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(54) **PUSH-UP EXERCISE UNIT AND DEVICE**

Publication Classification

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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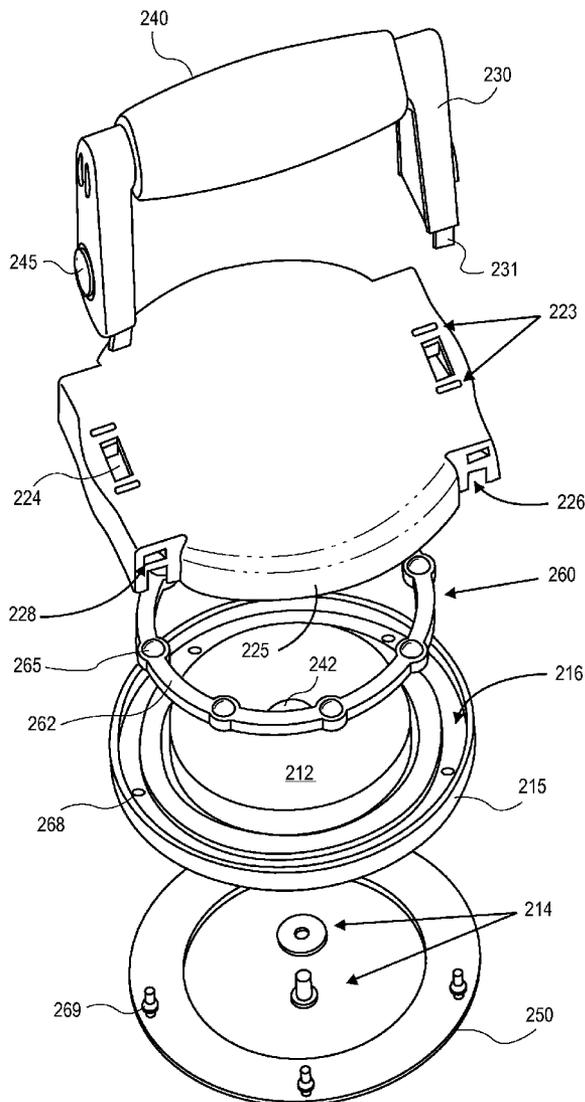
A push-up exercise unit and device is described which may enable a user to move with his or her body's natural rotation to engage additional muscle groups with reduced stress on joints. The device includes a pair of rotatable devices, one for each hand. Each rotatable device includes a handle assembly, a rotatable handle support structure, a fixed base support, and a bearing assembly operatively attached within the handle support structure to permit rotation of the handle assembly and handle support structure. The handle assembly is removable from a top surface of the handle support structure, to be inserted into another surface of the handle support structure to configure the unit for stowage.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 11/996,152, filed on Jan. 18, 2008, now Pat. No. 7,468,025.



