

Workout Buddies

by

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FADE IN:

INT. SWEAT N' STEEL GYM - AFTERNOON

A maze of machines and sweat stained men. The air's filled with GRUNTS and the CLANG of dropped weights.

ANDY (31) lies on a bench. JIM (32) hovers over him, ready to grab the bar if it drops.

Neither one is buff - in fact, they're downright stringy.

JIM

Push it, push it!

The bar sinks towards Andy's chest. Jim racks the weight, and writes down reps.

JIM

Got 7 that time. Last month you did 8.  
But the weight increased 5. Still an  
improvement...

ANDY

Great. One hour, five days a week for the  
past six months. And I'm up five pounds  
on my bench.

Andy does half-hearted bicep poses in the mirror.

ANDY

How about you, hot shot? Broken three  
unassisted pull-ups yet?

JIM

Getting close. Just need more time on the  
Gravitron.

He glances over at the machine, monopolized by one of the JOCKS. The guy cranks out reps unassisted.

Andy turns his attention back to the mirror.

One well-built GUY (30s) stands out from the rest. He cranks out bicep curls like a well-oiled machine, and glows in a shirtless sheen of manly sweat.

ANDY

Thought there were clothing regulations.

JIM

He new? Haven't seen him around.

Jim stares at "Mr. Perfect."

JIM

Gotta admit, he does look good.

ANDY

What, you want to look like that?

JIM

Sure, wouldn't you? Without the spray tan, of course.

Andy looks down at his own scrawny legs.

ANDY

Gotta be steroids, that kind of muscle.

INT. GYM LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Jim and Andy pull bags from their lockers.

JIM

There's a kettlebell class Wednesday. Guaranteed to shred body fat.

ANDY

Sure. I'm free. Whatever works.

JIM

Maybe it's a nutritional issue...

Jay ("Mr. Perfect") emerges from the shower. He smiles at the comment. Teeth gleam from his tanned face.

Jim swings on Jay.

JIM

So, what's the answer? Diet or training? Cause my buddy here's not doing too well.

ANDY

It's genetics. Give it a rest. There's no hope for guys like us.

He pulls a gel pack from his bag and sucks it down.

JAY

You don't remember me, do you?

Jay whips out a cell phone, and scrolls through pictures. He stops on a shot of a scrawny guy, wearing a faded Battle Bots shirt.

JAY  
Look familiar?

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. SWEAT N' STEEL GYM - AFTERNOON

The scrawny guy struggles under an empty bar. It falls and pins him to the bench.

JOCKS walk by and SNICKER. No-one helps.

BACK TO PRESENT.

Andy and Jim look at Jay in disbelief. Jay pulls a Battle Bots T-shirt out of his bag.

JAY  
Doesn't fit anymore. But I'm keeping it for sentimental reasons.

ANDY  
Dude, that was only three weeks ago!

EXT. SWEAT N' STEEL GYM PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The three walk to the parking lot together.

ANDY  
Steroids have nasty long-term effects. Aren't you worried about your junk?

JAY  
(laughs)  
I don't do steroids. Way too risky.

JIM  
So what's your secret?

Andy sips a Myoplex. Jay looks around. No-one's in sight.

JAY  
Got a friend in research. It's all natural, with no side effects. Other than the good ones, that is.

A hot BABE walks by. She checks out Jay - the attraction is mutual. It's a beautiful moment, for all concerned. Jay turns to his new-found friends.

JAY  
I could hook you guys up...

A few of the JOCKS from the gym walk by. They spot the babe, and head towards her car. Jay climbs into his ride.

JAY

Think it over. Us regular guys have to stick together.

INT. THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY - NIGHT

Andy and Jim sit at a table with drinks in hand. Looks like they've had a few too many.

JIM

That stuff at the gym... Maybe we should give it a shot?

ANDY

What if it's dangerous?

Jim shrugs; splashes his Mojito across the table.

JIM

You wanna spend the rest of your nights drinking with me - or them?

He points towards a table of HOT GIRLS. They see Andy and Jim, and turn away in disgust.

EXT. CLOSED VITAMIN SHOPPE STORE - MORNING

Andy, Jim and Jay huddle outside Vitamin Shoppe.

JAY

Don't over do it. The stuff's herbal, but way strong.

Jay and Adam nod. They each swallow pills.

START MONTAGE:

Andy presses out 250 lbs on his bench. JOCKS nod in grudging respect. A few of them actually clap.

Jim cranks out forty pull-ups. He doesn't even break a sweat.

Even more pull-ups - weighted this time. Jay gives Jim the thumbs-up.

END MONTAGE.

INT. GYM LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

The guys are freshly showered. Enthusiasm's at an all-time high.

ANDY

I have so much energy now!

JIM

I feel you, Dude. We got the power!

Andy dumps a box of protein bars in the trash.

ANDY

Don't think I need these anymore.

The three preen in front of the mirror. Jay runs a finger along his pec.

JAY

My muscles are growing muscles.

JIM

Can't stick around. Got a date.

ANDY

Geena again?

JIM

Nah, Geena's my Monday ride. Wednesday's Suzanne. She's blonde, and majoring in phys-ed...

Andy nods in jealous approval.

INT. SWEAT N' STEEL GYM

Andy cranks out a 300lb set and heads for the lockers.

INT. SWEAT N' STEEL GYM LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Andy gives Jay a shout-out as he exits the showers. Jay shies away, preoccupied.

Jay checks out his own chest in the mirror. He hides a worried expression from Andy.

INT. JIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

PAMMIE (25) lies under Jim on the couch. She's blonde - with legs that just don't end.

