A garment comprised of a first shape control panel, which is comprised of a first material, with a first degree of stretch and a second shape control panel, which is coupled to the first shape control panel. The second shape control panel is comprised of a second material, with a second degree of stretch. The second degree of stretch is different than the first degree of stretch.
GARMENT HAVING TARGETED SHAPE CONTROL ZONES
CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS


FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to garments that include targeted shape control zones.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Many women have parts of their bodies that they are unhappy with, making them have an insecure feeling when wearing certain clothing. Foundation garments have been worn for a very long time to address this problem. Better known today as shapewear, these foundation garments include body briefs, bodysuits, brassieres, control top panty hose, control panties, control briefs, control slips, control camisoles, control tanks, hip slips, waist shapers, corsets, garter belts, and girdles.

[0004] Shapewear are undergarments designed to change the wearer's shape, producing a more fashionable, slim figure and to enhance the natural curves of the body. Take for example control briefs. They are designed to lift a wearer's bottom, flatten the tummy and add shape and form to the thighs.

[0005] Shapewear is typically categorized according to the level or shape control offered—for instance, light, medium or firm. Generally, shapewear can be categorized into four different support levels:

[0006] Light Control shapewear garments, which offer a slight touch of control without binding. These are typically chosen by women of all sizes who want to appear firmer, but not necessarily smaller.

[0007] Moderate Control shapewear garments may have light control panels built in, offering control with a touch of compression. These are typically chosen by women who want to look more toned.

[0008] Firm Control shapewear garments are the most popular with a support level that gives the maximum amount of compression and control. These are typically chosen by women seeking to appear slimmer and more toned.

[0009] Extra Firm Control shapewear garments offer the highest level of support. These garments will most likely have reinforced panels and possibly boning.

[0010] Shapewear garments typically have a single control material covering an entire section of the garment. For example, in a typical shapewear tank, a single control panel material forms the tummy, side and back areas of the garment. This results in a shapewear garment that has the same control properties for all sections of the garment. However, women do not necessarily need a consistent amount of shaping across body parts. For example, a woman may want a shapewear garment to firmly flatten her stomach but give only light control to her thighs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The present invention provides a shapewear garment, i.e. a tank top or panties, that is capable of delivering different shape control properties to different regions of a wearer's body by employing multiple shape control panels with varying degrees of stretch. These shape control panels are each positioned in the garment to be adjacent to specific body parts and to constrict and shape those body parts.

[0012] One embodiment of the present invention is configured as panties. In this embodiment, the multiple shape control panels include a tummy/midriff panel, corresponding to the abdominals of the wearer, two opposed lateral side panels, corresponding to the oblique abdominals of the wearer, a back panel corresponding to the back of the wearer, and a chest panel, corresponding to the chest of the wearer.

[0013] The control panel material for each of the panels is selected to provide a desired amount of stretch to the particular location of that panel. In the tank top embodiment, the control panel material used for the tummy/midriff panel and back panel portion are selected to have a greater degree of stretch than the side panels, thereby providing a greater degree of restriction in the tummy/midriff and back areas for the wearer.

[0014] Another embodiment of the present invention is configured as panties. In this embodiment, the multiple shape control panels include front control panels, which correspond to the right and left lower abdominals of the wearer; side control panels, which correspond to the upper thighs of the wearer and wrap around the wearer's back side to correspond also to the lower buttocks of the wearer; and rear control panels, which correspond to the right and left central and upper buttocks of the wearer.

[0015] Like in the tank top embodiment, the material that comprises each panel in the panties embodiment is selected to provide a desired of constricting and shaping depending upon the body part where it is positioned. The desired constricting and shaping for each body part varies. The control panel material used for the front and rear panel portions is selected to have a greater degree of stretch than the side panel portions, which thereby provides a greater degree of restriction in the front and rear areas for the wearer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] The figures are for illustration purposes only and are not necessarily drawn to scale. The invention itself, however, may be understood by reference to the detailed description which follows when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0017] FIG. 1 is a plan view of an outer front side of a garment of the present invention;
[0018] FIG. 2 is a plan view of an outer back surface of a garment of the present invention;
[0019] FIG. 3 is a plan view of an outer front surface of a garment according to a second aspect of the present invention;
[0020] FIG. 4 is a plan view of an inner front surface of a garment according to the second aspect of the present invention;
[0021] FIG. 5 is a plan view of an outer back surface of a garment according to the second aspect of the present invention; and
[0022] FIG. 6 is a plan view of an inner back surface of a garment according to the second aspect of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0023] The present invention will next be illustrated with reference to the figures. Such figures are intended to be illus-
ative rather than limiting and are included herewith to facilitate the explanation of exemplary features of embodiments of the present invention. Unless otherwise noted, the figures are not to scale, and are not intended to serve as engineering drawings.

Shapewear undergarments have become a very popular fashion item. However, since currently available shapewear garments utilize a single control material that covers an entire section of the garment, i.e., a single control panel material forms the tummy, side and back areas of the garment, the shapewear garment is only capable of delivering the same control properties for all sections of the garment and thus to all parts of the wearer. This is not always an ideal situation because many times the wearer has different control needs corresponding to different body parts/locations. Because of this, there is a need to provide a garment that has the ability to provide different control properties to different body parts/locations.

