ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to an ornamental shoelace accessory for decorating shoes and sneakers. Ornaments and charms can be securely and removable attached to the shoelace tip while has been adapted to receive the removable and interchangeable charms and ornaments. The accessory device of the present invention enables the removable and interchangeable charms to be also added to a standard shoelace.
ORNAMENTAL SHOELACE TIP AND ACCESSORY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a shoelace with tips adapted for the attachment of removable and interchangeable charms and ornaments. The present invention also relates to a shoelace accessory device, independent from a shoelace, having removable and interchangeable charms and ornaments. The accessory device is added to a shoelace, at various locations other than the tips, for decorative purposes by the user.

[0002] Various devices for attaching decorative articles to shoelaces are known in the art. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 2,961,727 discloses a shoelace with hollow ornamental balls removably mounted on the tips of the shoelace. This patent, however, does not provide for interchangeability of the ornamental balls with other decorative items. Further, U.S. Pat. No. 5,584,132 discloses an adapter device having a decorative article, such as a light stick which attaches to a shoelace tip. While the adapter can be changed, they are only held in place by friction and can easily fall off the shoelace. Both previous devices are attached to the shoelace tip by friction, which is not extremely secure and increases the chance that the entire device will disengage from the shoelace tip. Furthermore, the user must install these devices to the shoelace tip, thereby raising issues of user operability.

[0003] Therefore, the present invention proceeds upon the desirability of providing ornamental shoelace tips and accessories that are secure and easy to use.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The object of the present invention is to provide decoration and adornment of shoes and sneakers which provides the most flexibility for the user (i.e., a new interchangeable/removable mechanism that is easy to operate), while securely attaching decorative charms and the like to prevent loss and/or damage. The present invention also provides a system of interchangeability which minimizes the aesthetic impact of the interchangeable mechanism (i.e., hidden from ordinary view) and is easy for an average person to use. All charms and ornaments are removable and interchangeable.

[0005] In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a shoelace comprises at least one connector tip, which permits charms and other ornaments to be securely and removably attached to the ends of the shoelace.

[0006] In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a shoelace accessory device permits such charms and ornaments to be securely and removably attached to a shoelace at various locations other than the tips.

[0007] In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a shoelace comprises at least one connector tip, the connector tip is preferably a rigid cylindrical structure having first and second members. The first member of the connector tip is securely held in place on the shoelace by a suitable fastening means. The diameter of the connector tip is small enough to pass through the eyelets of shoes and sneakers. Preferably, the diameter of the connector tip is from about 1 mm to about 10 mm. The first member of the connector tip is attached to the second member of the connector tip by a fitting mechanism. Preferably the fitting mechanism of the connector tip is an interlocking clasp, with the first member and the second member having compatible male and female parts. Preferably, the first and second members are constructed of the same material and have the same diameter, so that when the fitting mechanisms are engaged, the unit appears as one complete cylinder. In an embodiment of the present invention, the second member is a cap. The cap provides for ease of lacing shoes and sneakers and can be easily removed and replaced with an ornament or charm.

[0008] In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the second member is a charm or ornament (having a fitting mechanism compatible with the first member) and is attached to the first member in place of the cap, the charms and ornaments being releasable and interchangeable. Preferably, the fitting mechanism is an interlocking clasp, with the first and second members having compatible male and female parts. When a user wishes to decorate her shoe or sneaker, the user takes a charm or ornament of her choice and places the fitting mechanisms of the first member and the charm or ornament together (second member), and engages the fitting mechanisms to form a secure fit. For removal or changing of the charm or ornament, the user simply disengages the fitting mechanisms.

[0009] It is possible that, at some point, a user may not want to attach a charm or decorative ornament to the tips of the shoelace. In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the cap described herein can be easily re-attached to the first member of the connector tip.

[0010] In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a removable shoelace accessory device is provided to attach charms and ornaments to a shoelace at various locations other than the tips. The shoelace accessory device is a small, hollow cylindrical structure that is open at both ends and has a diameter large enough for a shoelace to pass through. At the center of the shoelace accessory device is a fitting mechanism to which a charm or ornament (having a compatible fitting mechanism) can be securely and removably attached, said charms and ornaments being releasable and interchangeable. Preferably, the fitting mechanism is an interlocking clasp, with the shoelace accessory device and the charm or ornament having compatible male and female parts. Preferably, the shoelace accessory device has a length from about 0.25 inches to about 1 inch, and has a diameter from about 1 mm to about 10 mm. A user threads a shoelace through the cylinder of the shoelace accessory device when lacing a shoe or sneaker. Hence, the shoelace accessory device of the present invention remains secure on the shoelace. Then, the user selects a charm or ornament of his/her choice, places the fitting mechanisms of the shoelace accessory device and the charm or ornament together, and engages the fitting mechanisms to form a secure fit. For removal or changing of the charm or ornament, the user simply disengages the fitting mechanisms.

