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(54) **BATHING ASSISTANCE APPARATUS**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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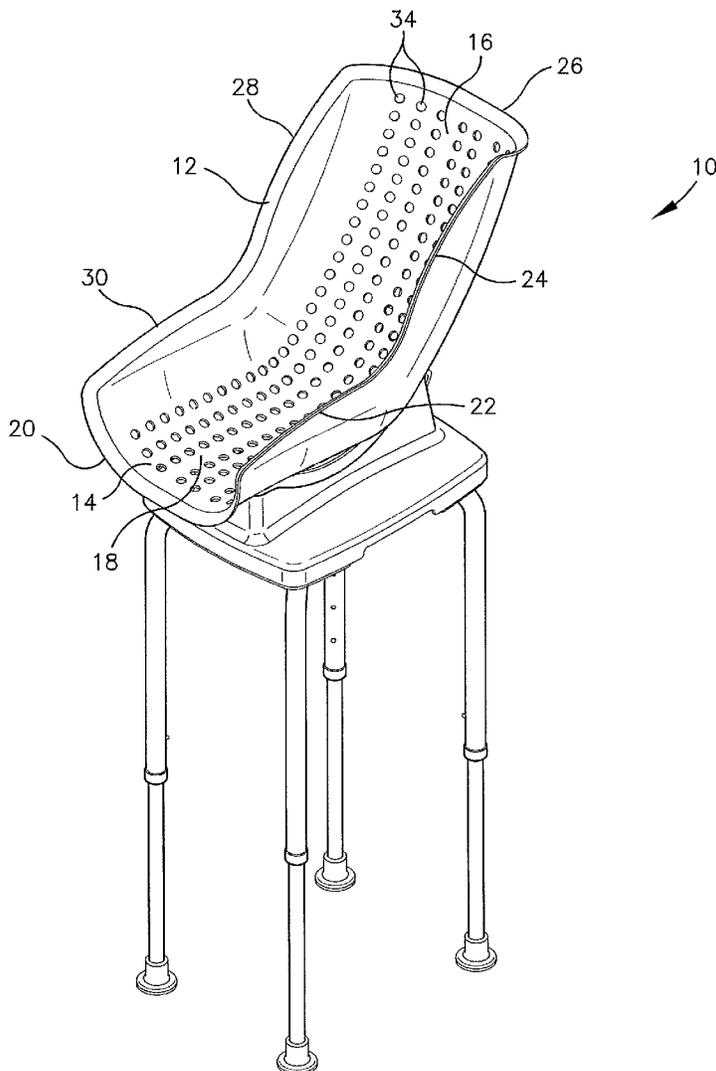
A bathing assistance apparatus for use within either a shower or a bathtub. The apparatus includes a seat with a base portion, a back-rest portion, an upper surface and a lower surface, and the seat is configured to support a user atop the upper surface. The seat support assembly includes a base member and the seat support assembly is mounted to the lower surface of the seat. The seat support assembly further includes laterally opposed biased locking members as well as a ratcheting mechanism for selectively altering the inclination of the seat relative to the support assembly. The apparatus further includes a support platform, the support platform is positioned beneath the seat support assembly and is detachably engageable from the seat support assembly using the laterally opposed and biased locking members. The support assembly is operable to support the seat and the seat support assembly.

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 62/843,808, filed on May 6, 2019.

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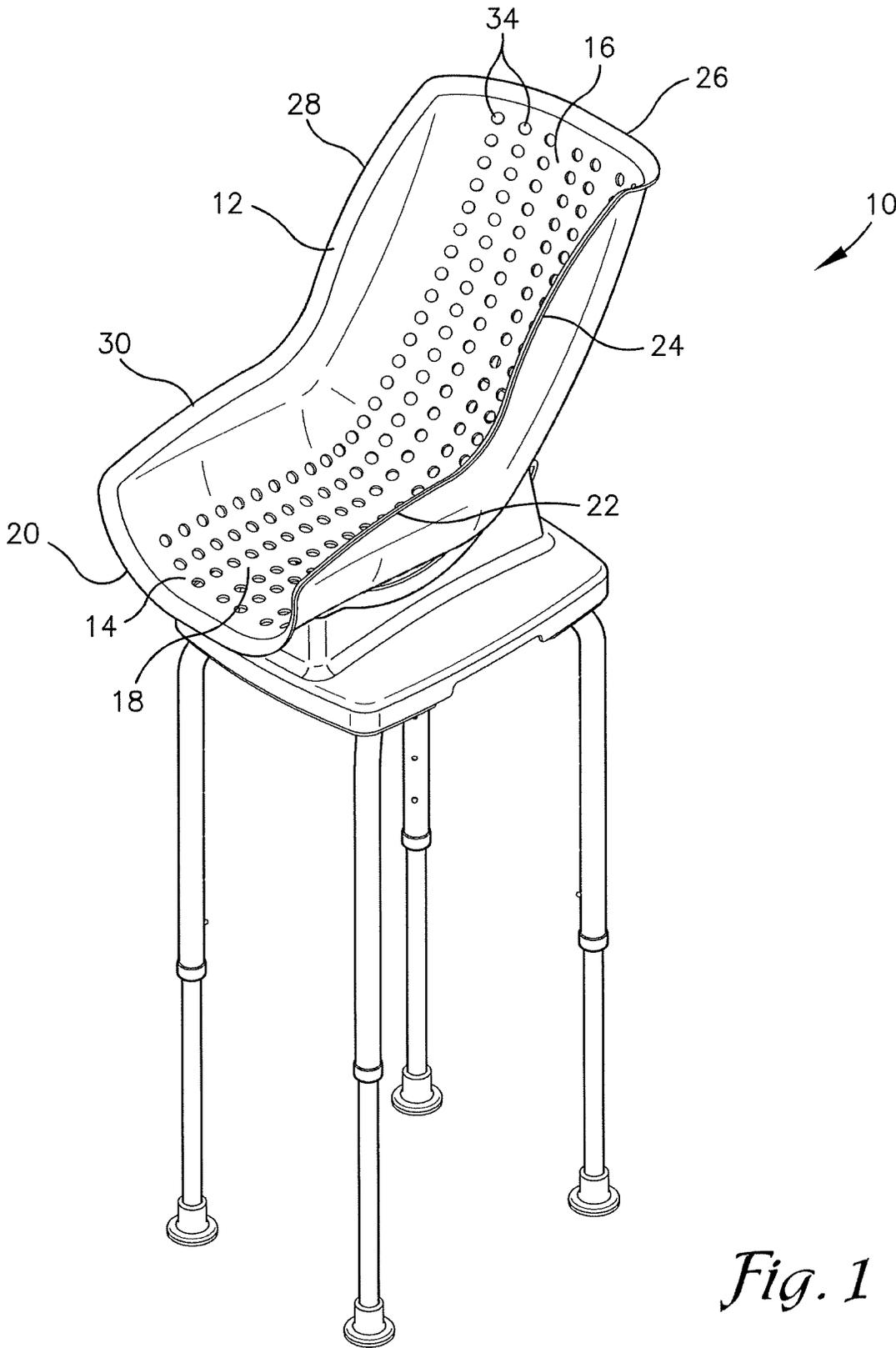