The present invention addresses such a need. Specifically, the present invention provides garments, i.e., a tank top and panties, that have targeted shape control zones that, when worn, provide differing amounts of shape control to different body parts/locations.

As shown for example in FIGS. 1-2, the present invention achieves this unique targeted shape control by providing a garment having multiple shape control panels. These multiple shape control panels include a tummy/midriff panel portion corresponding to the abdominals of the wearer, two opposed lateral side panel portions corresponding to the oblique abdominals of the wearer, and a back panel portion corresponding to the back of the wearer. The garment also includes a chest panel portion for covering the chest of the wearer. Preferably, the chest panel portion is constructed of a single layer of fabric, but however may also be constructed as a shape control panel similar to the other panels.

Each of these panel portions are preferably constructed of multiple fabric layers. These multiple fabric layers typically include an outer fabric layer and a control panel material attached to the inner, body facing surface of the outer fabric layer. An inner fabric layer is also preferably provided. Although the figures show a specific shape and configuration of the panel portions, one of skill in the art will readily recognize from the instant disclosure that the specific shape and positioning of these panel portions can be altered to provide control and/or compression to any desired area of the wearer’s body. Preferably, the outer fabric layer (and inner fabric layer) is selected from any fabric, such as lace, circular knit, warp knit, woven, cotton, nylon, polyester, elastane, or any combination thereof.

The control panel material for each of the panels is selected to provide a desired amount of stretch to the particular location of that panel. For example, as shown in the garment of FIGS. 1 and 2, i.e., a tank top, the control panel material used for the tummy/midriff panel portion and back panel portion is selected to have a greater degree of stretch than the side panel portions and thereby providing a greater degree of restriction in the tummy/midriff and back areas for the wearer. The control panel material used for the side panel portions and 5 is preferably selected to offer a degree of control and/or compression less than that of the tummy/midriff panel portion and back panel portion.

The control panel material can be attached to the inner body facing surface of the outer fabric layer by sewing, adhesive bonding, ultra sonic bonding, or any other means known in the art to attach fabric materials together. The control panel material is preferably a power mesh/net material, such as spandex or nylon/lycra® blend, a stretch tricot material, a cotton/spandex knit material, a poly/spandex knit material, or any other material that can provide the desired control and/or compression.

For example, it is preferred that control panel material used in the side panel portions and 5 is stretch mesh fabric having a weight of 75 g/m², and a 180% length/85% width elongation under a 10 lb load. This material is preferred because it is a lightweight mesh that provides light support and control.

The control panel material used in the other panel portions and 6 is preferably a stretch tricot material, a cotton/spandex knit material or a poly/spandex knit material having a weight 125-180 g/m², and a 75-270% length/100-150% width elongation under a 10 lb load. These materials are preferred because they have everyday wearability characteristics, comfortable stretch properties, and a modulus of elasticity that assists in the overall smoothing appearance of the wearer’s body.

FIGS. 3-6 show the garment of the present invention configured as panties having multiple shape control panels. Specifically, FIG. 3 is a plan view of an outer front surface of the panties; FIG. 4 is a plan view of an inner front surface of the panties; FIG. 5 is a plan view of an outer back surface of the panties; and FIG. 6 is a plan view of an inner back surface of the panties.

In the example shown in FIGS. 3 and 5, the panties have an outer fabric layer. An inner fabric layer may also be provided. Preferably, the outer fabric layer (and inner fabric layer) is selected from any fabric, such as lace, circular knit, warp knit, woven, cotton, nylon, polyester, elastane, or any combination thereof.

As shown in FIGS. 4 and 6, the multiple shape control panels are located on an inner body-facing surface of the outer fabric layer and include front control panels and side control panels, and rear control panels. The front control panels correspond to the right and left lower abdominals of the wearer. The side control panels and 15 are two opposed lateral side panel portions that correspond to the upper thighs of the wearer and wrap around the wearer’s back side to correspond also to the lower buttocks of the wearer. The two rear control panels correspond to the right and left central and upper buttocks of the wearer.

The control panel material for each of the panels is selected to provide a desired amount of restriction and/or control. For example, as shown in the panties of FIGS. 3-6, the control panel material used for the front and rear panel portions is selected to have a greater degree of stretch than the side panel portions, which thereby provides a greater degree of restriction in the front and rear areas for the wearer. The control panel material used for the side panel portions is preferably selected to offer a degree of control and/or compression less than that of the front and rear panel portions.

The control panel material is preferably attached to the inner body facing surface of the outer fabric layer by sewing, adhesive bonding, ultra sonic bonding, or any other means known in the art to attach fabric materials together so as to reduce the visibility of any panty lines. The control panel material is preferably a power mesh/net material, such as
spandex or nylon/Lycra® blend, a stretch tricot material, a cotton/spandex knit material, a poly/spandex knit material, or any other material that can provide the desired control and/or compression.

