

## **'Ice Edges' with Craig Heath** [www.craigheath.com](http://www.craigheath.com)

What are Edges? I looked it up in the dictionary and it said, "the outside limit of an object, area, or surface; a place or part farthest away from the center of something." It also gave another definition, "the sharpened side of the blade of a cutting implement." Both of these examples make sense for our blades. We skate on a blade with a hollow center and two sharp edges that are farthest away from the center! What does this have to do with practicing 'Edges' on the ice you ask? Well, when we ice skate, we are always changing from one edge to another. This is how we build speed and also how we are able to lean from one side to the other. We do sometimes skate on both blade edges at the same time but usually we are on one edge or the other.

Practicing Edges on the ice is of the utmost importance. When I was competing (I'm dating myself by telling you this) I used to practice figures (edges) for about 3 hours per day- 6 days a week. Can you imagine that? We used to compete in Figures (I was the first ever US Men's Figure Champion in 1991- look it up if you don't believe me) ☺. Edges are what figure skating is all about. Gliding on the ice and leaning from one edge to the other by changing the body weight and using your core. This is something that must be practiced and it must be practiced a lot!

I like to have fun when I am teaching edges and I want you to have fun so that you are encouraged to practice edges on you own. This is why I use music in my edge classes. I have fun being a DJ and you get to have fun skating to music that you like and music that motivates you. I'm also sneaking in 'counting' so that one day when you (hopefully) join an ice show and travel the world, you will already be prepared and ready to count to 8 while you are skating and performing.

During my classes I also teach you how to skate together with other people. It is easy to go down the ice doing a pattern on your own but it is a much greater challenge to do it with several other people at the same time. See, I'm also teaching you how to work with others, compromise, share, learn to give and take and be an overall good person. ☺

There are many different edges to practice. Here is a list of some edges to work on:

- |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| +Forward Inside and Outside Loops    | +toe steps                  |
| +Back Inside and Outside Loops       | + mohawks                   |
| +Forward Inside and Outside Edges    | +chocktaws                  |
| +Back Inside and Outside Edges       | +curves with change of edge |
| +Twizzles                            | +running steps              |
| +Forward Inside and Outside Rockers  |                             |
| +Back Inside and Outside Rockers     |                             |
| +Forward Inside and Outside Counters |                             |
| +Back Inside and Outside Counters    |                             |

- +Forward Inside and Outside 3-Turns
- +Back Inside and Outside 3- Turns
- +Forward Inside and Outside Brackets
- +Back Inside and Outside Brackets
- +Inside and Outside Spread Eagles
- +Inside and Outside Ina Bauers
- +Chasses
- +Swing Rolls
- +Forward Crossovers both directions
- +Back Crossovers both directions
- +Forward Cross Rolls
- +Back Cross Rolls
- +Spirals (all kinds)
- +Extended Edges
- +Power pulls
- +Ski exercises with feet side by side (forwards and backwards)

Practice all of these in combination with one another as well. For example, do a forward outside loop –outside counter-pull-back inside loop-cross over-back inside 3-turn, etc.

Now, do this all exactly to the music! And better yet- “perform” while you are doing your edges exactly to the music!! And even better than better yet, change your ‘core’ while you are performing your edges exactly to the music!! And best of all- do it all quickly! This is what will give you the most points in the Footwork of your ISU programs. So, make sure you really practice your edges. I know it can be boring (unless you are taking my fun edge class ☺ ) but think of it like taking a spoon full of sugar(my class) to make the medicine(edges) go down!

Ice Skating is all about edges so the more you practice them, the better skater you will become. Yes, edges help with your jumps and spins, just in case you were wondering. The stronger your edges get, the stronger your body will get and your ‘core’ will be able to hold you up much better for everything you do in skating and (as an added bonus) in daily life too!

In closing, I encourage you to always do whatever I say. ☺ Please practice your edges. Here is an idea; warm up with edges every session you skate. This will help get your body ready to jump and spin and it will greatly decrease the amount of injuries you have during your skating career.

Go For Greatness! Practice you edges!

Craig Heath

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