthy lifestyle. Today they are working on almost doubling their size, adding a turf area, locker rooms and other amenities with hopes of having the expansion completed by the

fall. Long term, the Gods of Iron Pro hope to keep up the good vibe and energy of their gym family while bringing awareness to the community that they are the go-to place for expert fitness advice and building your body surrounded by an encouraging community of like-minded people. Adam says, "while we come from a foundation built on the sport of bodybuilding, there is no denying that some of the other categories like bikini and men's physique have made this sport visible to all levels because people feel it's attainable." For those that want to compete, we want to share the idea of doing it for the right purpose – do it for yourself, the challenge of the process and the accomplishment of being your best. Beyond competition, we strive to educate people that being dedicated to a healthy lifestyle is a life decision; choose to make a change so you can be your best. You can look forward to more workshops in the future and for Sheila to work towards her goal of competing at the Olympia! For more information on Gods of Pro Iron Gym, you can follow them on Facebook.