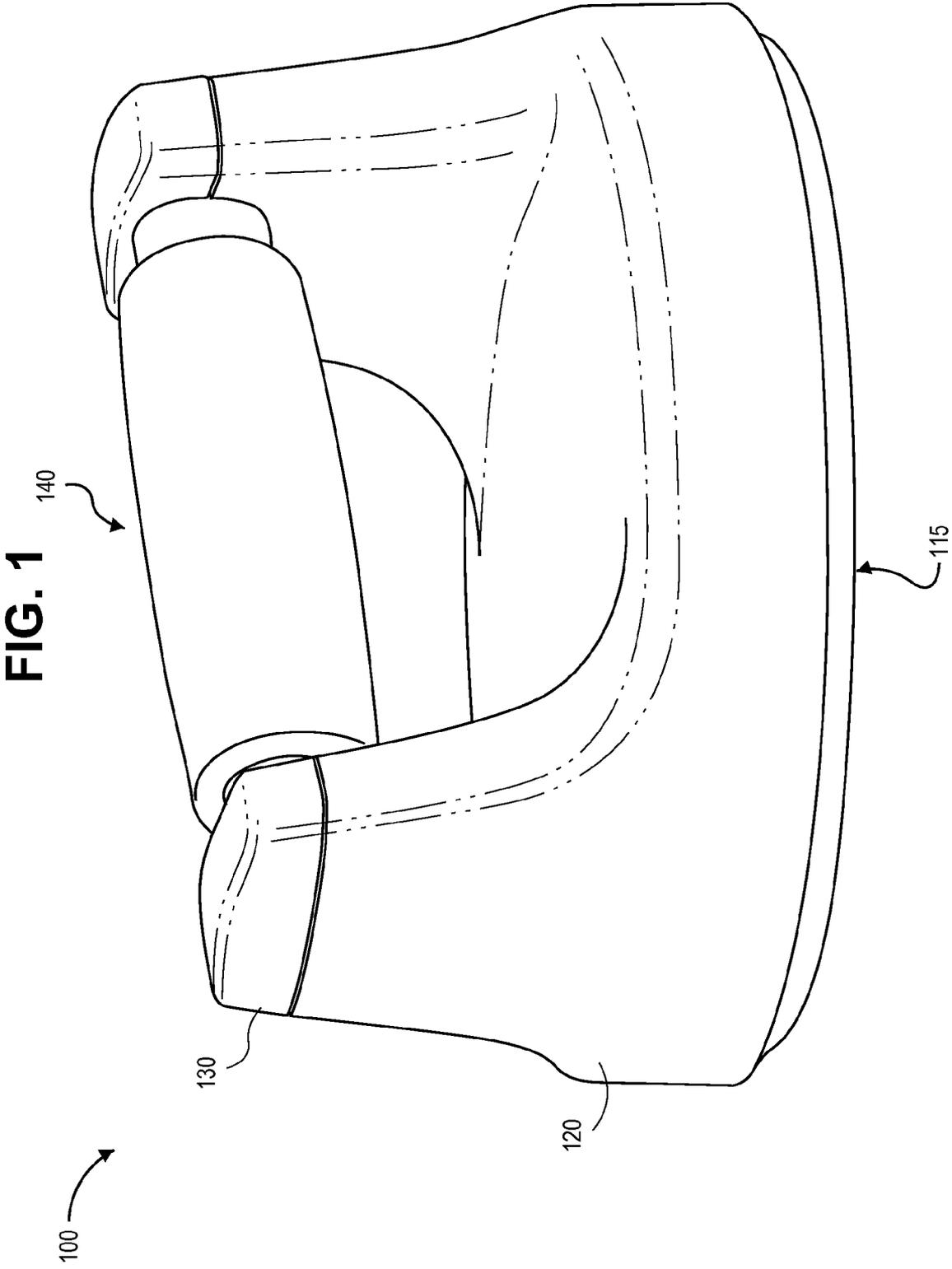


FIG. 2

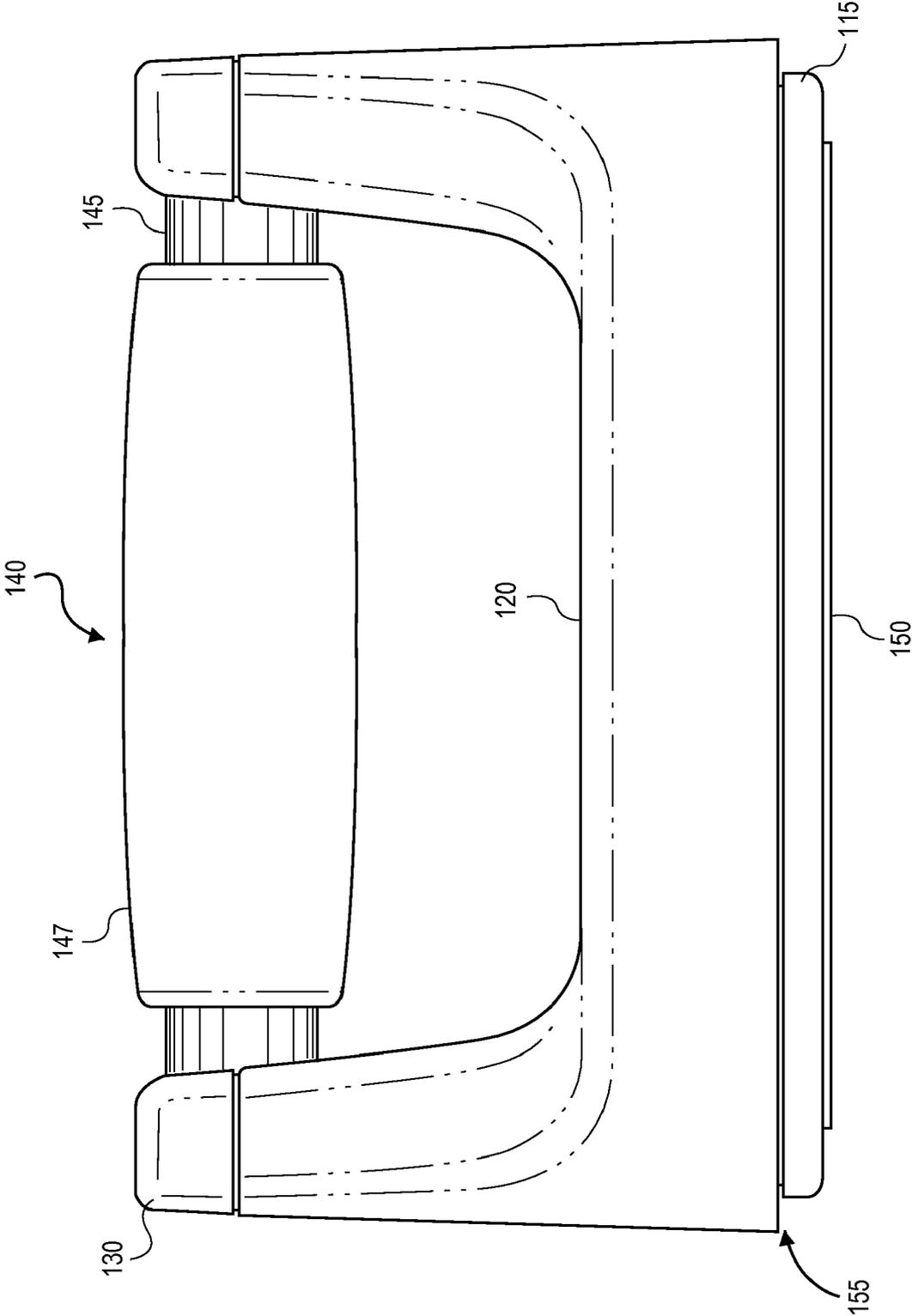


FIG. 3

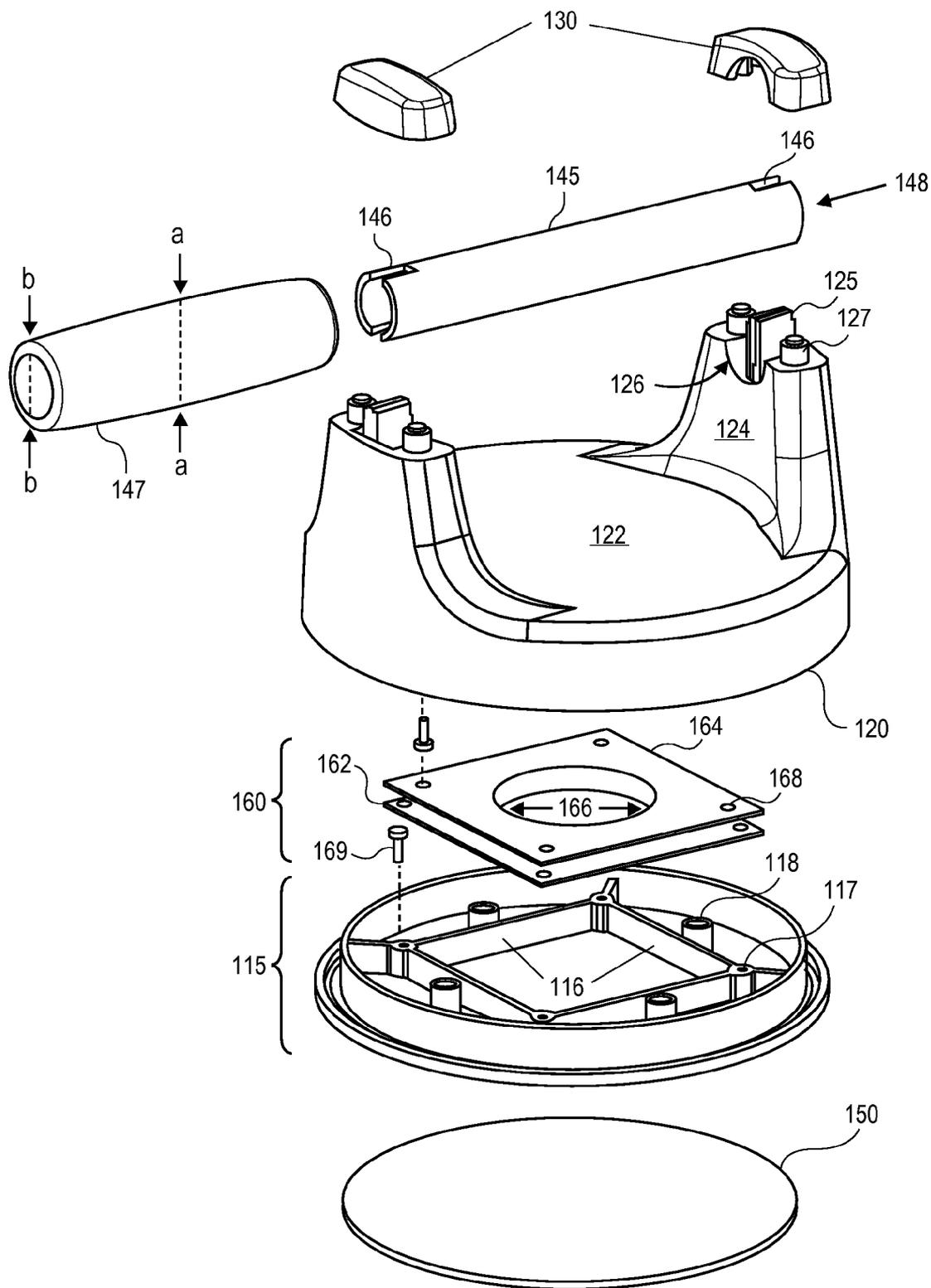