Fig. 1

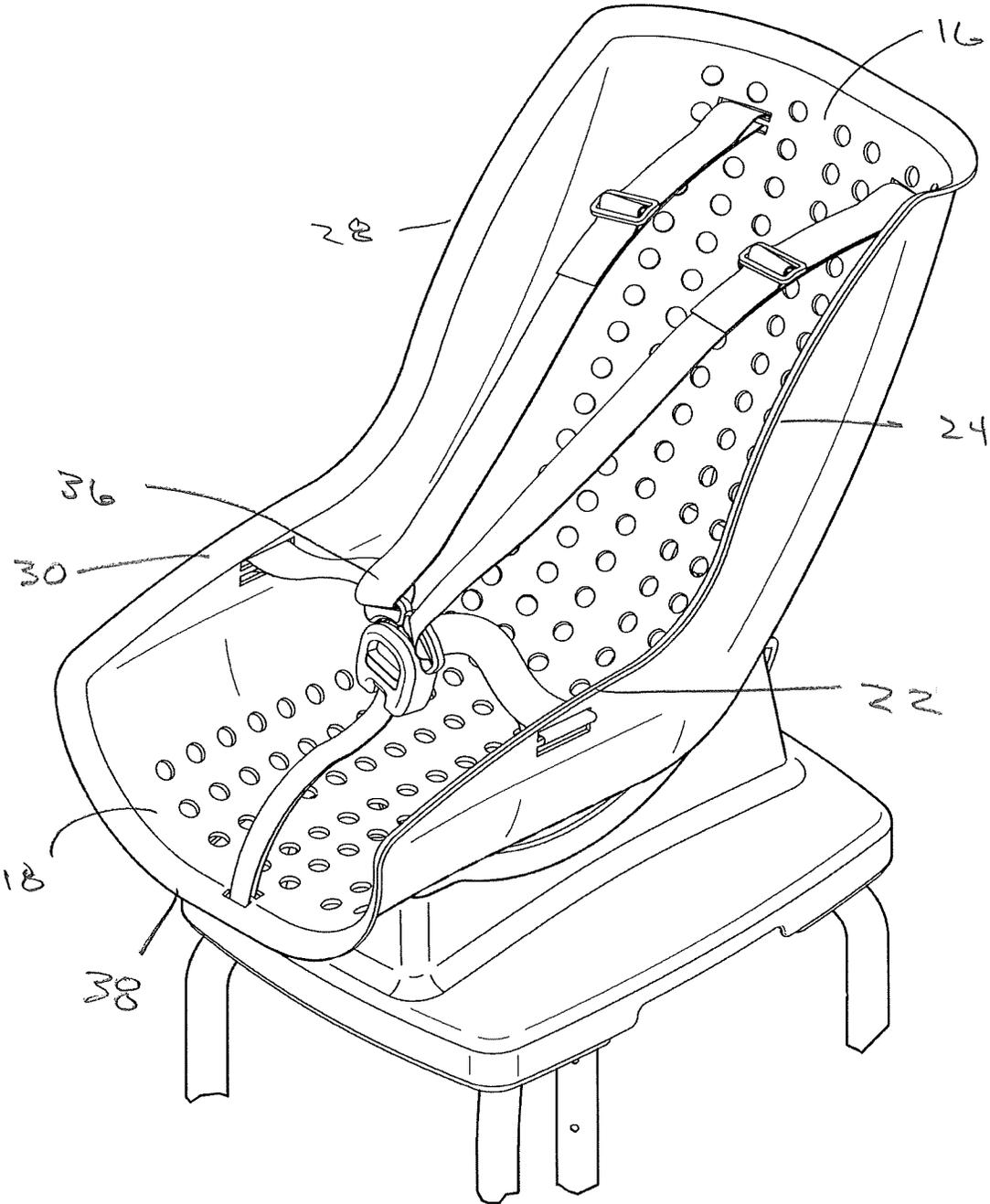


Fig. 2

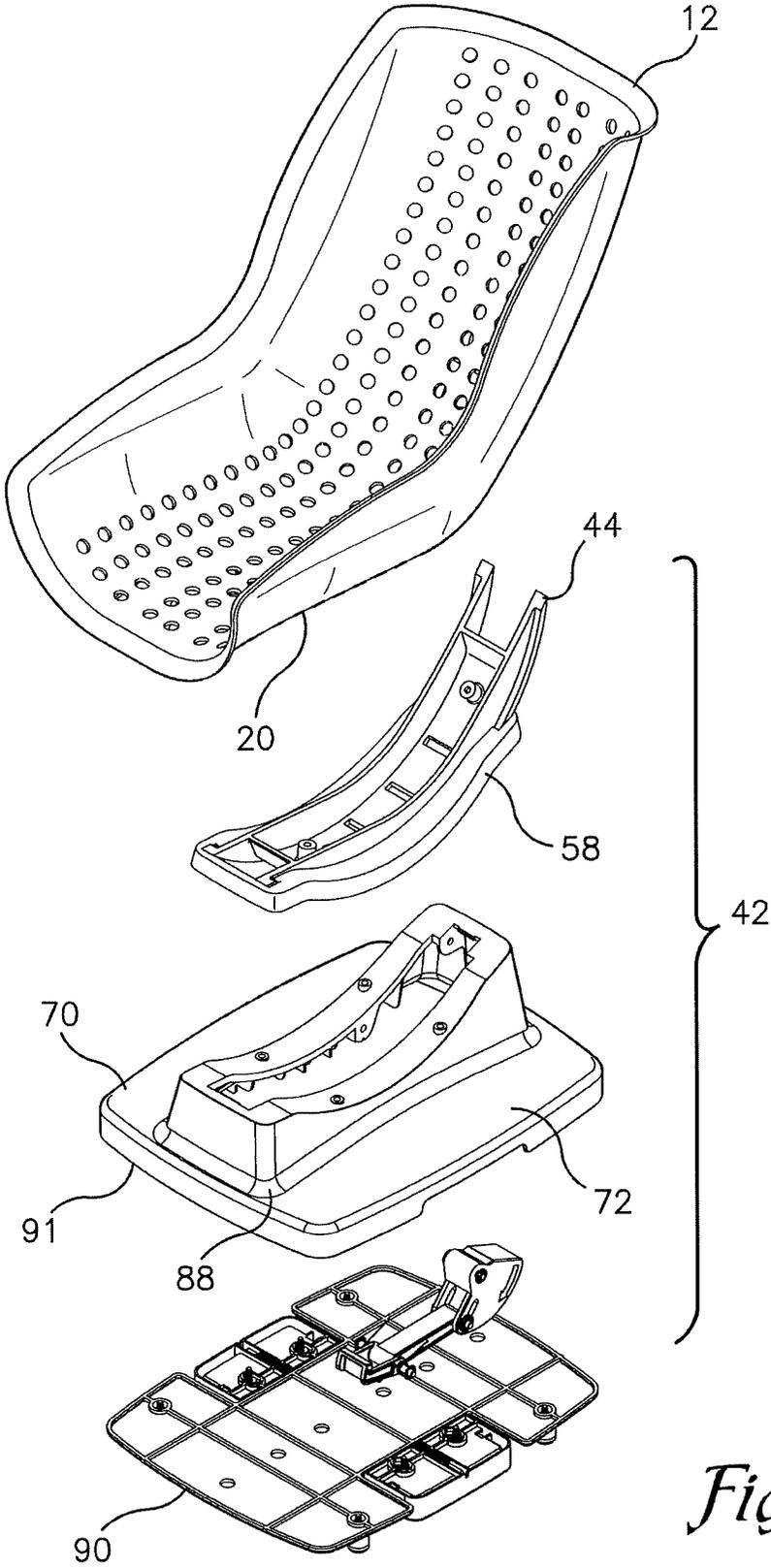


Fig. 3

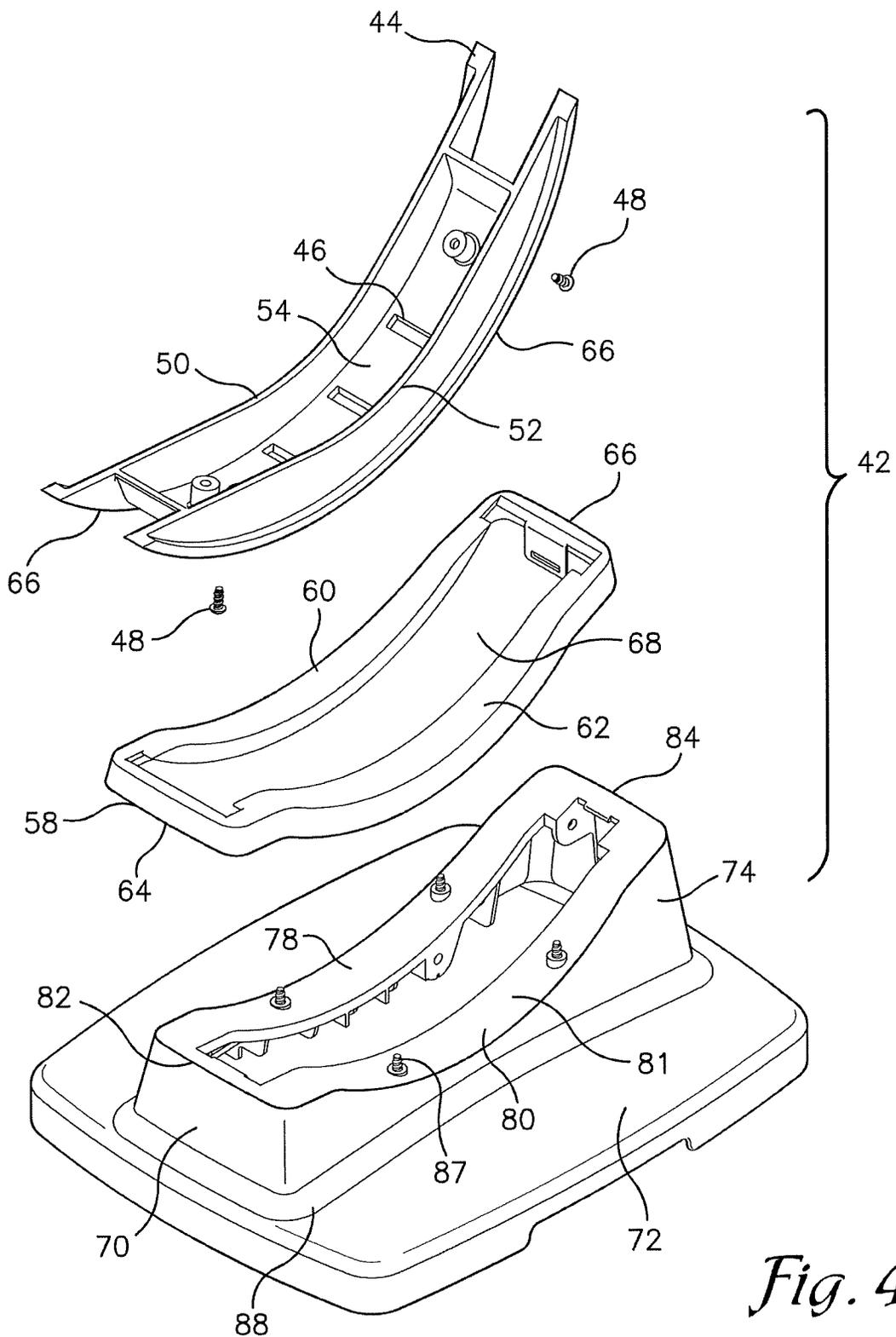


Fig. 4

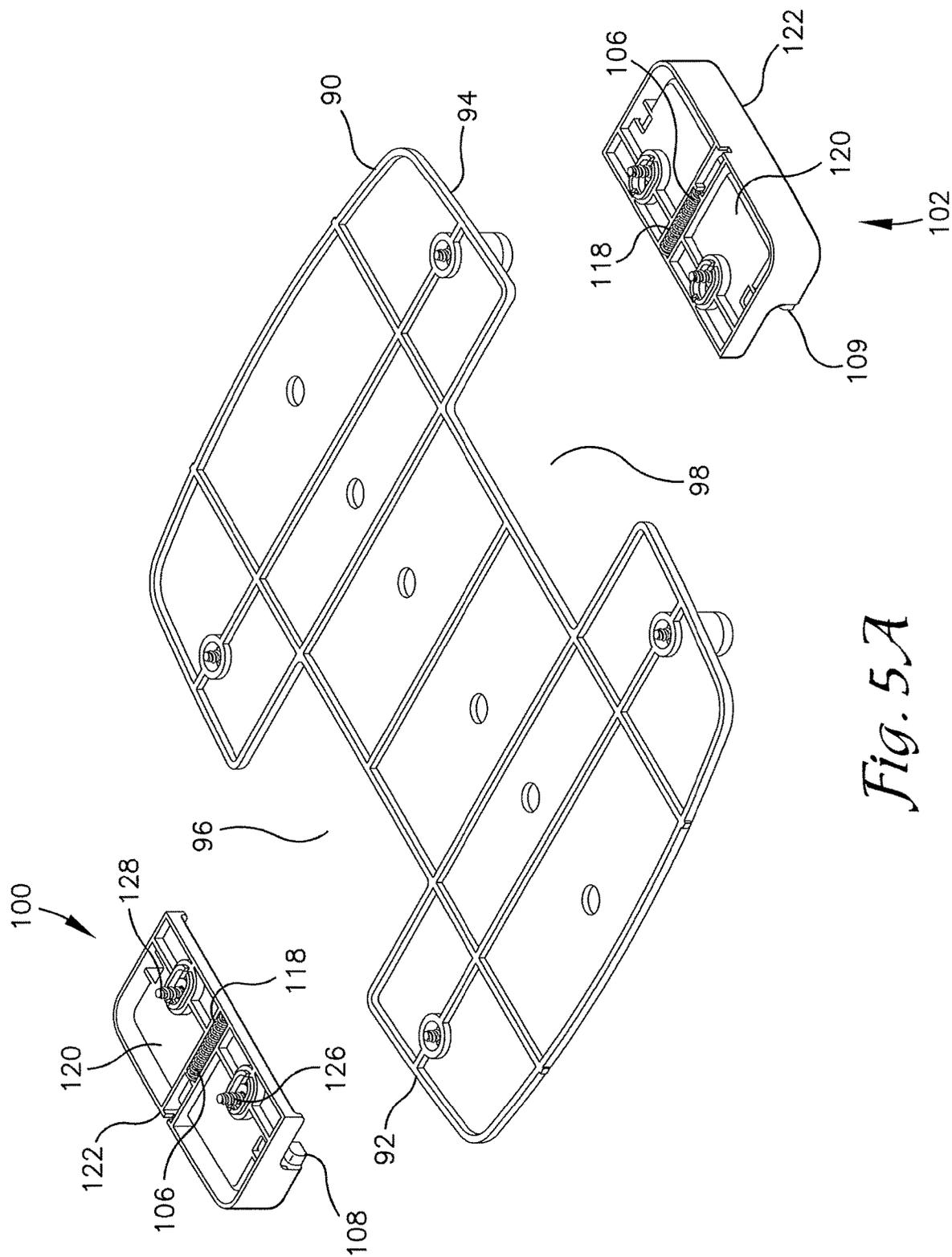


Fig. 5A

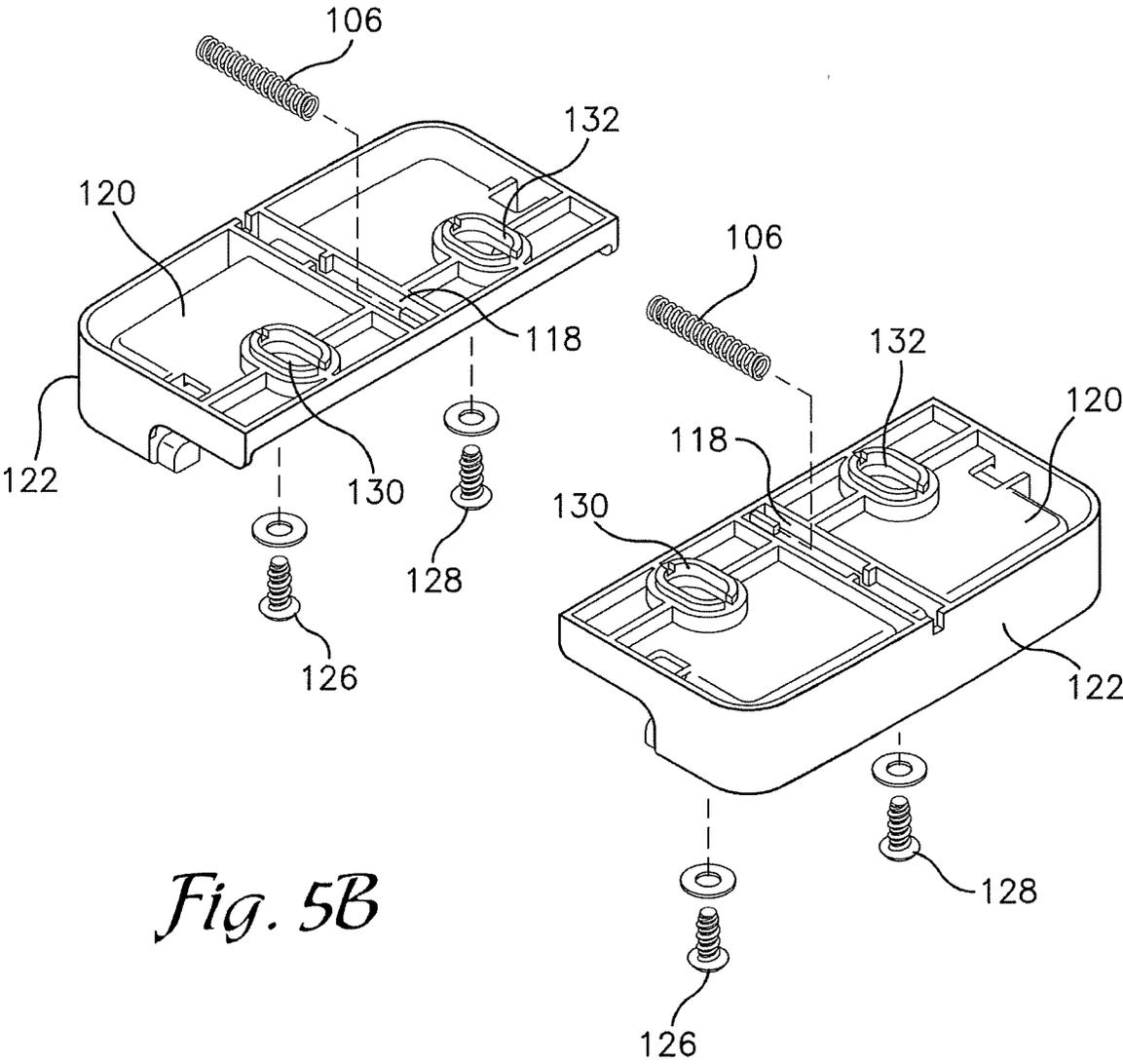


Fig. 5B

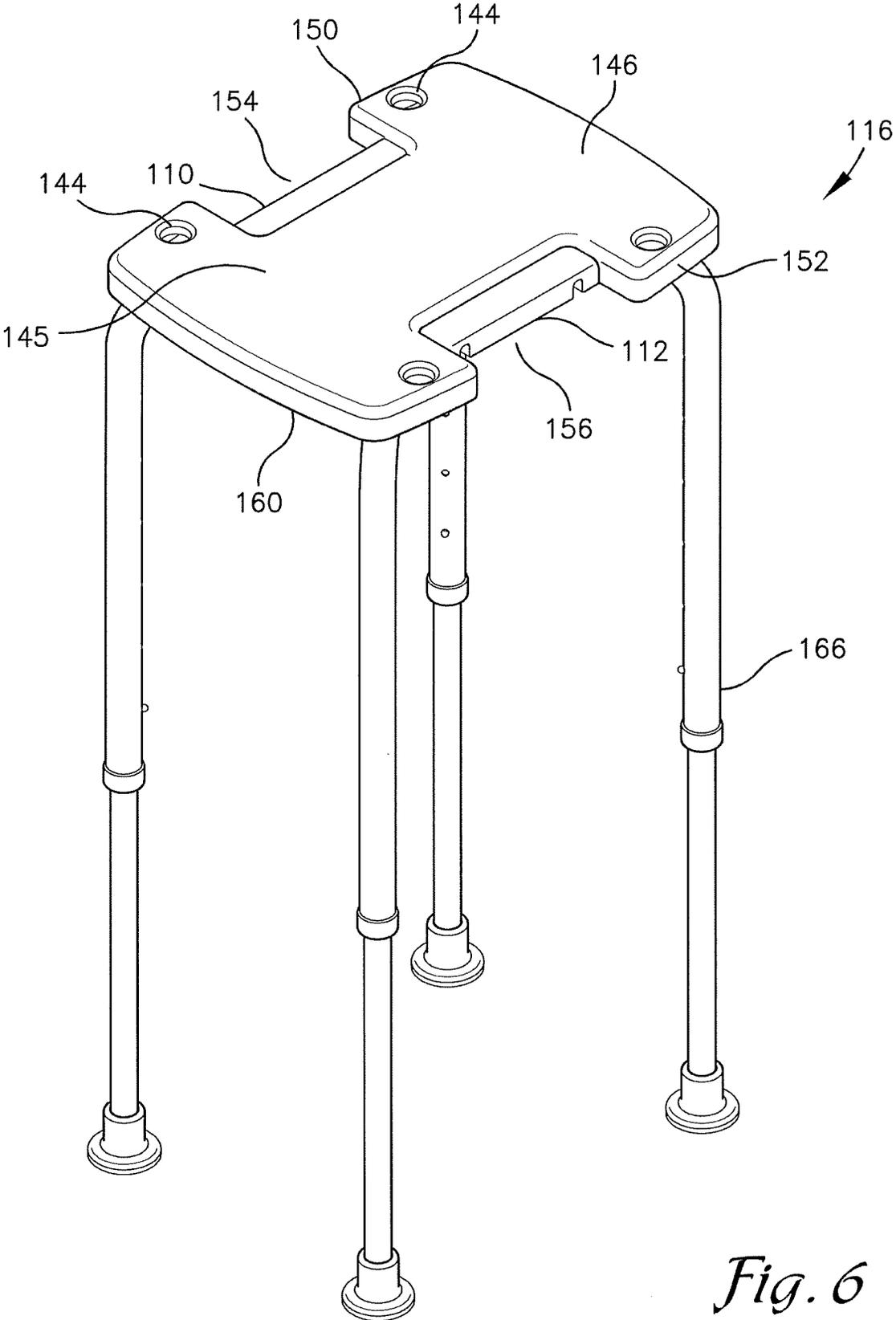


Fig. 6

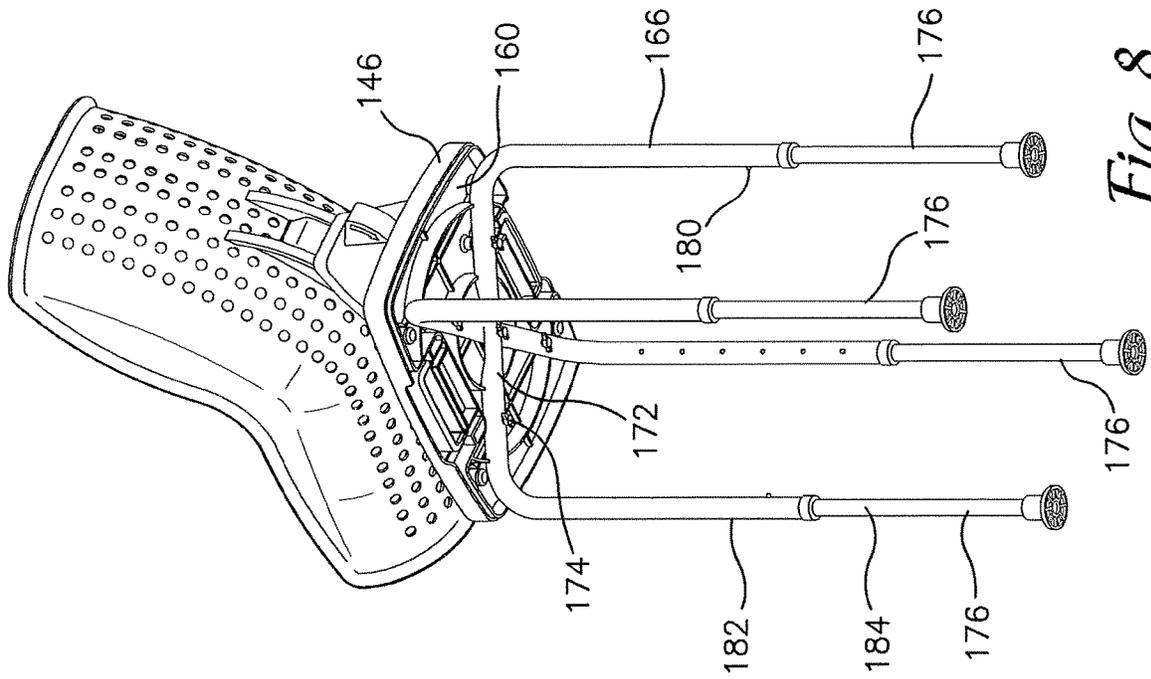


Fig. 8

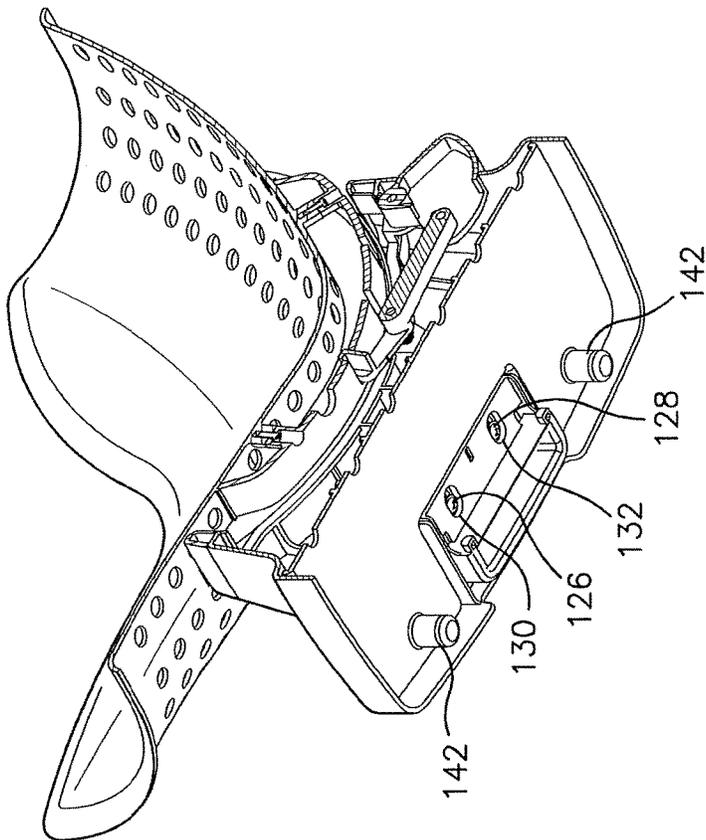
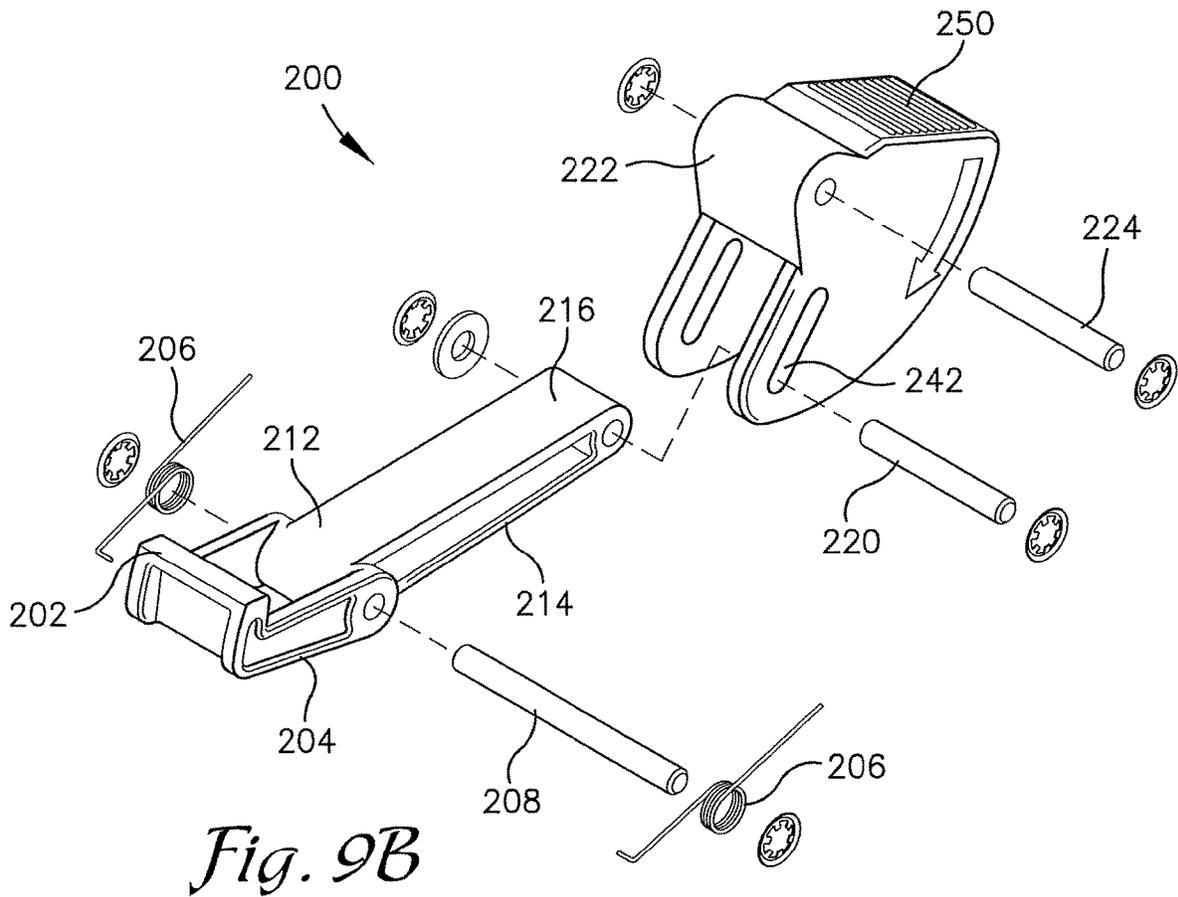
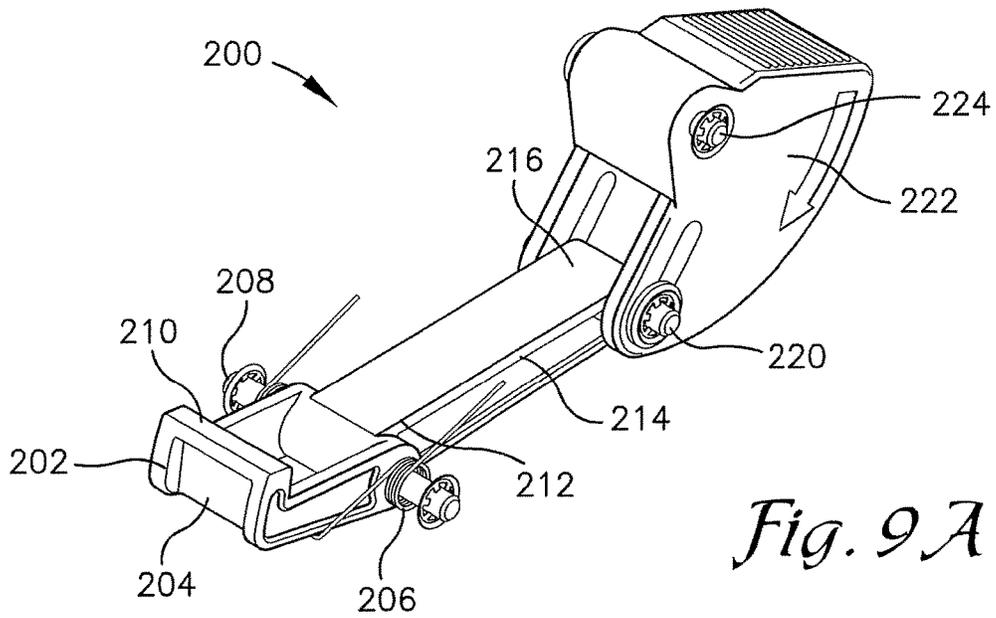


Fig. 7



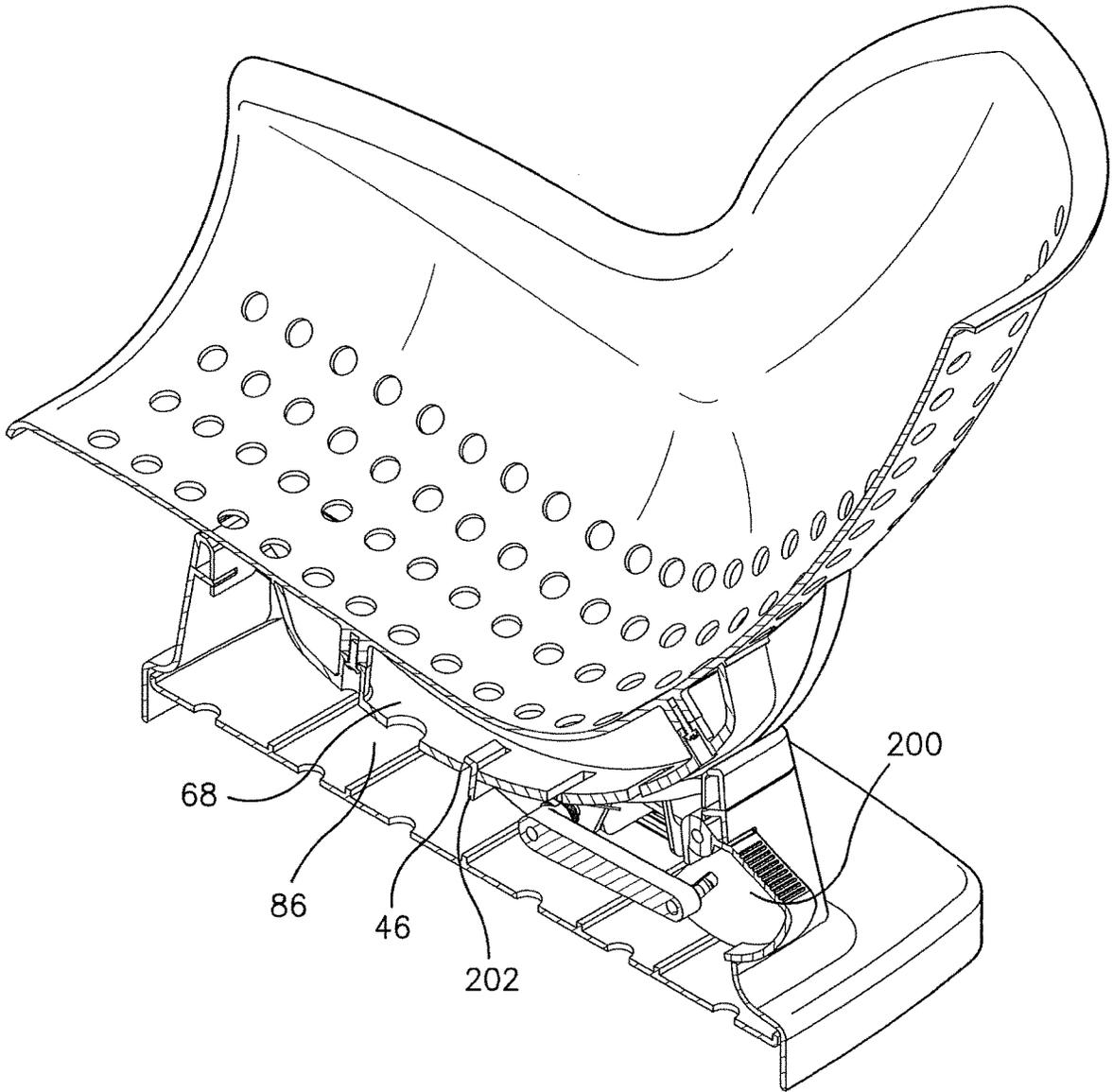


Fig. 10

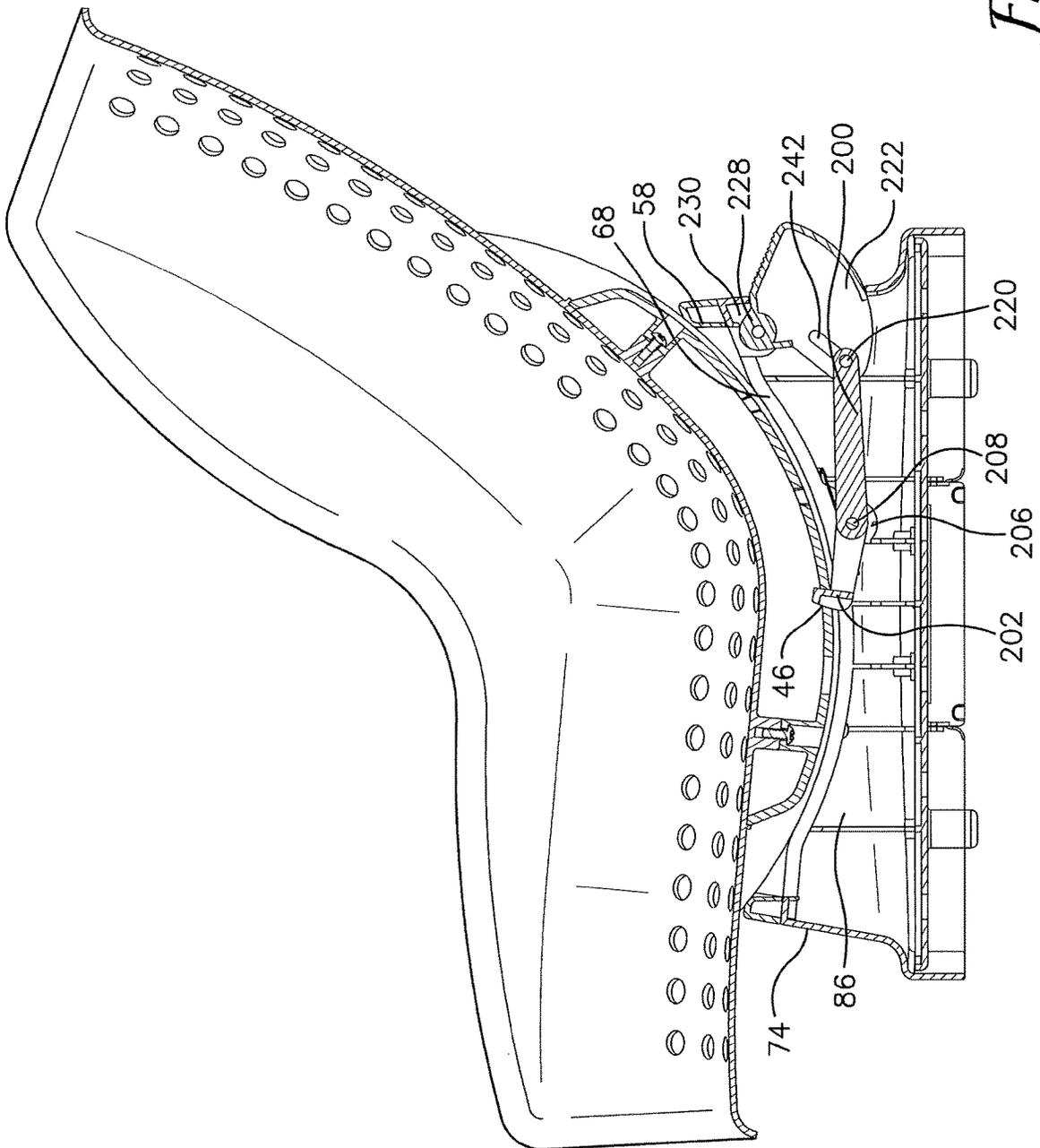


Fig. 11

BATHING ASSISTANCE APPARATUS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Application No. 62/843,808 filed on May 6, 2019, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

FIELD OF USE

[0002] This disclosure relates to a bathing assistance apparatus and more particularly pertains to a bathing apparatus for assisting infants, older children and even adults with disabilities.

BACKGROUND

[0003] To stay clean and healthy, babies, older children and adults with disabilities need to be bathed regularly. There are different ways to wash infants, according to their age, motor abilities, and preferences. Some caregivers may want to bathe their babies daily. Bath time can be a fun and special time between infant and caregiver that can add to their physical, mental, and emotional growth. As babies grow older, they can begin to explore and play games in the tub or shower but safety of the infant, child or even adult that is being bathed is of paramount concern.

[0004] A baby bath seat is a type of chair, usually made of an engineered plastic, that sits partially submerged in the bathtub water or can be placed on the floor of a shower. Designed to support the head and back, these seats also help baby stay put, leaving their hands free so that they can be properly cleaned. It can be very difficult to bathe a baby, especially a newborn, in a regular tub by oneself. A baby bath seat also allows a caregiver to wash the child without having to buy a smaller tub, which an infant will quickly outgrow.

[0005] There are several varieties of bath seats. For newborns, there are plastic models contoured to an infant's body, as well as sling chairs with suspended cloth seats that let in water through the fabric. Both are tilted back like a lounge chair and designed for babies who cannot sit up on their own. Older infants can be placed in a more traditional-style baby bath chair, which is like a high chair seat. It has a bar across the front instead of a tray, openings for baby's legs and suction cups on the bottom to secure it to the tub. Another option is a baby bath ring, a soft, inflatable pillow that allows the infant to lay back and float in the water. When baby can sit up, the seat ring can be secured around the waist to help keep her upright.

[0006] Currently there exists many devices for assisting individuals with bathing of infants, children and disabled persons. Examples of such devices include chairs that slide on rails to help move non-ambulatory persons into a standard residential bathtub, transfer benches that allow a person to sit in a bathtub and bathing chairs having conduits disposed within the seat and back member for channeling water through. However, many prior art devices have limited utility beyond providing a seating function making such devices relatively less versatile. On the other hand, some devices are unusually complex in design and are relatively expensive to build and maintain. Other seats are extremely difficult to operate and are intimidating to parents or ambulatory impaired persons. These chairs often require the help

of a skilled worker, which is generally not feasible or desired in a home setting as opposed to institutional settings.

[0007] Another drawback of prior art chair bathing devices is that they are not conducive for reaching the hard to reach areas such as the sides and back of the body, especially for a person who is handicapped and/or physically disabled.

[0008] Therefore, there is a need for a seat used for bathing that overcomes the drawbacks of the prior art. Such a chair must have a range of functionality, must be relatively simple in design and operation and must be usable by most individuals without extensive assistance.

SUMMARY

[0009] Disclosed herein is a bathing assistance apparatus for use within either of a shower or a bathtub. The bathing assistance apparatus as disclosed herein includes a perforated seat with a base portion, a back-rest portion, an upper surface and a lower surface, the seat configured to support a user atop the upper surface. The apparatus also includes a seat support assembly that includes a base member and a saddle support member. The seat support assembly, as disclosed herein, is mounted to the lower surface of the seat.

[0010] The bathing assistance apparatus further includes a cover plate with first and second laterally opposed indented edges, the cover plate is secured against the lower surface of the seat support assembly. The bathing assistance apparatus further includes a pair of biased locking members received into the indented edges of the cover plate. The bathing assistance apparatus also includes a ratcheting mechanism for selectively altering the inclination of the seat relative to the support assembly. The ratcheting mechanism is positioned substantially internal to the seat support assembly. Lastly, the apparatus includes a support platform, the support platform is positioned beneath the cover plate and is configured for detachable engagement from the seat support assembly with the biased locking members.

[0011] The apparatus as disclosed herein may be used in a seat and seat support assembly stand-alone configuration without the use of the support platform that includes the elevating legs and support plate. An exemplary use in this configuration would be in a bathtub setting where the individual assisting the infant, or disabled adult, may sit on the elevated support platform as if it were a stool. The support platform may be positioned within the bathtub allowing, for example a parent, to be within the tub area with the infant. Alternatively, the parent or caregiver may be seated on the support platform outside of the bathtub should they prefer to limit their exposure to the bathwater.

[0012] It is an object of the bathing assistance apparatus disclosed herein to provide a lightweight, easy to operate apparatus to assist in the bathing of infants, older children and individuals with impairments.

[0013] It is a further object of the apparatus as disclosed herein to be fully functional in both a shower and a bathtub setting.

[0014] It is a further object of the apparatus as disclosed herein to easily change the elevation and inclination of the user's seat.

[0015] It is a further object of the apparatus as disclosed herein to minimize the weight of the apparatus.

[0016] It is a further object of the apparatus as disclosed herein to facilitate drainage of water from the apparatus.

[0017] It is a further object of the apparatus as disclosed herein to easily separate the seat and seat support assembly from the support platform.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] Illustrative embodiments of the apparatus disclosed herein are described in detail below with reference to the attached figures, which are incorporated by reference herein and wherein:

[0019] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the bathing assistance apparatus;

[0020] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the seat of the bathing assistance apparatus with a seat belt in position;

[0021] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the components comprising the seat support assembly;

[0022] FIG. 4 is an assembly view of an embodiment of the components comprising the seat support assembly;

[0023] FIG. 5A is a perspective view of an embodiment of the biased locking members and the cover plate residing beneath the base plate;

[0024] FIG. 5B is an exploded perspective view of an embodiment of the biased locking members and associated hardware;

[0025] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the support platform to include the support plate;

[0026] FIG. 7 is a sectional view of an embodiment of the seat and seat support assembly;

[0027] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the bathing assistance apparatus;

[0028] FIG. 9A is a perspective view of an assembled embodiment of the ratcheting mechanism in isolation;

[0029] FIG. 9B is an exploded assembly view of an embodiment of the ratcheting mechanism in isolation;

[0030] FIG. 10 is a sectional perspective view of an embodiment of the ratcheting mechanism in position within the saddle of the seat support assembly; and

[0031] FIG. 11 is a sectional elevation view of an embodiment of the ratcheting mechanism in position within the saddle of the seat support assembly.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0032] As shown in FIG. 1 is an assistive bathing apparatus 10 for use within either a bathtub or a shower setting to allow an individual to assist the user with bathing. It is contemplated by this disclosure that the user may be an infant, an elderly individual or possibly an individual with physical or emotional disabilities. It is also contemplated by this disclosure that the apparatus 10 may be employed in different configurations depending upon the needs and physical attributes of the user as well as the attributes of the individual that is assisting the user located within the apparatus 10. Those configurations are more extensively discussed later in this detailed description section.

[0033] FIG. 1 illustrates that the apparatus 10 is comprised of a seat 12 with a base portion 14, a back-rest portion 16, an upper surface 18 and a lower surface 20. The seat 12 further includes edges 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 that surround the base 14 and back-rest 16 portions. In a preferred embodiment, the seat 12 is fabricated from an engineered plastic such as an elastomeric polymer; however, other materials such as aluminum, silicone and composites are also contemplated by this disclosure. Because the seat 12 is intended

to either be immersed, at least partially in a bathtub, and be completely exposed to water in a shower setting the base 14 and back-rest 16 portions include a plurality of perforations 34 to facilitate drainage of water away from the body of the user.

[0034] FIG. 2. reveals the placement of a seat belt 36 that are installed to prevent inadvertent sliding of the user out of the chair during the bathing process. The belt 36 is secured preferably proximate the edge 38 to restrain the user at the crotch region and at the side regions 22, 30. The seat belt 36 may be of many configurations and may be secured at various attachment points. The proper placement and attachment points of seat belts for successfully restraining the user in position is well known in the art and the attachment points and configuration of the seat belt shown in FIG. 2 is not intended to be limiting.

[0035] As shown in FIGS. 3-4, disposed beneath the lower surface 20 of the seat 12 is a seat support assembly 42. The seat support assembly 42 includes a bracket 44 with a plurality of cutouts 46. The bracket 44 is mounted to the lower surface 20 of the seat 12 with a plurality of fasteners 48. The bracket 44, as disclosed herein, is preferably arcuately shaped and aligns with the contours of the lower surface of the seat 12. The cutouts 46 are disposed at approximately 15 degrees increments from one another and in a preferred embodiment a total of three cutouts 46 are utilized; however, additional cutouts are contemplated by this disclosure and increments of lesser or greater than 15 degrees are also contemplated. The bracket 44 further employs two laterally opposed rail segments 50, 52 with a central region 54 that contains the cutouts 46.

[0036] As also shown in FIG. 4 is another feature of the seat support assembly 42 that is disposed beneath the bracket 44. That feature is a spacer member 58 that includes first and second side members 60, 62, first and second end members 64, 66, and an open interior space 68. The side members 60, 62 of the spacer member 58 when in an assembled configuration are aligned with the rail segments 50, 52 of the bracket 44. In operation, the lower surfaces 66 of the rail segments 50, 52 translate upon the first and second side members 60, 62. The interior space 68 remains open for the insertion of hardware that will be more fully detailed later in this detailed description section.

[0037] Again, with reference to FIG. 4, as part of the seat support assembly 42, the apparatus 10 utilizes a base member 70. The base member 70 is positioned beneath the spacer member 58. The base member 70 is comprised of a base plate 72 and extending upwardly from the base plate 72 is a saddle 74. The saddle upper surface 76, as disclosed herein is contoured to the arcuate shape of the spacer member 58 and utilizes first and second laterally opposed side walls 78, 80 and longitudinally opposed end walls 82, 84. The first and second side members 60, 62 and first and second end members 64, 66 of the spacer rest atop respectively the first and second laterally opposed side walls 78, 80 and longitudinally opposed end walls 82, 84. In order to secure the spacer member 58 to the base member 70 a plurality of fasteners 87 are passed from the underside of the base member 70 through the upper surface 81 of the first and second side walls 78, 80 and into, for example, bosses within the spacer member 58.

[0038] Referring to FIGS. 3 and 4, the base plate 72 of base member 70 supports the upwardly extending saddle 74 and extends laterally outward beyond the base 88 of the

saddle 74. Beneath the base plate 72 is a cover plate 90 that covers most of the underside 91 of the base member 70. In a preferred embodiment, as seen in FIG. 5A, the cover plate 90 is configured in the shape of an "I." Two sides 92, 94 of the cover plate 90 include cutouts 96, 98. The cutouts 96, 98 provide space for the insertion on each side of the cover plate 90 for a biased locking member 100, 102. The biased locking members 100, 102 as well as the cover plate 72 are preferably secured to the underside 91 of the base member 70 by threaded fasteners.

[0039] As shown in FIGS. 5A and 5B the biased locking members 100, 102 include, for example, a biasing compression or tension spring 106 to maintain a locking flange 108, 109 in position beneath a locking feature 110, 112 on each side of the support platform 116. The biasing spring 106 is maintained in a channel 118 in the topline 120 of the housing 122 of each biasing member 100, 102. Two retaining fasteners 126, 128 inserted through oblong shaped openings 130, 132 in each housing 122 facilitate the short movement of each of the biased locking members 100, 102 sufficient to allow clearance of the locking flanges 108, 109 from beneath the locking features 110, 112. The two retaining fasteners 126, 128 are threaded into position into the underside 91 of the base member 70 as shown at FIG. 5A.

[0040] The short travel distance of the locking members 100, 102 permitted by the oblong openings 130, 132 is sufficient to allow movement of the locking flanges 108, 109 to avoid interference with the locking features 110, 112 of the support platform 116. To release the base plate 72 from the support platform 116, the operator applies outward pressure to the locking flanges 108, 109 of each of the locking members 100, 102. The outward movement provides the necessary clearance as just detailed.

[0041] Projecting downwardly from a lower surface 140 of the cover plate 72, as seen in the cutaway view of FIG. 7 are two bosses 142. The bosses 142 are oriented to align with recesses 144 in the upper surface 145 of the support platform's support plate 146 as seen in FIG. 6. As the bosses 142 are aligned with the recesses 144 in the support plate 146 the locking members 100, 102 of the seat support assembly 42 are employed to lock the seat support assembly in position atop the support platform 116.

[0042] As seen in FIG. 6, the support plate 146 includes laterally opposed sides 150, 152 that include cutouts 154, 156. The purpose of these cutouts 154, 156 as well as the locking features 110, 112 that preferably span the entire cutout 154, 154 is the facilitation of the function of the biased locking members 100, 102. Critically these elements retain the seat support assembly 42 in position atop the support platform 116. The support plate 146 in addition to having an upper surface 145 (of the support platform) also has a lower surface 160.

[0043] Referring again to FIG. 6, in addition to the support plate 146, the support platform 116 is comprised of at least one and preferably multiple legs 166. A preferred embodiment includes four legs. FIG. 8 reveals that the supporting leg configuration is preferably comprised of pairs of legs that are interconnected beneath the lower surface 160 of the support plate 146. In addition to being interconnected beneath the lower surface 160 of the support plate 146 the connecting span 172 of the legs 166 is secured to the lower surface of the support plate 146 with fasteners 174. The legs 166 preferably also include segments 176 that are individually extensible such as with the depression of a biased

locking nub 180 that extends through concentric leg cylinders 182, 184. The adjustability of the legs allows the individual assisting the user to elevate or depress the seat assembly to a height that accommodates the assisting individual.

[0044] An additional feature of the bathing apparatus 10 that provides the assisting individual with operational flexibility is the ratcheting mechanism 200 as seen in FIGS. 9A and 9B. The ratcheting mechanism 200 allows the assisting individual to depress a lever and the seat can be manually rotated, by the assisting individual, between pre-established orientation options. The ratcheting mechanism 200, as seen in FIGS. 10-11 is substantially disposed within the open interior space 68 of the spacer member 58 and the open interior space 86 of the saddle 74 and the ratcheting engagement/disengagement feature is accessible as needed by the individual assisting the user as detailed below.

[0045] As seen in FIGS. 10-11, most of the ratcheting mechanism 200 is enclosed within the interior space 86 of the saddle and hidden from view and any inadvertent interaction with human appendages that may become entangled or pinched in the mechanism. The ratcheting mechanism 200, as disclosed herein, and as shown in FIG. 9 is comprised of a pivotable hook 202 at the first end 204. The pivotable hook 202 is for selective engagement with one of the plurality of cutouts 46 located in the central region 54 of the bracket as seen in FIGS. 10-11. Selective engagement in this context means that the ratcheting mechanism 200 is configured to only engage a single cutout 46 at any one time and the engagement of the cutout is determined, and locked into position, by the individual assisting the user of the bathing chair apparatus 10.

[0046] As seen in FIGS. 9 and 11, the hook 202 on the first end 204 of the ratcheting mechanism 200 is pivotally biased upward toward the cutouts 46, preferably by a torsion spring 206. The hook 202 pivots about a pin 208 that connects the hook arm 210 to the first end 212 of the extender arm 214 of the ratcheting mechanism 200. The second end 216 of the extender arm 214 is pivotally connected by a pin 220 to a cam member 222. The cam member 222 is also pivotally connected, and restrained in position, by a pin 224 to a pair of bosses 228, 230 in the saddle 74 as best seen in FIG. 11. The combination of the pin 224 connecting the ratcheting mechanism 200 to the saddle bosses 228, 230 and the engagement of the hook 202 within the cutout 46 of the bracket 44 provides the restraint necessary to maintain the ratcheting mechanism securely in position within the interior spaces 68, 86 of the spacer 58 and the saddle 74.

[0047] The pin 220 at the second end 216 of the extender arm 214 that engages with the cam member 222 resides within a slot 242. The slot 242 in the cam member 222 facilitates the engagement and disengagement of the hook 202 within the cutout 46 and provides backlash to prevent undesirable locking of the ratcheting mechanism 200 during operation of the mechanism. The cam member 222 includes an activation surface 250 that is external to the interior space 86 of the saddle. When a force is applied to the activation surface 250, such as by a human hand, the cam member 222 passes the force to the second end 216 of the extender arm 214. This force is then transmitted to the first end 212 of the extender arm 214 and via the pin 208 to the second end of the hook arm 210. The force is in turn transmitted to the hook 202 of the hook arm 210.

[0048] In operation, a typical, but not exclusive, user of the bathing assistance apparatus 10 is an infant. In a first configuration of the apparatus 10, the seat 12 and associated seat support assembly 42 are positioned atop the support platform 116 at a height that is accommodating to an individual bathing the infant in a shower setting. The infant's buttocks are positioned upon the base portion 14 of the seat 12 and the infant's back is positioned against the back-rest portion 16 of the seat. The infant is then secured upon the seat using a seat belt 36 in order to restrain the infant against slippage out of the seat 12.

[0049] The individual bathing the infant has the option of adjusting both the angle of inclination of the seat as well as the height of the seat. To adjust the height of the seat 12, and this may most appropriately be done before the infant user is positioned upon the seat 12, the individual depresses the nubs 180 extending through the concentric leg cylinders 182, 184 to allow the leg cylinders to extend or retract depending upon the elevation needs of the individual. Once all legs 166, in a preferred embodiment a total of four legs, are adjusted, the individual may need to adjust the orientation of the seat 12 upon the seat support assembly 42.

[0050] The individual assisting the user may want to adjust the angular inclination of the seat 12 to facilitate the bathing process and to, for example, reduce the potential that shower water may be spraying directly into the mouth, nose or eyes of the infant user. The assisting individual places a hand on one of the edges 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 of the seat 12 and places a second hand on the activation surface 250 of the cam member 222. While applying hand pressure to the activation surface 250 and simultaneously grasping one of the edges, the individual assisting the user disengages the hook 202 from the cutout 46 in the seat bracket 44 and rotates the seat 12 to another one of the cutouts in the bracket 44. The hook 202 extends into the cutout 46 and overlaps one of the edges of the cutout 46. The spring 206 biasing of the hook 202 seeks to drive the hook into the cutout 46 and restrain rotation of the seat 12 and associated bracket 44 upon the spacer 58 that resides atop the saddle 74 of the base member 70.

[0051] Once the seat elevation and seat rotational orientation are achieved to the satisfaction of the individual assisting the user infant, and again, this may be done before placing the infant user into the seat or preferably prior to placing the infant in the seat. It is contemplated that prior to attempting to adjust either the elevation, or seat orientation, that all appropriate safety precautions are taken to prevent any seat instability that may present itself.

[0052] The same methodology as detailed above for an infant is equally applicable to the washing of an older child, or an adult that may have either physical or mental impairments or possibly both. The assisting individual adjusts both the elevation of the seat 12 and the orientation of the seat to suit the specific environment presented and the particular needs of the user and the assisting individual.

[0053] The apparatus as disclosed herein is also capable of placement into a bathtub setting. In a bathtub setting the seat 12 and associated seat support assembly 42 would most likely be removed from the support platform 116. Removing the seat and associated seat support assembly 42 from the support platform 116 would allow the person assisting the user to assist in the bathing process from either within the tub or outside of the tub. If inside of the tub, the user, again for example an infant, would be positioned within the seat

12 after the seat and seat support assembly 42 are already positioned on the tub of the floor. The support platform 116 that is comprised of the support plate 146 and the one or more legs 166 when separated from the seat 12 and associated seat support assembly, may be used as a stool (one of the earliest forms of seat furniture) seat by the individual bathing the infant. When the support platform 116 is functioning as a stool the individual that is bathing the infant may, as previously noted, position themselves within the tub or outside of the tub depending upon their preference. Also, as previously noted, the individual bathing the user may adjust the legs 166 of the support platform by depressing the spring-loaded nubs 180 and repositioning the concentric leg cylinders 182, 184 to a comfortable height.

[0054] To separate the seat 12 and the seat support assembly 42 from the support platform 116 the individual bathing the user places their fingers beneath the biased locking members 100, 102 and engages the locking flange 108, 109 on each locking member. The individual then retracts the locking flanges 108, 109 outwardly away from the seat 12. This outward movement, which overcomes the biasing effect of the compression spring 106 disposed in the channel 118 of the housing 120 of each of the locking flanges, clears the locking flanges 108, 109 from interference with the locking features 110, 112 on the underside of the support platform 116. The individual may then lift the seat 12 and the associated seat support assembly 42 away from the support platform 116.

[0055] Any different arrangements of the various components depicted, as well as components not shown, are possible without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosed technology. Embodiments of the disclosed technology have been described with the intent to be illustrative rather than restrictive. Alternative embodiments will become apparent to those skilled in the art that do not depart from its scope. A skilled artisan may develop alternative means of implementing the aforementioned improvements without departing from the scope of the disclosed technology.

[0056] It will be understood that certain features and sub combinations are of utility and may be employed without reference to other features and sub combinations and are contemplated within the scope of the claims. Not all steps listed in the various figures need be carried out in the specific order described. We claim:

1. A bathing assistance apparatus for use in bathing a user, the apparatus comprising;

- a seat with a base portion, a back-rest portion, an upper surface and a lower surface, the seat configured to support a user atop the upper surface;
- a seat support assembly with a base member, the seat support assembly mounted to the lower surface of the seat, the seat support assembly further comprising laterally opposed biased locking members;
- a ratcheting mechanism for selectively altering the inclination of the seat relative to the support assembly, the ratcheting mechanism disposed substantially within the seat support assembly; and
- a support platform, the support platform disposed beneath the seat support assembly and detachably engageable from the seat support assembly using the laterally opposed and biased locking members integral to the seat support assembly, wherein the support assembly is operable to support the seat and the seat support assembly.

2. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ratcheting mechanism further comprises a first end and a second end, the first end pivotally biased for engagement with a bracket in the seat support assembly, the second end of the ratcheting mechanism comprising a pad for application of force to actuate the first end for engagement with the bracket.

3. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 1, wherein the support platform further comprises a support plate with an upper surface and a lower surface.

4. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 3, wherein the support platform is elevated by at least one leg that is secured to the lower surface of the support platform.

5. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least one leg is adjustable in height to accommodate the position of an individual that is assisting the user in the bathing process.

6. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 1, wherein the inclination of the seat is selectable with the ratcheting mechanism.

7. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 6, wherein seat inclination is selectable between at least two positions.

8. A bathing assistance apparatus for use within either a shower or a bathtub, the apparatus comprising;

a seat with a base portion, a back-rest portion, an upper surface and a lower surface, the seat configured to support a user atop the upper surface;

a seat support assembly comprising a base member, a support member and a lower surface, the seat support assembly mounted to the lower surface of the seat;

a cover plate with first and second laterally opposed indented edges, the cover plate disposed adjacent the lower surface of the seat support assembly;

a pair of biased locking members received into the indented edges of the cover plate and disposed adjacent to the cover plate;

a ratcheting mechanism for selectively altering the inclination of the seat relative to the support assembly, the ratcheting mechanism disposed substantially within the seat support assembly; and

a support platform, the support platform disposed beneath the cover plate and configured for detachable engagement from the seat support assembly by the pair of biased locking members.

9. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 8, wherein the ratcheting mechanism further comprises a first end and a second end, the first end pivotally biased for selective engagement with a plurality of cutouts in a bracket in the seat support assembly, the second end of the ratcheting mechanism comprising a pad for application of force to actuate the first end for engagement with the bracket.

10. A bathing assistance apparatus for use within a bathtub and optionally a shower, the apparatus comprising;

a seat with a base portion, a back-rest portion, an upper surface and a lower surface, the seat configured to support a user atop the upper surface;

a bracket with a plurality of cutouts mounted to the lower surface of the seat;

a spacer member with first and second side members, first and second end members and an open interior space;

a base member with an upper surface, a lower surface and an open interior, the base member upper surface comprising a base plate as well as a saddle extending upwardly from the base member upper surface, the

spacer member disposed atop the saddle and the bracket disposed atop the spacer member;

a cover plate for engagement with the lower surface of the base member, the cover plate having an upper surface and a lower surface;

a ratcheting mechanism disposed within the open interior of the base member, the ratcheting mechanism comprising a first end and a second end, the ratcheting mechanism first end configured for selective engagement with one of the plurality of cutouts in the bracket and the second end operable as a surface for application of a force to slidably reorient the contoured seat to an alternative position upon the base member; and at least one leg disposed beneath the cover plate for supporting the contoured seat.

11. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 10, wherein the contoured seat further comprises a plurality of openings to facilitate drainage of shower water.

12. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 10, wherein the user is secured in the seat with at least one strap with a first end and a second end.

13. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 12, wherein the first end of the strap is secured to the seat.

14. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 10, wherein the bracket is arcuately shaped.

15. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 10, wherein the saddle further comprises a pair of laterally opposed arcuate upper surfaces configured to support the spacer member.

16. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 10, wherein the first end of the ratcheting mechanism is hook shaped.

17. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 10, wherein the first end of the ratcheting mechanism is pivotally biased.

18. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 17, wherein a torsion spring biases the pivotal first end of the ratcheting mechanism.

19. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 10, wherein the ratcheting mechanism is mounted to the upper surface of the lower plate.

20. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 10, wherein a plurality of bosses extend downwardly from the lower surface of the cover plate.

21. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 20, wherein the plurality of bosses are received into a plurality of alignment recesses in an upper surface of a support plate.

22. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 21, wherein the support plate further comprises a lower surface and a pair of laterally opposed cutouts.

23. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 22, wherein a biased locking member is received into each laterally opposed cutout, each biased locking member is secured to the lower surface of the base member.

24. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 23, wherein a mounting plate is disposed between the cover plate and the at least one leg.

25. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 24, wherein a pair of laterally opposed indentations are disposed within the mounting plate.

26. The bathing assistance apparatus of claim 25, wherein each biased locking member lockably engages with each indentation in the mounting plate and unlocks upon manual application of force adequate to overcome the bias of the locking member.