[0011] If a user does not want the shoe or sneaker decorated, she can simply unlace the shoe or sneaker, slide the shoelace accessory device of the present invention off of the shoelace, and re-lace the shoe or sneaker. In the alternative, the shoelace accessory device of the present invention can remain in place, and the user can attach a small cap (as previously described herein) to the fitting mechanism of the shoelace accessory device of the present invention.

[0012] In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a shoelace comprises at least one connector tip for attaching charms or ornaments and a shoelace accessory device for attaching charms or ornaments at various locations on the shoelace, other than the tips.
In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the connector tips, shoelace accessory device and the fitting mechanisms thereof can be constructed of any durable material such as plastic, metal, etc. Various charms and ornaments are contemplated, including, but not limited to, shapes (flowers, footballs, baseballs, etc.), characters, and rhinestones. Such charms and ornaments are removable and interchangeable, and preferably but not necessarily constructed of the same material as the connector tips and/or accessory device. Preferably, the charms and ornaments are interchangeable between the connector tip of the shoelace and the shoelace accessory device, thereby allowing a user to maximize decorative possibilities in a cost effective manner.

Various other objects, advantages, and features of the present invention will become readily apparent from the ensuing detailed description, and the novel features will be particularly pointed out in the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The following detailed description, given by way of example, and not intended to limit the present invention solely thereto, will best be understood in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

FIGS. 1A-1D depict a shoelace tip and a shoelace accessory device comprising a coupler that fits into a plug to connect a decorative article in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 2A-B depict a shoelace tip and a shoelace accessory device comprising a clip-type fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 3A-E depict a shoelace tip and a shoelace accessory device comprising a channel/notch/peg fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 4A-B depict a shoelace tip and a shoelace accessory device comprising a clasp ring fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 5A-D depict a shoelace tip and a shoelace accessory device comprising a magnetic coupler and plug in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 6A-D depict a shoelace tip and a shoelace accessory device comprising a spring-type fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 7 depicts a shoelace accessory device in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

FIGS. 1A-D depict an exemplary embodiment of the shoelace tip and removable shoelace accessory device of the present invention. FIG. 1A shows a first member 100 of the interlocking clasp fitting mechanism. First member 100 comprises a housing 101 having an open end 102, which receives the end of a shoelace, and a closed end 103. Attached to closed end 103 is coupler 104 having a rounded bulb end 105. Second member 200, shown in FIG. 1B, comprises a housing 201 having a plug 202. Plug 202 has a channel 203 for removably receiving coupler 104 of first member 100. Plug 202 is preferably made of silicone, but can be any similar flexible material, and is smaller than the length of housing 201 such that there is an open space 204 in housing 201. Housing 201 also has means 205 for removably attaching a charm or ornament to second member 200.

FIG. 1C shows first member 100 and second member 200 joined together by the interlocking clasp fitting mechanism of the present invention. Rounded bulb end 105 prevents first member 100 from being easily separated from second member 200.

FIG. 1D depicts the removable shoelace accessory device in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The first member 300 is a hollow cylinder 301 having open ends 302 and 303 and a diameter large enough for a shoelace to pass through. Coupler 304 having a rounded bulb end 305 is attached at the center of cylinder 301. Second member 200 is the same as described herein with respect to FIG. 1B.

FIGS. 2A-B depict the removable shoelace tip and accessory device comprising a clip-type interlocking clasp fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 2A shows the removable shoelace accessory device and FIG. 2B shows the shoelace tip. First members 100 or 300 have clip 106 which removably fastens to clip receiver 206 of second member 200. Preferably, the terminal end of the clip 106 is inserted into the clip receiver 206 and folded back onto the clip 106, thereby securely fastening the second member to the first members 100 or 300. That is, the clip receiver 206 is preferably rectangular in shape with a rectangular hole in the middle.