FIG. 4A

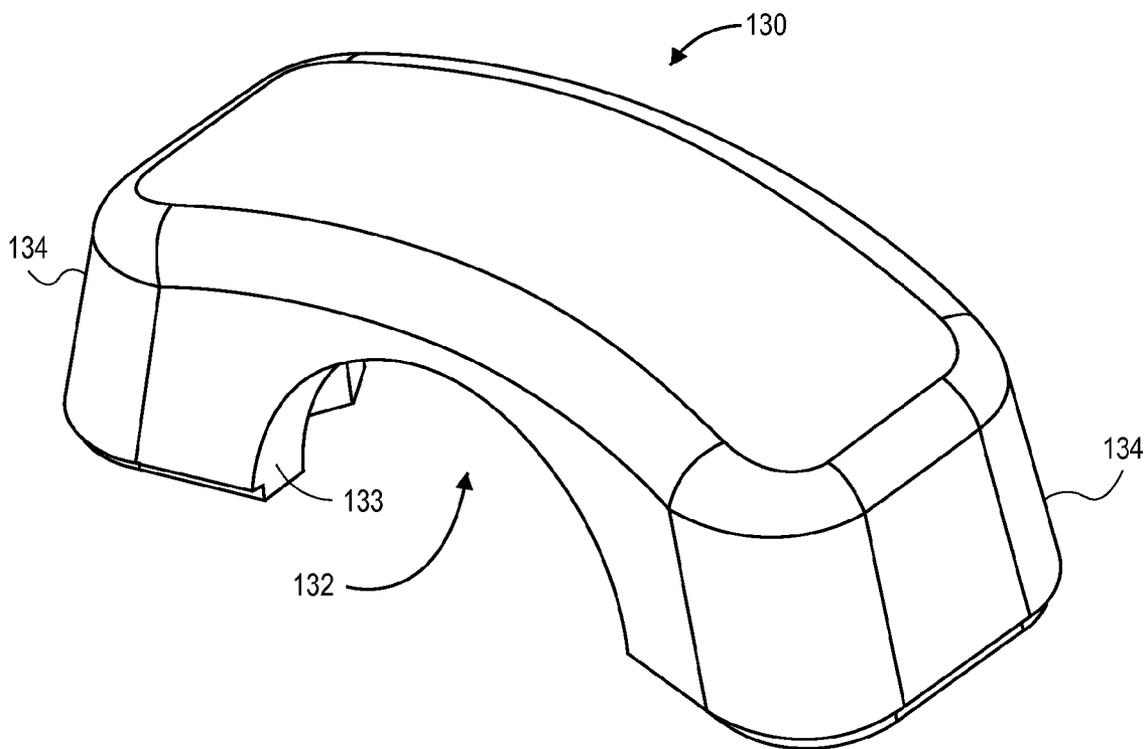


FIG. 4B

