It is time to start another fun and exciting year.

This is my sixth year of writing the "Ask Mr. Edge" column, and as is custom at the beginning of each year, I would like to thank you for making this happen. Without your readership, none of this is possible.

Next, I'd like to thank everyone who attended my seminars at the U.S. Junior Championships last month. I hope everyone enjoyed hearing what I had to say. I felt many – if not all – who attended came away with more knowledge than they had before the seminars.

I thought you might like to know what is in store for the coming year.

- Equipment review of what is new in boots and blades
- More on orthotics
- More of your questions answered
- My pick for product of the year – you won't believe it
- A little of this and a little of that

If you remember in the November issue I talked about supination (rolling out) of the feet and provided you with a picture of that extreme. At that time, I mentioned that I would talk about pronation (rolling in) sometime soon. Well, that time is now.

Many of you are familiar with the term "rolling in of your feet." The exact medical term for this condition is pronation. (Compare the picture in this issue and the picture in the November issue and see if you can tell which one is pronated and which is not.) For some, this isn't a problem at all. For others, it could mean the difference between skating pain free or any of the following:

- Blisters, pain and/or swelling of the ankle bones
- Blisters, pain and/or swelling of extra bone in the foot, called the navicular
- Difficulty with edges, especially outside
- Cramping in the arches
- Pain under the balls of the feet

Trying to correct this by using an arch cookie is sometimes not enough. It may also require the use of some sort of heel wedge, or even an orthotic. I find in most cases a combination of using a heel wedge with an arch cookie works best (except in more severe cases). I like placing the heel wedge under the insole and the arch cookie over the insole. Of course, they must be glued down so they won't slip out of place.

If nothing else, remember this: if your feet are in a neutral position, the rest of your body will be, too. Straighten out your feet, and your knees, hips and back will follow suit, provided there are no other medical issues which may already be altering your body posture.

Now it's time for "show and tell."

In taking a look at the picture of the feet, you will notice on the right foot, just below the ankle bone, the navicular bone protruding. Also, notice that it is worse on the right. When placing the foot in a more neutral position, the navicular bone will be less protruding, as in the left foot. By remaining in a neutral position, you can reduce or even eliminate any chance of blistering or swelling around this area of the foot, while skating more comfortably.

On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the worst severe case of pronation, I would say the right foot is about a 5. If you want to know what a 10 looks like, just imagine someone literally walking on their ankle bones.

It's time to once again say goodbye. Have a great skate and good luck to everyone at the U.S. Championships.

Mr. Edge

If I can be of service to anyone, I'll be at the Great Oaks competition in Royal Oaks, Mich., at the end of February.