The removable shoelace tip and accessory device comprising an interlocking clasp fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIGS. 3A-E. FIG. 3A shows a first member 100 of the interlocking clasp fitting mechanism. First member 100 comprises housing 101 having an open end 102, which receives the end of a shoelace, and a second open end 113. At second open end 113, housing 101 has channel 110 and notch 120 cut into the side of housing 101. Second member 200, shown in FIGS. 3B and 3C, comprises a housing 201 having peg 210 on one side. Peg 210 removably slides into channel 110 of housing 101, and second member 200 fits into second open end 103 of housing 101 of first member 100. Once peg 210 meets notch 120, first member 100 is turned so that peg 210 slides into notch 120, thereby locking first member 100 and second member 200 together. Housing 201 also has means 205 for removably attaching a charm or ornament to second member 200. FIG. 3D shows first member 100 and second member 200 joined together by the interlocking clasp fitting mechanism.

FIG. 3E depicts the removable shoelace accessory device comprising an interlocking clasp fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. First member 300 is a hollow cylinder 301 having open ends 302 and 303 and a diameter large enough for a shoelace to pass through. At the center of cylinder 301 is coupler 304 having channel 110 and notch 120 cut into one side. Second member 200 is the same as described herein with respect to FIGS. 3A-D. First member 300 and second member 200 fit together in the same manner as discussed above.

The removable shoelace tip and accessory device comprising a clasp ring fitting mechanism in accordance an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is depicted in FIGS. 4A-B. The removable shoelace accessory device
shown in FIG. 4A comprises a single integrated device 400 comprising a hollow cylinder 401 with open ends 402 and 403, and nodule 404. Nodule 404 has clasp ring 405 which opens and removably attaches to a charm or ornament (not shown). FIG. 4B depicts the shoe lace tip comprising the clasp ring fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, where housing 500 has an open end 501 and a closed end 502. A shoe lace is received by open end 501, and closed end 502 has a clasp ring 405 attached thereto, which opens and removably attaches to a charm or ornament (not shown).

[0030] FIGS. 5A-D depict the removable shoe lace tip and accessory device comprising a magnetic fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 5A shows a first member 600 of a magnetic fitting mechanism. First member 600 comprises a housing 601 having an open end 602, which receives the end of a shoe lace, and a closed end 603. Attached to closed end 603 is coupler 604. Closed end 603 and coupler 604 are magnetic. Second member 700, shown in FIG. 5B, comprises a housing 701 having a plug 702. Plug 702 has a channel 703 for receiving coupler 604 of first member 600. Plug 702 is smaller than the length of housing 701 such that there is an open space 704 in housing 701. Plug 702 is also magnetic, such that when coupler 604 is received into channel 703, the magnets engage and the first member 600 and second member 700 are magnetically joined together. That is, the magnetic plug 702 of the second member has opposite polarity from the magnetic closed end 603 and magnetic coupler 605 of the first member. Housing 701 also has means 705 for removably attaching a charm or ornament to second member 700. FIG. 5C shows first member 600 and second member 700 being magnetically joined together.

[0031] The removable shoe lace accessory device comprising the magnetic fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is depicted in FIG. 5D. First member 800 is a hollow cylinder 801 having open ends 802 and 803 and a diameter large enough for a shoe lace to pass through. Coupler 804 is magnetic and is attached at the center of cylinder 801. Second member 700 is the same as described herein. When coupler 804 is received into channel 703, the magnets engage and the first member 800 and second member 700 are magnetically joined together.

[0032] FIGS. 6A-D illustrate the removable shoe lace tip and accessory device comprising a spring-type fitting mechanism in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 6A shows first member 900, comprising housing 901 with open end 902 and closed end 903. Closed end 903 has locking member 904 attached thereto. Locking member 904 comprises two end pieces 905 with spring 906 therebetween, and parallel pins 907 on the outside portion of end pieces 905. Second member 1000, shown in FIG. 6B, comprises a hollow housing 1001 having an open end 1002 and a closed end 1003 and parallel notches 1004 on the inner surface of housing 1001, which receive pins 907 when first member 900 is inserted into second member 1000. Spring 906 allows end pieces 905 to be squeezed, thereby allowing first member 900 to be easily inserted and removed from second member 1000. Second member 1000 also has means 1005 for attaching a charm or ornament to second member 1000 at closed end 1003.

[0033] FIG. 6D depicts the removable shoe lace accessory device employing the fitting mechanism of FIGS. 6A-6C.

First member 1100 is a hollow cylinder 1101 having open ends 1102 and 1103 and a diameter large enough for a shoe lace to pass through. Locking member 1104 is attached at the center of cylinder 1101 and comprises two end pieces 1105 with spring 1106 therebetween, and parallel pins 1107 on the outside portion of end pieces 1105. Second member 1000 is the same as described herein with respect to FIGS. 6A-6C.

[0034] As shown in FIG. 7, in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the shoe lace accessory device comprises a shoe lace holder 2000 for positioning the shoe lace tips of the present invention with the removable charms attached therein. The two shoe lace tips of a shoe lace can be inserted into the two tubes 2100 of the shoe lace holder 2006 which is secured to the shoe by a clip 2000. Preferably, the shoe lace tip with only first member 100 is inserted into the two tubes 2100 and then the second member 200 with the charms or ornament attached thereto is fasten to the first member 100.

[0035] While the present invention has been particularly described with respect to the illustrated embodiments, it will be appreciated that various alterations, modifications and adaptations may be made based on the present disclosure, and are intended to be within the scope of the present invention. It is intended that the appended claims be interpreted as including the embodiments discussed above, the various alternatives that have been described, and all equivalents thereto.

We claim:

1. A shoe lace comprising at least one connector tip having a first member and a second member, wherein said first member is attached to the shoe lace to form a shoe lace tip and comprises a fitting mechanism for securely and removably attaching said second member of said connector tip to said first member, and wherein said second member has a decorative article attached thereto comprising a compatible fitting mechanism for securely and removably attaching said second member having said decorative article to said first member of said connector tip.

2. The shoe lace of claim 1, wherein said fitting mechanism of said first member comprises a coupler; wherein said first member comprises a housing having an open end and a closed end, said open end being operable to receive and attach to said shoe lace to form said shoe lace tip, and said coupler being attached to said closed end; and wherein said second member comprises a housing having a plug with a channel for receiving said coupler.

3. The shoe lace of claim 2, wherein said plug comprises silicone.

4. The shoe lace of claim 2, wherein said coupler and plug are magnetic.

5. The shoe lace of claim 1, wherein said fitting mechanisms are male and female parts of a clip.

6. The shoe lace of claim 1, wherein said fitting mechanisms are clasp rings.

7. The shoe lace of claim 1, wherein said first member comprises a housing having an open end operable to receive and attach to said shoe lace to form said shoe lace tip; and a closed end comprising a channel and a notch cut into said housing of said first member; and wherein said second member comprises a housing having a peg on the outside of said housing of said second member, said peg slides into said channel and locks into said notch when said first and second members are joined.

8. A shoe lace accessory device comprising a first member and a second member, wherein said first member comprises a
hollow cylindrical structure open at both ends with a diameter large enough for a shoelace to pass through and a fitting mechanism attached to an outer circumference of said hollow cylindrical structure for securely and removably attaching said second member to said first member; and wherein said second member has a decorative article attached thereto comprising a compatible fitting mechanism for securely and removably attaching said second member having said decorative article to said first member.

10. The shoelace accessory device of claim 9, wherein said fitting mechanism of said first member comprises a coupler; and wherein said second member comprises a housing having a plug with a channel for receiving said coupler.

11. The shoelace accessory device of claim 10, wherein said plug comprises silicone.

12. The shoelace accessory device of claim 10, wherein said coupler and said plug are magnetic.

13. The shoelace accessory device of claim 9, wherein said fitting mechanisms are male and female parts of a clip.

14. The shoelace accessory device of claim 9, wherein said fitting mechanisms are clasp rings.

15. The shoelace accessory device of claim 9, wherein said fitting mechanism of said first member comprises a channel and a notch, and wherein said second member comprises a housing having a peg on the outside of said housing, wherein said peg slides into said channel and locks into said notch when said first and second members are joined.

16. A shoelace holder comprising two tubes for holding two ends of a shoelace and a clip for attaching said shoelace holder to a shoe.

17. The shoelace holder of claim 16, wherein said shoelace comprises at least one connector tip having a first member and a second member; wherein said first member is attached to the shoelace to form a shoelace tip and comprises a fitting mechanism for securely and removably attaching said second member of said connector tip to said first member, and wherein said second member has a decorative article attached thereto comprising a compatible fitting mechanism for securely and removably attaching said second member having said decorative article to said first member of said connector tip.