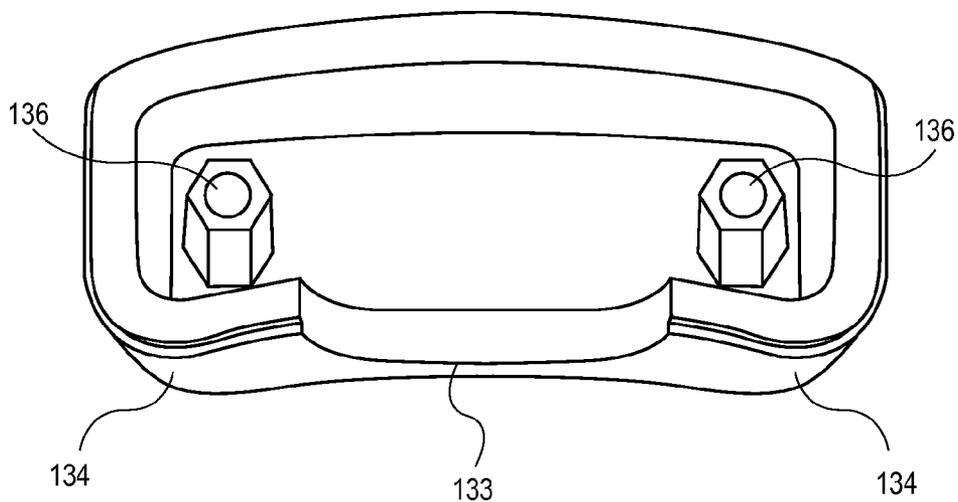


FIG. 5

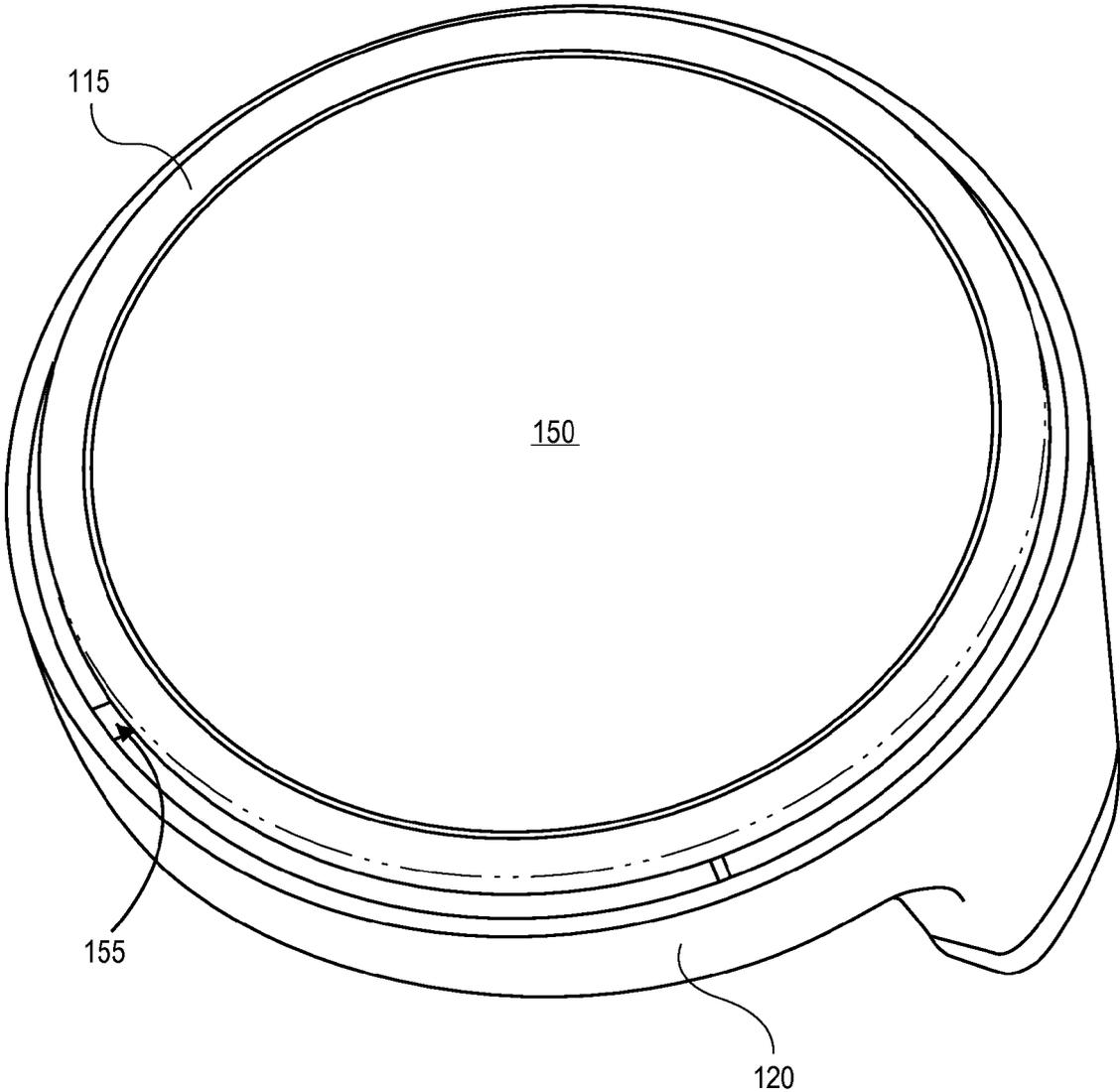


