n my last column, I demonstrated how to reinforce the tongues on your skates. This month I’m going to show how to prevent your ankle bones from looking like the one in the picture below.

First, let me explain how one comes to have their ankles swell up like in the photograph. There is no particular age or level of skating in which this problem occurs, although it is most often seen in higher level skaters. This is simply caused from skating in a boot that has far too much support. Along with the excess amount of support, is the way your boot fits around your ankle bones and ankle joint.

When you have an excess amount of support in your boots and pull your laces tightly, your ankle bones rub and absorb an incredible amount of pressure from the walls of the boot. Eventually, the cells in the tissue area surrounding the ankle joint burst and the fluid from them spills out and surrounds the ankle joint, acting as a protective barrier. To make a long story short, it’s the body’s natural defense mechanism against injury that occurs.

To help relieve the pressure, add more padding and take out some of the support between the walls of the boot. To accomplish this procedure, you’ll need to do the following:

- Using a sharp knife or razor, split open the boot along the edges from back top down to just below the arch area.
- Separate the inside lining from the next layer of leather or lining material.
- Remove what looks to be a reinforcement piece in the upper area around the ankle joint.
- Replace with ¼”-½” sponge rubber (same that is used to line the tongues with) by gluing it in with barge cement.
- Glue back together the walls of the boot and then stitch them as well (any good shoe repair shop will be able to do this type of work).

You may also elect to send them back to the manufacturer and have them do the work. When done properly, your boots will feel much more comfortable and your ankle bones will love you for it.

Until next time, this is Mr. Edge wishing you all the best of luck with your skating career.

P.S. Thanks for the picture Kelly!