

Training for Competition

First figure out exactly what it is you're training for.

For example, don't train for a 12 round fight if you're only going to be doing 3 rounds. If you're fighting 3 minute rounds, train so that you can fight at full pace for 3 minutes. Tactically, I'd never train for more rounds than you actually have to fight - I'd just train to fight harder and faster in the number of rounds I actually had to do.

Base your training on your tactics. For example, many people approach a 3 round fight in the same way they would a 12 rounder - suss the opponent out in the early part of the fight, put on the pressure later on, intending to last the distance.

If you're in there for 12 rounds, this makes sense. If you're in there for 3, it doesn't. You end up wasting the first round stuffing around swapping techniques, then you've really got to put the pressure on in the second round and are battling to get much of an advantage before the bout ends.

My advice is to train so that you're fit enough to put maximum pressure on the other guy right from the first second of Round 1 - he probably won't expect it and you'll get a decent psychological advantage as you come into Round 2 (even if you don't get a KO in Round 1).

To train for a 3 rounder bout, you don't need to do heaps of stamina training (marathon length road work etc), because you probably won't be using your Aerobic system very much. You'll be tending to do a lot of sharp, short exchanges, then try to recover in between. Any activity that lasts less than 10 seconds tends to draw energy from the Anaerobic system and is more reliant on diet, motor skills and muscle "memory". So, train to fight a hell of a lot of 10 seconds bursts end to end.

So, you just need to ensure that you have a background level of aerobic fitness - a bit of swimming, bike riding or other non-impact type training (not jogging) is OK. Then you need to train for short, intensive bouts of activity - which means that, if you're fighting 3 X 1.5 minute bouts, you train so that you can fight 3 X 3 minute ones and recover within 30 seconds between bouts.

The type of training I'd recommend would involve a lot of bag and pad work - warm up by doing some key stretches, do a 3 minute round on the exercise bike, then onto the heavy bag (no heavier than 50% body weight). I'd also use an interval training approach - 3 minutes at a moderate pace, then 3 minutes flat out etc.

Above all, RELAX!! Tension breeds exhaustion and slows you down - and that breeds knock outs.

Start out at 2 minutes at a moderate pace on the heavy bag, 30 seconds rest, then 2 minutes at flat out pace, then 30 seconds rest, then 2 minutes at flat out pace. Keep on prolonging the time so that you can do the flat out/moderate/flat out for 3 minutes - then work towards doing the lot at flat out pace). Then another round on the bike, followed by a similar sequence on a light bag (25% body weight).

If you use a really heavy bag, you'll start just pushing it around instead of exploding through it. A bag that weighs about 50% of your body weight still provides plenty of resistance if you're hitting it at flat out pace - but doesn't get you into the pushing habit. Then the 25% bag lets you just explode at maximum speed and intensity. I'd only use very light hand weights - you only need a couple of hundred grams to trigger off muscle growth (look at the ones that AIS swimmers use - little bags on the back of their hands).

Aerobic capacity in a short bout isn't as important as anaerobic capacity - which depends on diet (as your body consumes a lot of phosphates etc in short, intense activities). So, get the diet right. Protein for muscle building and repair, carbs for energy. On the day of the fight - go for carbs and take along something like a couple of baked spuds for almost immediate energy plus a couple of bananas for glucose and potassium levels (potassium reduces heart rate - which is good, since motor skills decrease as your heart rate goes up).

Work on explosiveness in the bag work by, for example, jumping down from a height of at least a metre then bounding straight back up or doing push ups in a similar manner - or by doing weight training specifically for explosiveness (by lifting no more than 70% of your best weight but doing it fast).

As far as ground work in a sporting context goes - it's about explosiveness, too, rather than brute strength. However, a bit of useful body mass (flexible and fast) is good because the other guy has to use more energy and leverage to shift you. Being a big, slow but strong slug doesn't help much.

And all of the above is absolutely **no** good if you don't have the basic fighting skills that you need – fast footwork, good combinations, tight defence (and lots of heart).

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