[0037] For example, and similar to the embodiment of FIGS. 1-2, it is preferred that control material used in the side panel portions 14, 15 is stretch mesh fabric having a weight of 75 g/m², and a 180% length/85% width elongation under a 10 lb load. This material is preferred because it is a lightweight mesh that provides shaping and lift for the wearer.

[0038] The control panel material used in the other panel portions 12, 13 and 16, 17 is preferably a stretch tricot material, a cotton/spandex knit material or a poly/spandex knit material having a weight 125-180 g/m², and a 75-270% length/100-150% width elongation under a 10 lb load. These materials are preferred because they have everyday wearability characteristics, comfortable stretch properties, and a modulus of elasticity that assists in the overall smoothing appearance of the wearer’s body.

[0039] It should be noted that although the number of layers of material in the presently preferred embodiment of the garment has been described herein with respect to a particular number of layers, the actual number of layers in the garment may vary based on specific requirements of the garment being constructed, such as for a particular weight garment for a certain season of use. Accordingly, the number of layers of material shown in the presently preferred embodiment of FIGS. 1-6 is merely illustrative and in no way excludes other combinations of layers that may be employed by one of ordinary skill in the art to achieve the benefits of the present invention.

[0040] Although the present invention has been described in relation to particular embodiments thereof, many other variations and modifications will become apparent to those skilled in the art. As such, it will be readily evident to one of skill in the art based on the detailed description of the presently preferred embodiment of the garment explained herein, that different types of garments can be realized.

What is claimed is:

1. A garment comprising:
   a first shape control panel comprised of a first material with a first degree of stretch; and
   a second shape control panel coupled to the first shape control panel, the second shape control panel comprised of a second material with a second degree of stretch, wherein the second degree of stretch is different than the first degree of stretch.

2. The garment according to claim 1, wherein the garment is configured as a tank top.

3. The garment according to claim 1, further comprising:
   a third shape control panel coupled to the second shape control panel, the third shape control panel comprised of a third material with a third degree of stretch wherein the third degree of stretch is the same as the first degree of stretch;
   a fourth shape control panel coupled to the third shape control panel and the first shape control panel, the fourth shape control panel comprised of a fourth material with a fourth degree of stretch, wherein the fourth degree of stretch is different than the first degree of stretch.

4. The garment according to claim 3, wherein the first shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s left oblique abdominals,

the second shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s central stomach area,

the third shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s right oblique abdominals, and

the fourth shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s back.

5. The garment according to claim 4, further comprising a fifth shape control panel coupled to the second shape control panel, and the third shape control panel, the fifth shape control panel comprised of a fifth material with a fifth degree of stretch, wherein the fifth degree of stretch is different than the first degree of stretch,

wherein the fifth shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s bust.

6. The garment according to claim 4, wherein the second degree of stretch and the fourth degree of stretch are greater than the first degree of stretch and the third degree of stretch.

7. The garment according to claim 5, wherein the first material and the third material are a stretch mesh fabric having a weight of 75 g/m², and a 180% length/85% width elongation under a 10 lb load and the second material, the fourth material and the fifth material are a material having a weight 125-180 g/m², and a 75-270% length/100-150% width elongation under a 10 lb load.

8. The garment according to claim 1, wherein the garment is configured as a pair of panties.

9. The garment according to claim 1, further comprising:
   a third shape control panel coupled to the second shape control panel, the third shape control panel comprised of a third material with a third degree of stretch wherein the third degree of stretch is different than the first degree of stretch;
   a fourth shape control panel coupled to the third shape control panel, the fourth shape control panel comprised of a fourth material with a fourth degree of stretch, wherein the fourth degree of stretch is different than the second degree of stretch; and
   a fifth shape control panel comprised of a fifth material with a fifth degree of stretch, wherein the fifth degree of stretch is different than the first degree of stretch, the fifth control panel being coupled to the fourth shape control panel; and
   a sixth shape control panel coupled to the fifth shape control panel and the first control panel, the sixth shape control panel comprised of a sixth material with a sixth degree of stretch, wherein the sixth degree of stretch is different than the first degree of stretch.

10. The garment according to claim 9, wherein the first shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s left upper thigh and lower buttocks,

   the second shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s right lower abdominals,

   the third shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s right lower abdominals,

   the fourth shape control panel is positioned within the garment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s right upper thigh and lower buttocks;
the fifth shape control panel is configured to shape and
smooth the user’s central buttocks area on the left side;
and
the sixth shape control panel is positioned within the gar-
ment so as to constrict and smooth the user’s central
buttocks area on the right side.

11. The garment according to claim 8, wherein the second
degree of stretch, the third degree of stretch, the fifth degree of
stretch and the sixth degree of stretch are greater than the first
degree of stretch and the fourth degree of stretch.

12. The garment according to claim 9, wherein the first
material and the fourth material are a stretch mesh fabric
having a weight of 75 g/m², and a 180% length/85% width
elongation under a 10 lb load and the second material, the
third material, the fifth material, and the sixth material are a
material having a weight 125-180 g/m², and a 75-270%
length/100-150% width elongation under a 10 lb load.