Her hands caress Jim's well defined back.

PAMMIE  
Your muscles are so big...! Honey?  
Baby? What's that bump?

INT. JIM'S BEDROOM - LATER.

Jim sits on the edge of the bed in shadow. He tries to view his back in the mirror, but the angle's wrong.

INT. GYM LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Jim pulls Andy aside.

JIM  
There's this itch I've been getting.  
Wanted to know if it's a rash, or  
something else...

Jim pulls his shirt over his head, and turns around to give Andy a peek.

ANDY  
Dunno. Looks kinda wrong.

He reaches out to touch it. Jim pulls away.

JIM  
Don't touch me. That's gay!

ANDY  
Could be a tumor. You should get that  
checked out.

He scratches his waist. Jim shakes his head.

JIM  
It's not a tumor. I'll wait. See if it  
goes away on it's own.

INT. SWEAT N' STEEL GYM - DAY

Jim and Andy scan the gym for signs of Jay. Andy idly scratches his side.

JIM  
Still itchy?

ANDY

(nods)

We gotta get a hold of him - fast. We stopped the pills, and it's still getting worse.

He uses a lifting hook to dig in deeper.

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jay shuffles out of bed, dressed in bulky sweats. He seems groggy as he answers the phone.

JAY

'Lo?

JIM (O.S.)

We need to talk. We got a serious problem here.

JAY

Fine. I'll meet you in my building's gym. It's 220 Cedar Road. I've got a key.

INT. JAY'S BASEMENT GYM - NIGHT

The guys stand in the basement. Andy foams at the mouth.

JAY

I told you. My friend said it wasn't on the market yet. But he swore it was natural. With a bit of gene splicing...

ANDY

What the hell did you give us?

JAY

Come on, Dude. Cut me some slack. I'm in the same situation as you.

The three stand in a circle. Andy stares at Jim.

ANDY

You first.

Jim pulls off his shirt and turns around.

The bulges on his back have gotten bigger. They look suspiciously like little hands.

There are two slits along his traps as well. They resemble closed eyes, minus the lashes.



JIM

You next.

Andy pulls up his shirt. His waist looks thicker. There's some sort of growth beneath the skin.

Jay reluctantly peels off his sweatshirt next.

Two tiny arms sprout from his pecs. Blue eyes peek out at the world from his nipples.

JIM

Ew!

ANDY

Gross!

JAY

Is it really that bad?

ANDY

Your chest is staring at me. Make it stop.

Jay quickly puts the sweatshirt back in place.

JAY

I'm so, so sorry. I've been calling my friend, but the phone's disconnected. I swear to you, I'll get this fixed.

INT. MARTHA'S MEALS DINER - NIGHT

The guys gather around a table. Jay's sweatshirt looks bulkier now.

JAY

The company's gone. No forwarding address.

ANDY

Think it's time to go to a doctor?

JIM

No way I'm getting dissected over this! Pammie broke up with me, too. She ran away screaming. What a bitch.

A thoughtful silence falls over the table.

ANDY

Yours got fingers yet?

JIM

(nods)

Eyes, too. And a mouth. Hasn't said anything yet. Thank God.

ANDY

Where's the mouth on yours?

JIM

Belly button. You?

ANDY

Trust me, you don't want to know.

JIM

Guess we're gonna have to quit the gym.

Jay nods.

JAY

Especially with all those mirrors.

INT. JAY'S BASEMENT GYM - EVENING

The trio works out in Jay's basement gym. It's much less crowded than Sweat N' Steel.

Andy runs on the treadmill.

Jay benches. He self-spots with a second set of arms.

Jim cranks out pull-ups. His strength wavers. A miniature pair of arms protrude - pull him level with the bar.

The three gather in the center of the gym.

JAY

You broke 50! Not bad!

He pats Jim on the shoulder - accidentally grazes "Little Jim".

JAY

Sorry.

Andy bends down to catch his breath.

ANDY

Dude, you seriously still suck. You know that, right?

JAY

It could go away on it's own.

JIM

Doubt it.

He forces a smile.

JIM

Still, it's great for reaching items high on the shelf. And I just met this chick into freaky stuff. Broadens my options in so many ways...

ANDY

Gotta look on the bright side. It's pretty sweet, having this place all to ourselves. And if you guys can't make it, I got a built-in buddy.

The three sip simultaneously from water bottles.

JAY

Strong form out there, bro.

ANDY

Looking pretty good, yourself. You pack on muscle over the weekend?

JAY

(worried)

Think so?

JIM

Yeah. Looks like you put on a few pounds.

Jay cops a feel under his shirt, and SIGHS in relief.

JAY

Yeah, solid muscle. Boo-yah!

JIM

Here's to a good workout, more to come!

Three little sets of arms emerge for a 'high five'. High pitched grunts come from 'LITTLE' JIM, JAY and ANDY.

JAY

Wanna head back to my place? Got protein drinks, and the Tomb Raider reboot...

Andy and Jim nod, head for the exit.

LITTLE JIM

(high-pitched voice)

Hey, what about us? Me thirsty.

LITTLE ANDY

(squeaky)

Me, too. Give a little guy a break!

ANDY

Forget it, dude. I'm not giving you a drink. At least, not in front of the guys...

The trio (sextet?) head upstairs.

LITTLE JAY (O.S.)

(even squeakier)

How 'bout girls?

LITTLE ANDY (O.S.)

Yeah. We party!

JAY (O.S.)

Not tonight. Gotta get some sleep.

LITTLE JAY (O.S.)

Screw you guys. You three so lame...

FINAL FADE OUT: