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(54) **FOOTWEAR AND RELATED ACCESSORIES**

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC 36/100

(76) Inventor: **Danilo Mendoza**, Fontana, CA (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **13/600,041**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

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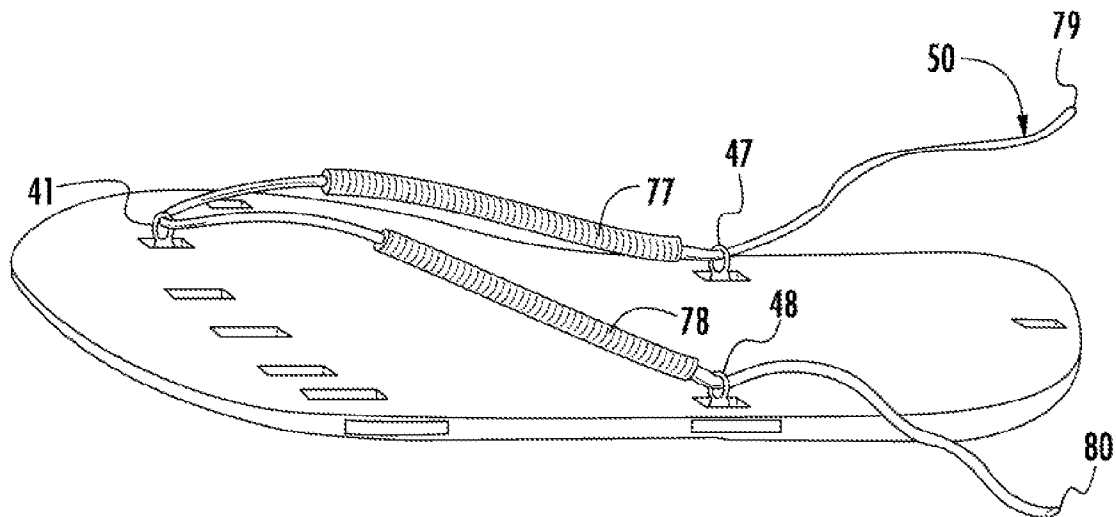
Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/627,583, filed on Oct. 15, 2011.

Publication Classification

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A43B 3/24 (2006.01)
A43B 23/24 (2006.01)

A footwear comprising a sole adapted to provide a base for the footwear; a plurality of mounts embedded within the sole; a plurality of lace holders, each of the plurality of lace holders being attached to its corresponding mount; and a lace adapted to be connected to the plurality of lace holders, wherein the footwear can be transformed from one design to another by varying the way the lace is connected to the plurality of lace holders.



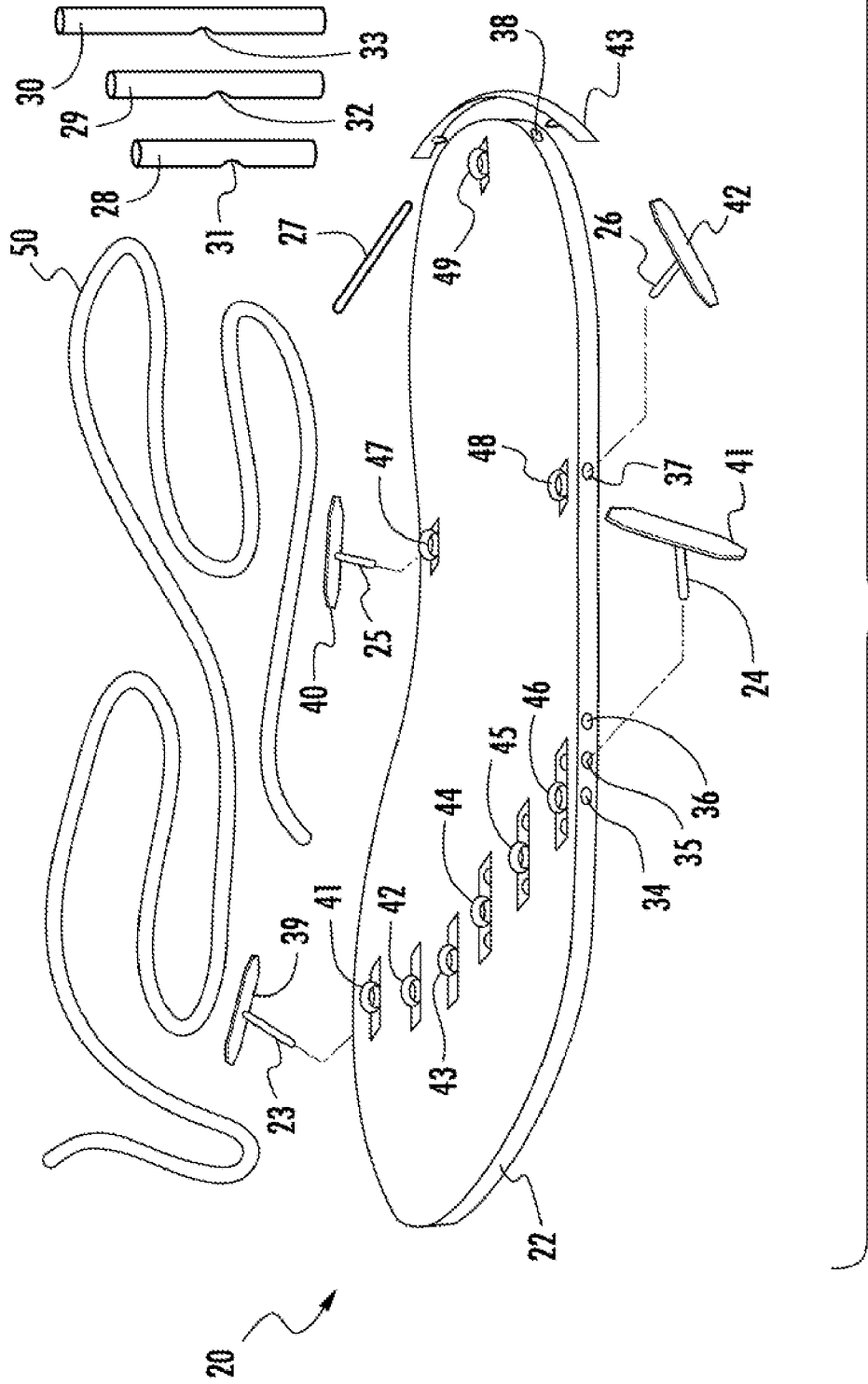


FIG. 1

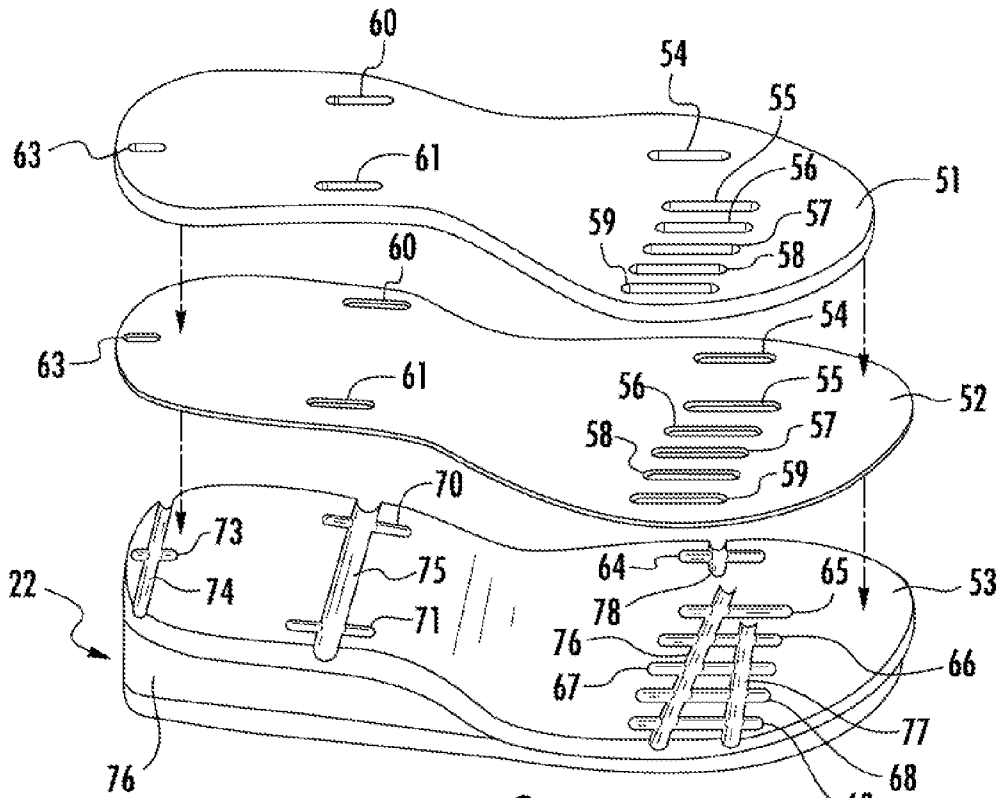


FIG. 2

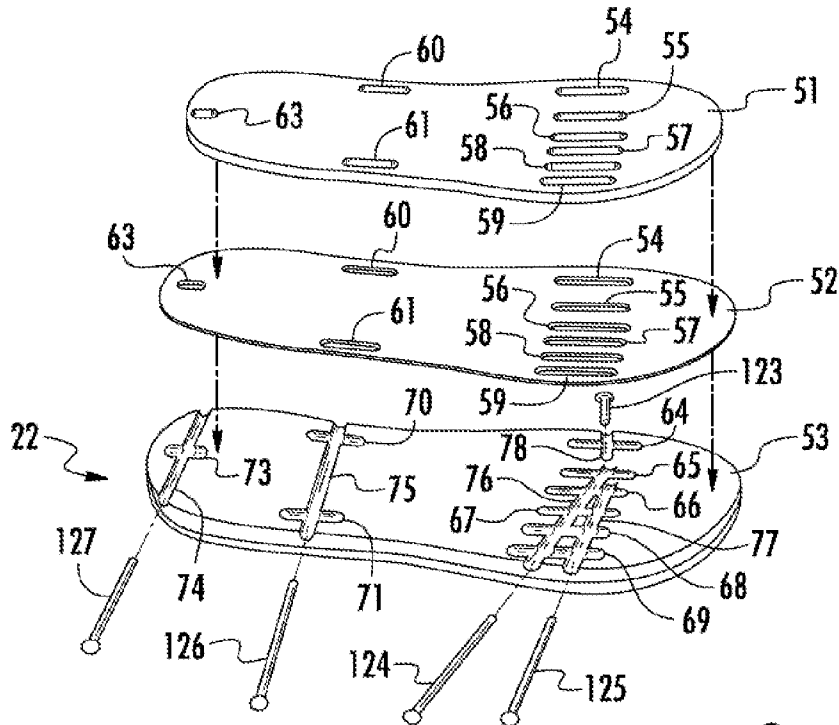


FIG. 3

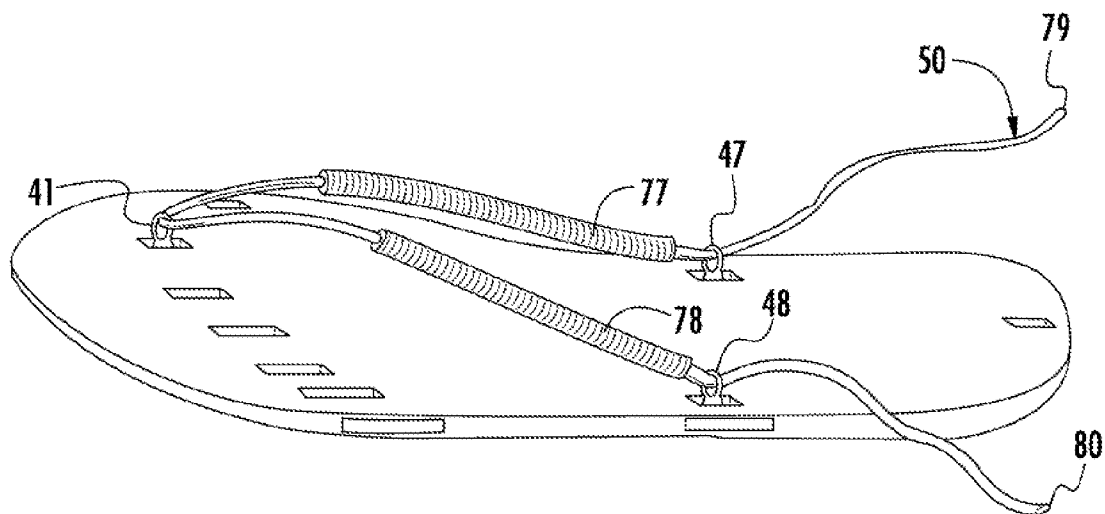


FIG. 4

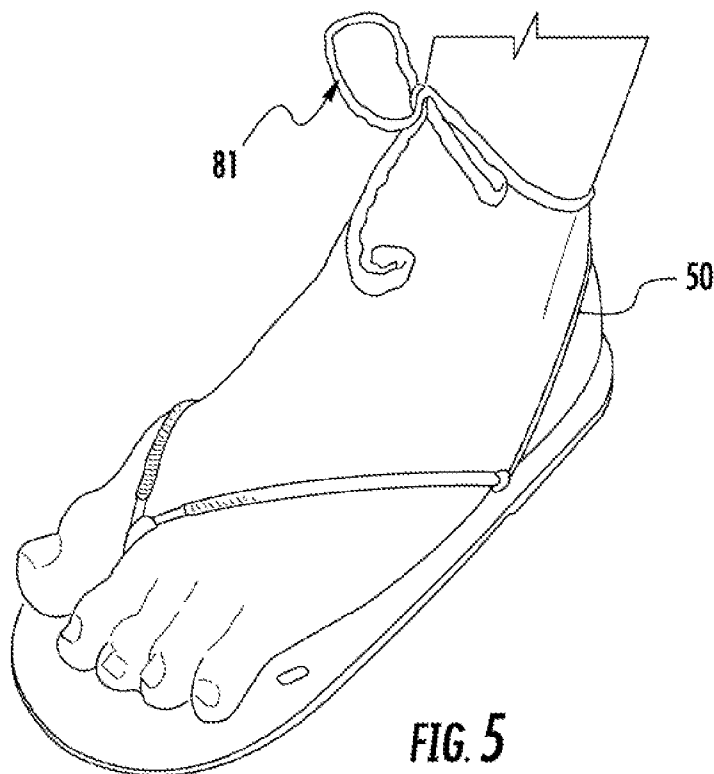
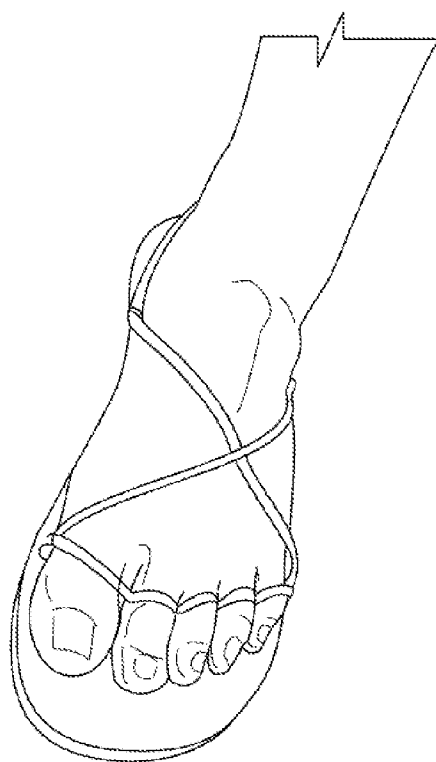
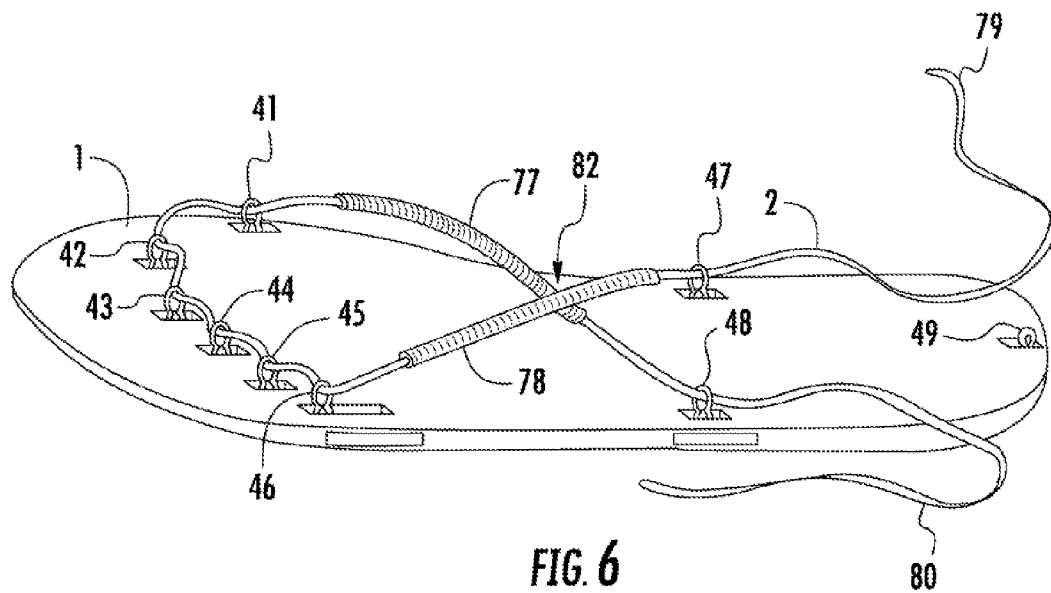


FIG. 5



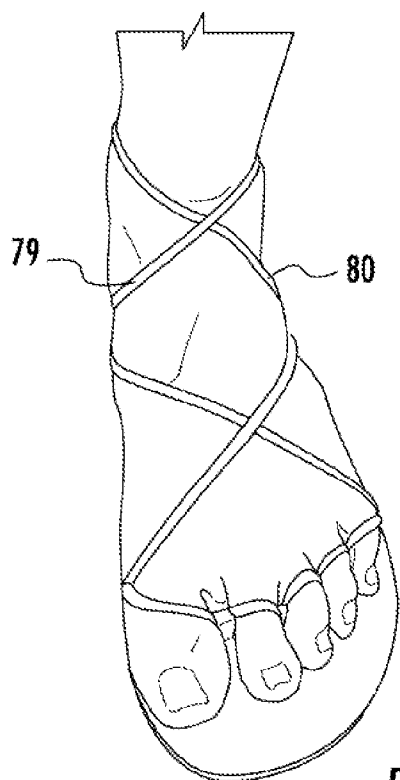


FIG. 8

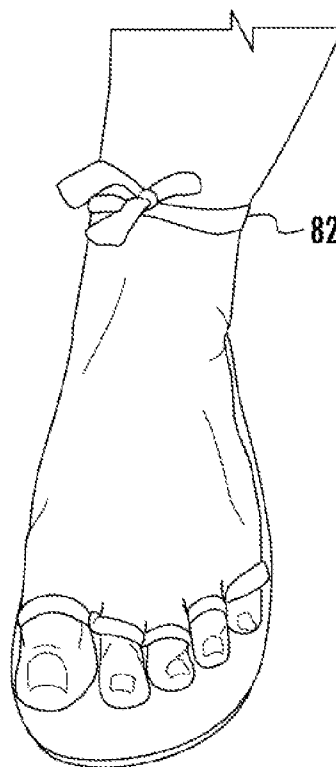


FIG. 9

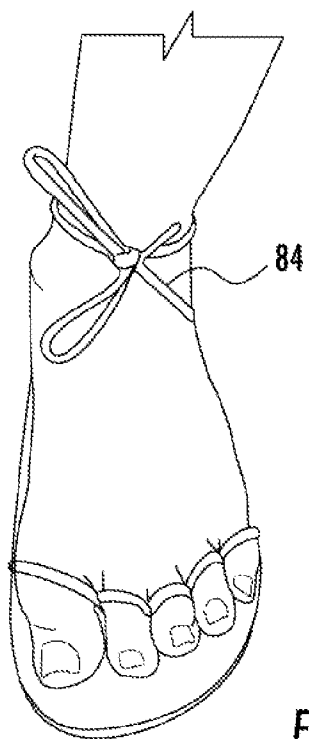


FIG. 10

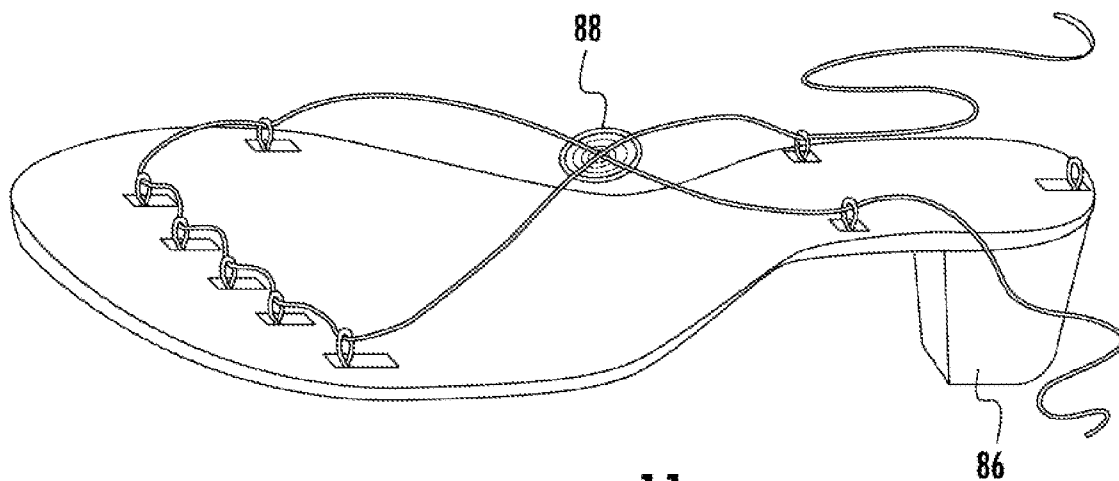


FIG. 11

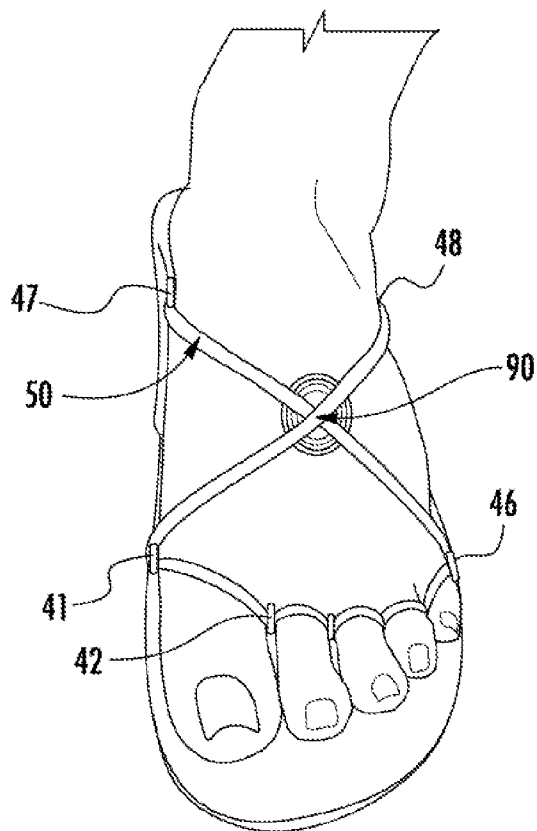


FIG. 12

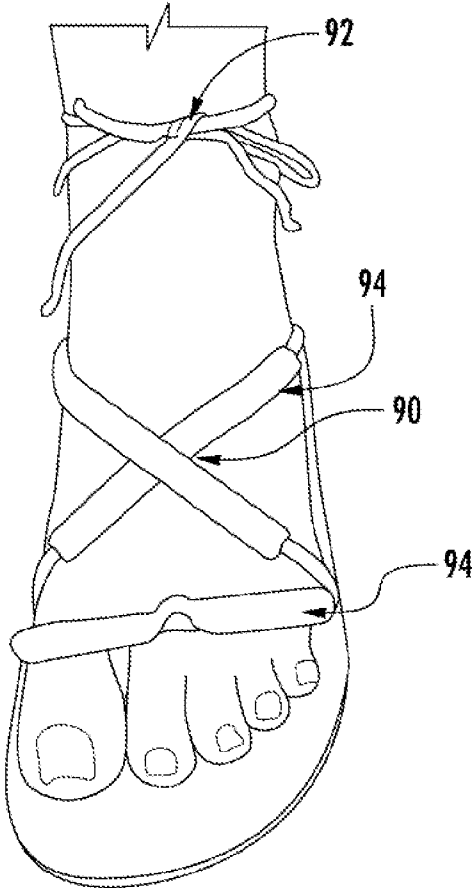


FIG. 13

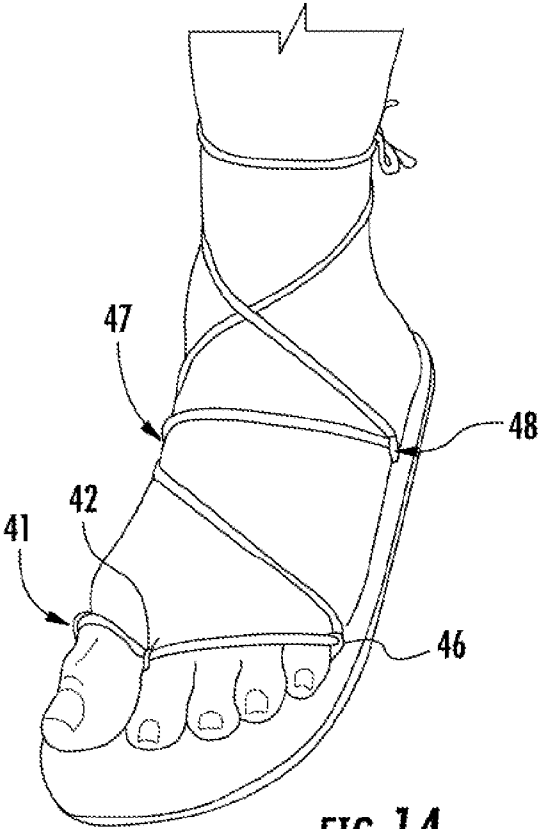


FIG. 14

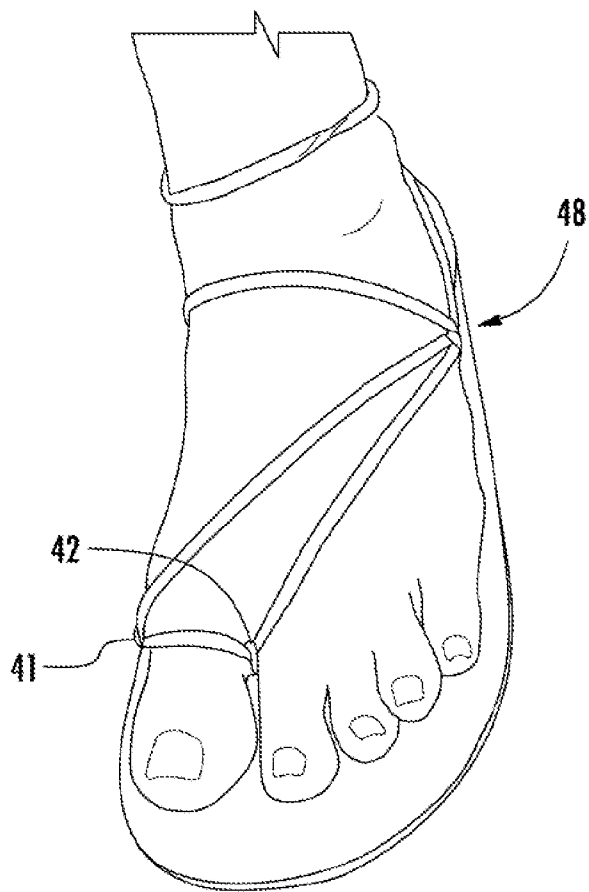


FIG. 15

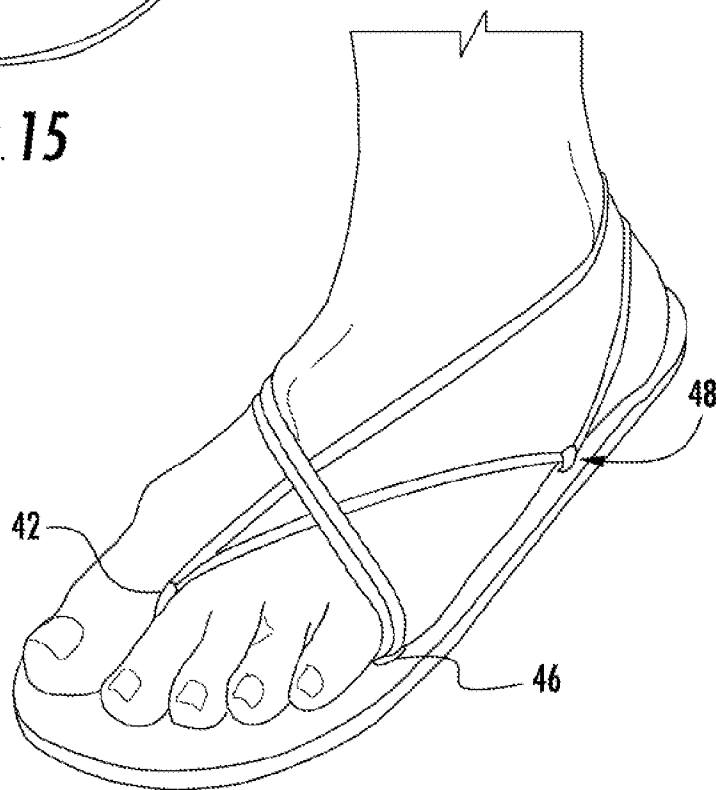


FIG. 16



FIG. 17

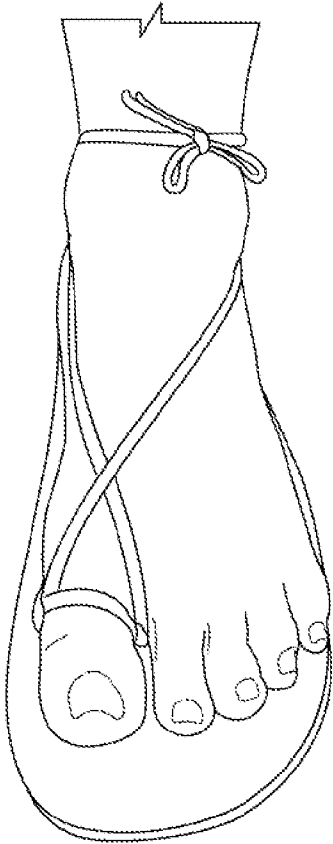


FIG. 18

FOOTWEAR AND RELATED ACCESSORIES

CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of provisional application Ser. No. 61/627,583 filed on Oct. 15, 2011.

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0002] This application relates to footwear and footwear accessories, and in particular, footwear accessories that are designed to be interchangeably attached to or detached from the footwear to create various footwear designs or styles.

BACKGROUND

[0003] A conventional footwear has various parts that can easily break, such as straps and laces. Once a footwear part breaks, a user may just likely discard the entire pair of footwear and purchase a brand new replacement footwear. This can make a conventional footwear very expensive, especially when the purchase price of the footwear is expensive to begin with and the part that broke is minor and mainly cosmetic. Users typically do not try to repair footwear because repairing a footwear may involve sewing, gluing, or attaching together the broken part, which may leave a visible trace of the stitches used to put together the broken pieces or the break where the specific part used to be broken. This visible trace of the stitches or the break may not be attractive for most users. Footwear replacement parts are also not often offered in retail stores or stores frequently visited by consumers. Users may have to make their own footwear replacement parts, which may or may not be durable and may not be fashionable or may not look good. For instance, they may have to make their own replacement strap or sole, which may not necessarily match the color or the texture of the original strap or sole.

[0004] Even if a conventional footwear does not break, users often want to change footwear. Users often want to wear different styles or colors of footwear to match their different outfits, to be fashionably creative, or to simply satisfy their wants or moods. Unfortunately, a typical footwear only offers a single design or style. It typically consists of a fixed color scheme and a fixed orientation or configuration of the parts, such as the straps. It does not offer much opportunity for users to be creative in changing its appearance. Thus, if users want multiple footwear designs, they have to keep on purchasing new pairs of footwear, which can be very expensive. Also, when a user goes on a trip and when the user wants to use various footwear styles, the user has to bring multiple shoes, which may occupy quite a bit of space in the user's luggage. A footwear that is more versatile than the conventional footwear and that solves many of the problems associated with conventional footwear is desired.

SUMMARY

[0005] The present invention includes a footwear comprising a sole adapted to provide a base for the footwear; a plurality of mounts embedded within the sole; a plurality of lace holders, each of the plurality of lace holders being attached to its corresponding mount; and a lace adapted to be connected to the plurality of lace holders, wherein the footwear can be transformed from one design to another by varying the way the lace is connected to the plurality of lace holders.

[0006] The above description sets forth, rather broadly, a summary of embodiments of the present invention so that the detailed description that follows may be better understood and contributions of the present invention to the art may be better appreciated. Some of the embodiments of the present invention may not include all of the features or characteristics listed in the above summary. There may be, of course, other features of the invention that will be described below and may form the subject matter of claims.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] FIG. 1 is substantially an exploded view of an exemplary embodiment of a footwear of the present invention.

[0008] FIG. 2 is substantially an exploded view of an exemplary embodiment of a sole for a footwear embodiment of the present invention.

[0009] FIG. 3 is substantially an exploded view of yet another exemplary embodiment of a sole for a footwear embodiment of the present invention.

[0010] FIG. 4 is substantially a perspective view of a footwear embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 5 is substantially a view showing another way of wearing the footwear embodiment of FIG. 4.

[0012] FIG. 6 is substantially a perspective view of yet another footwear embodiment of the present invention.

[0013] FIG. 7 is substantially a view of the footwear embodiment of FIG. 6 in use.

[0014] FIG. 8 is substantially a view of the footwear embodiment of FIG. 6 showing a certain configuration of wearing it.

[0015] FIG. 9 is substantially a view of the footwear embodiment similar to the embodiment of FIG. 6 but with a different lace.

[0016] FIG. 10 is substantially a view of the footwear embodiment similar to FIG. 6 with a different lace and another configuration of wearing it.

[0017] FIG. 11 is substantially a view of the footwear embodiment similar to the embodiment of FIG. 6 but with a heel and an accessory.

[0018] FIG. 12 is substantially a front view of the footwear embodiment of FIG. 11 being worn by a user.

[0019] FIG. 13 is substantially another footwear design of the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 14 is substantially another footwear design of the present invention.

[0021] FIG. 15 is substantially another footwear design of the present invention.

[0022] FIG. 16 is substantially another footwear design of the present invention.

[0023] FIG. 17 is substantially another footwear design of the present invention.

[0024] FIG. 18 is substantially another footwear design of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0025] In the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part of this application. The drawings show, by way of illustration, specific embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. It is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and structural changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and

terminology employed herein are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting.

[0026] As used herein, the term “footwear” refers to any wearing apparel for the feet, and may be used interchangeably with or includes the following: shoes, slippers, sandals, flip-flops, pumps, heels, flats, boots, sneakers, tennis shoes, and the like.

[0027] The present invention includes various embodiments of a footwear and methods for converting a footwear from one style to another. Certain embodiments of the present invention may help minimize the number of footwear an individual may have to purchase thereby allowing the individual to save money. Certain embodiments of the present invention may provide a footwear that has readily available spare parts for repair and may save individuals from having to throw away an entire pair of shoes due to a minor part that is broken or worn. Yet certain embodiments of the present invention may promote fun and creativity in allowing individuals to customize their own shoe designs or create various creative shoe designs. Certain embodiments of the present invention may provide fun and innovative footwear that helps minimize the number of footwear an individual may have to store, or minimize the number of footwear an individual pack when travelling. Yet certain embodiments of the present invention may be viewed as opportunities for sellers to sell various footwear parts and accessories.

[0028] Referring now to FIG. 1, an exemplary embodiment of a footwear **20** of the present invention includes a sole **22** and a plurality of loop mounts **23-27**. The plurality of loop mounts **23-27** may provide attachment points for various loops **41-49**, which, in turn, provide versatile attachment points for a lace **50**. Decorative accessories **28, 29, and 30** may be provided and may be attached at various portions of the lace **50** for ornamental or aesthetic purposes. Each decorative accessory **28, 29, and 30** may include its respective notch **31-33** to expose a portion of the lace **50** to add an aesthetic feature. The sole **22** may be made of rubber, wood, vinyl, or other materials known in the art, and may include pre-formed recesses **34-38** for inserting or detaching their respective loop mounts **23-27**. Some of the loop mounts **23-27** may be in a form of a pin, and some may include their respective plates **39-42** attached perpendicular to them. The plates **39-42** may serve as a decorative element where various artwork or logo may be drawn, painted, or engraved. They may further serve to cosmetically cover the recesses **34-38** and the sole edges to where they are attached, at least partially. Additional plates not perpendicularly attached to the loop mount, such as plate **43**, may be provided. Plate **43** is preferably attached to the heel side edge of the sole **22** and may provide a decorative cover to said edge. The loops **41-49** may be made of elastic bands, metal rings, or other materials known in the art. The lace **50** may be made of cloth, synthetic clothing material, or other materials known in the art, and may include decorative elements, such as glitter, sequins, decorative covers, and other materials known in the art. The length of the lace **50** may be varied as desired. It is noted that the number of loop mounts, loops, and laces may be varied to provide various styles and designs of the footwear **20**.

[0029] Referring now to FIGS. 2 and 3, the sole **22** may comprise of a plurality of layers, such as a top layer **51**, middle layer **52**, and bottom layer **53**. The bottom layer **53** may be substantially flat in the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, or may include a high heel **76** as shown in FIG. 2. The top layer **51** and middle layer **52** may be pre-formed or pre-

molded with: recesses **54-59** adapted to surround each toe of a user's foot; recesses **60** and **61** positioned substantially adjacent to each side of a user's ankle; and recess **63** adapted to be positioned substantially behind the middle of a user's heel. When the top layer **51** and middle layer **52** are positioned next to each other, recesses **54-59, 60-61, and 63** preferably extend all the way to the bottom layer **53**. The bottom layer **53** preferably includes: a plurality of indentations **64-69**, which are configured to align with recesses **54-59**; indentations **70-71**, which are configured to align with recesses **60-61**; and, indentation **73**, which is configured to align with recess **63** when the top layer **51**, middle layer **52**, and bottom layers **53** are assembled to form the sole **22**. The bottom layer **53** preferably further includes a plurality of loop mount indentations **74, 75, 76, 77, 78** adapted to accommodate their respective loop mounts **123, 124, 125, 126, 127**. Loop mount **123** may be positioned around the area of the sole **22** where the user's toes will be positioned (hereinafter “Toe Area”); loop mount **126** may be positioned around the area of the sole **22** close to the left and right arches of a user's foot or where the user's ankle will be positioned (hereinafter “Ankle Area”); and, loop mount **127** may be positioned around the area of the sole **22** where the user's heel will be positioned (hereinafter “Heel Area”). It can be noticed that the number of loop mounts in any area may vary in certain embodiments. For instance, as shown in FIG. 3, an additional loop mount **125** may be provided in the Toe Area. Loop mount **125** may be positioned at an angle relative to loop mount **124** to account for the varying toe lengths.

[0030] Another exemplary embodiment of a footwear of the present invention is shown in FIG. 4, wherein one loop **41** is provided in the Toe Area and specifically in the area adjacent to where the user's big toe will be positioned on the sole **22**. Loops **47** and **48** are preferably provided in the Ankle Area. A lace **50** is preferably inserted through loop **47** then through loop **41** and then through loop **48**. Decorative lace cover **77** may be attached to the lace **50** in the lace area spanning between loops **41** and **47**, and decorative lace cover **78** may be attached to the lace **50** in the lace area spanning between loops **41** and **48**. The two ends **79** and **80** of the lace **50** may be left loose, and may be tied to a user's ankle as shown in FIG. 5. The ends of the lace **50** may be crossed behind a user's ankle and then tied again in front of the user's high ankle into a ribbon **81**.

[0031] Yet another exemplary embodiment of a footwear of the present invention is shown in FIG. 6, wherein a plurality of loops **41-46** are provided in the Toe Area and are adapted to be positioned in between each toe of a user. Loops **47** and **48** are also preferably provided in the Ankle Area. A lace **50** is preferably inserted in the following sequence: through loop **47**, loop **46**, loop **45**, loop **44**, loop **43**, loop **42**, loop **41**, then through loop **48** thereby crisscrossing itself forming intersection **82**. A ribbon, flower, or a decorative element (not shown) may be attached to intersection **82**. Decorative lace covers **77** and **78** may again be provided in the areas of the lace **50** shown in FIG. 6. The two ends **79** and **80** of the lace **50** may be left loose, and may be tied to an optional loop **49** positioned in the Heel Area upon use as shown in FIG. 7.

[0032] FIG. 8 shows a different footwear style created by crisscrossing the two ends **79** and **80** at the user's ankle and tying both ends behind the user's ankle. Different footwear styles are shown on FIGS. 9 and 10 by making simple modifications to the footwear embodiment previously shown in FIGS. 6-8. In FIGS. 9 and 10, the sequence of insertion of the

lace **82** into the loops is also modified such that it is not crisscrossed after going through the loops provided in the Toe Area and the intersection **52** shown in FIGS. **6-8** is eliminated. The footwear shown in FIG. **9** utilizes a new lace **82** that replaces lace **50**. Lace **82** may be made of a different and wider material than the material used for lace **50**. The footwear shown in FIG. **10** utilizes yet another different lace **84** made of a different material and that replaces lace **50**. Referring now to FIG. **11**, another footwear style is shown, which is a slight modification of the footwear embodiment previously shown in FIGS. **6-10**. The footwear style shown in FIG. **11** includes a heel **86** attached to the sole and a decorative element **88** attached to the lace intersection formed approximately in between the Toe Area and the Ankle Area.

[0033] FIG. **12** shows yet another footwear style. Some of the loops on the Toe Area may be removed, or they may simply be left on and not tied to the lace **50**. The lace **50** may be inserted in the following sequence: through loop **47**, loop **46**, loop **42**, loop **41**, then through **48** crisscrossing itself and forming intersection **90**. The ends of the laces may be left loose or tied to an optional loop **49** (not shown). Referring now to FIG. **13**, the lace ends may be crossed behind the user's ankle and crossed again on the front of the user's ankle and formed into a ribbon **92**. The lace area that forms intersection **90** may be covered by a decorative lace cover **94**. The decorative lace cover **94** may also be added to the lace that extends across the Toe Area.

[0034] FIGS. **14-18** shows various footwear styles generated mainly from: (1) varying the number of loops through which the lace is inserted, (2) varying the sequence in which the lace is inserted through the various loops, (3) varying the styles or number of laces used, (4) varying the loop locations where the lace is inserted, (5) adding accessories, such as the lace cover shown in FIG. **17**, or (6) creating lace ribbons at various locations, such as behind the ankle (FIGS. **14** and **15**), next to the smallest toe (FIG. **17**), or in front of the ankle (FIG. **18**).

[0035] It can be realized that the present invention provides a highly versatile footwear that can be transformed into various footwear styles. Such versatility can be very beneficial for users who want a diverse collection of footwear to match their diverse outfits, to fit their ever changing moods, or for users who want to bring multiple styles of footwear to a trip and want to minimize the weight and bulk of their luggages. The present invention further provides various methods of generating various footwear styles, which may include using a single sole and a plurality of accessories. Certain embodiments of the present invention also provide a footwear that has readily available parts for replacement or repair. Yet certain embodiments of the present invention provide opportunities for various merchants to make not only a one-time sales transaction from the main footwear but multiple sales transaction from the footwear accessories.

[0036] Although the description above contains many specifications, these should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention but as merely providing illustrations of some of the presently preferred embodiments of this invention. For example, the component shapes, sizes, and materials may vary, such as the lace and the loops. The sole may be heeled or flat and may be made of various materials, such as rubber, wood, or synthetic materials. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. For instance, it is not limited to the home furnishing and interior decorating industry. The invention is

further not limited in its application to the details of the construction and to the arrangement of the components set forth in the above description or as illustrated in the drawings.

What is claimed is:

1. A footwear comprising:

- a. a sole adapted to provide a base for the footwear;
- b. a plurality of mounts embedded within the sole;
- c. a plurality of lace holders, each of the plurality of lace holders being attached to its corresponding mount; and
- d. a lace adapted to be connected to the plurality of lace holders, wherein the footwear can be transformed from one design to another by varying the way the lace is connected to the plurality of lace holders.

2. The footwear of claim **1**, further comprising a decorative lace element adapted to be attached to the lace.

3. The footwear of claim **2**, wherein the decorative lace element is plurality of sequins.

4. The footwear of claim **2**, wherein the decorative lace element is adapted to cover a portion of the lace.

5. The footwear of claim **2**, wherein the decorative lace element is adapted to attach to the lace.

6. The footwear of claim **1**, wherein the plurality of mounts are positioned in the area of the sole where a user's toes will be positioned.

7. The footwear of claim **1**, wherein at least one of the plurality of mounts is positioned in the area of the sole where the side a user's arch will be positioned.

8. The footwear of claim **1**, wherein at least one of the plurality of mounts is positioned in the area of the sole where a user's heel will be positioned.

9. A footwear comprising:

- a. a base means for supporting a user's foot, the base means comprising a top layer and a bottom layer;
- b. a plurality of mounting means for mounting a plurality of means for holding a strap means, the plurality of mounting means being positioned in between the top layer and the bottom layer of the base means;
- c. a plurality of holding means for holding a lace, the plurality of holding means corresponding to and attached to its own mounting means;
- d. a strap means for holding a user's foot, the strap means being attachable to the plurality of holding means in various ways, wherein a first configuration of the strap means to the plurality of holding means generates a first footwear style and a second configuration of the strap means to the plurality of holding means generates a second footwear style.

10. The footwear of claim **9**, wherein the plurality of mounting means comprises:

- a. a toe area mounting means provided in the area of the base means where the user's foot will be positioned; and
- b. a pair of arch area mounting means provided in the area of the base means where the opposing sides of an arch of a user's foot will be positioned.

11. The footwear of claim **10**, wherein the plurality of holding means comprises:

- a. a first holding means attached to the toe area mounting means;
- b. a second holding means attached to one of the pair of the arch area mounting means; and
- c. a third holding means attached to the other arch area mounting means.

12. The footwear of claim **11**, wherein the strap means is inserted through the second holding means, then to the first holding means, and then to the third holding means.

13. The footwear of claim **11**, wherein the strap means is inserted through the third holding means, then to the first holding means, and then to the second holding means.

14. The footwear of claim **11**, further comprising a plurality of holding means attached to the toe area mounting means, some of the plurality of the holding means adapted to be positioned in between the user's toes.

15. A footwear comprising:

- a. a sole adapted to support a user's foot;
- b. a plurality of mounts attached to the sole, the plurality of toe mounts comprising:
 - i. a toe area mount adapted to be positioned on an area of the sole where the user's toes are anticipated to be positioned when the footwear is in use;
 - ii. a left arch area mount adapted to be positioned on an area of the sole where a left side of the user's arch is anticipated to be positioned when the footwear is in use;
 - iii. a right arch area mount adapted to be positioned on an area of the sole where a right side of the user's arch is anticipated to be positioned when the footwear is in use;
- c. a plurality of lace holders comprising:
 - i. a large toe lace holder attached to the toe area mount, the large toe lace holder adapted to be positioned at an

area of the sole where the side of the user's large toe is anticipated to be positioned when the footwear is in use;

- ii. a left arch lace holder attached to the left arch area mount;
- iii. a right arch lace holder attached to the right arch area mount; and
- d. a lace insertable through the plurality of lace holders, wherein the lace can be configured in various ways thereby generating various footwear styles.

16. The footwear of claim **15**, wherein the sole comprises a high heel positioned under the sole.

17. The footwear of claim **15**, wherein the plurality of lace holders further comprises:

- a. a second toe lace holder attached to the toe area mount, the second toe lace holder adapted to be positioned at an area of the sole where the side of the user's large toe is anticipated to be positioned when the footwear is in use;
- b. a third toe lace holder
- c. a fourth toe lace holder
- d. a fifth toe lace holder

18. The footwear of claim **15**, further comprising a heel area mount adapted to be positioned on an area of the sole where the user's heel is anticipated to be positioned when the footwear is in use.

19. The footwear of claim **18**, further comprising a heel lace holder attached to the heel area mount.

20. The footwear of claim **15**, wherein the left arch area mount and the right arch area mount are unibody.

* * * * *