FIG. 6

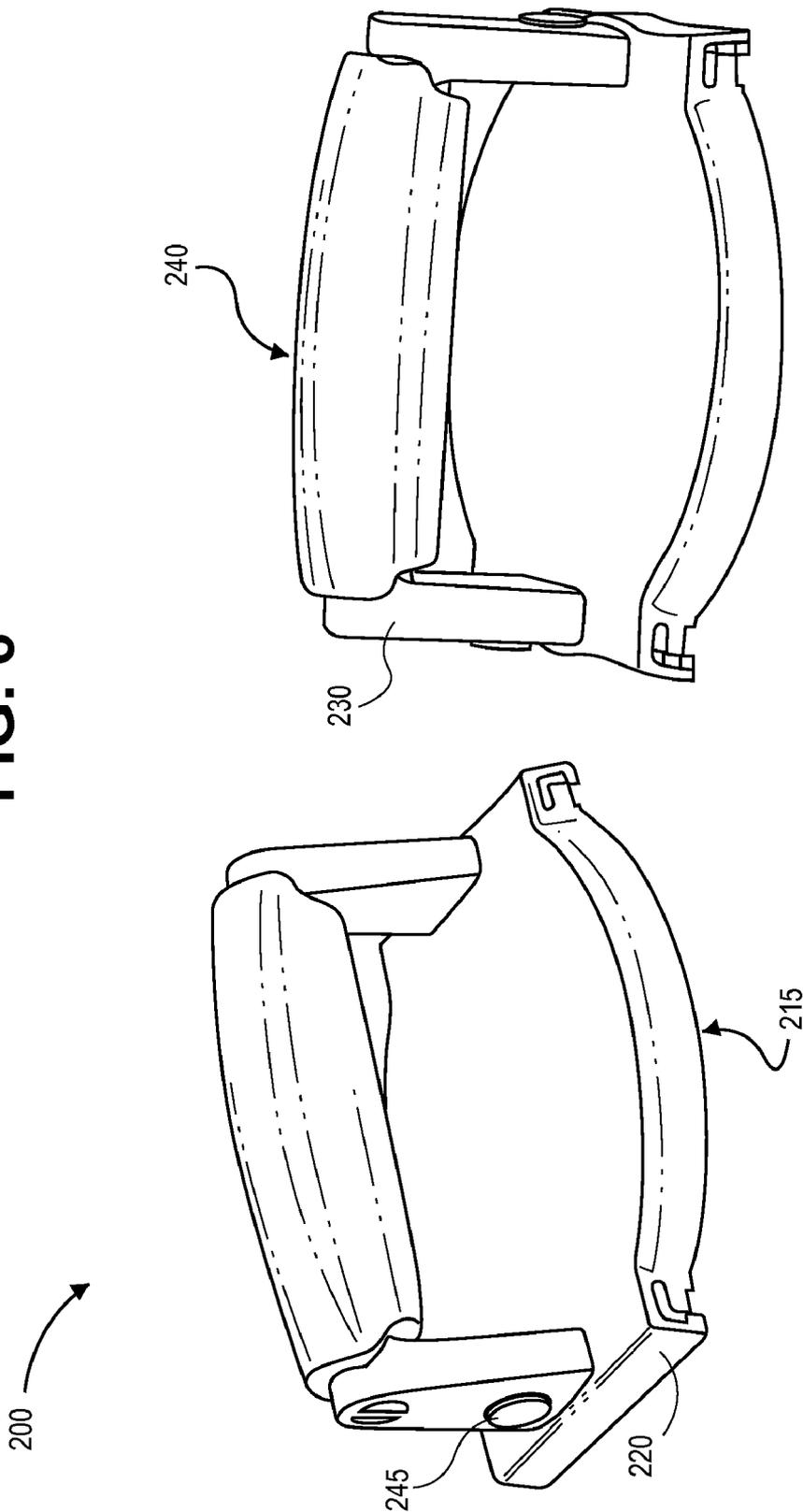


FIG. 7A

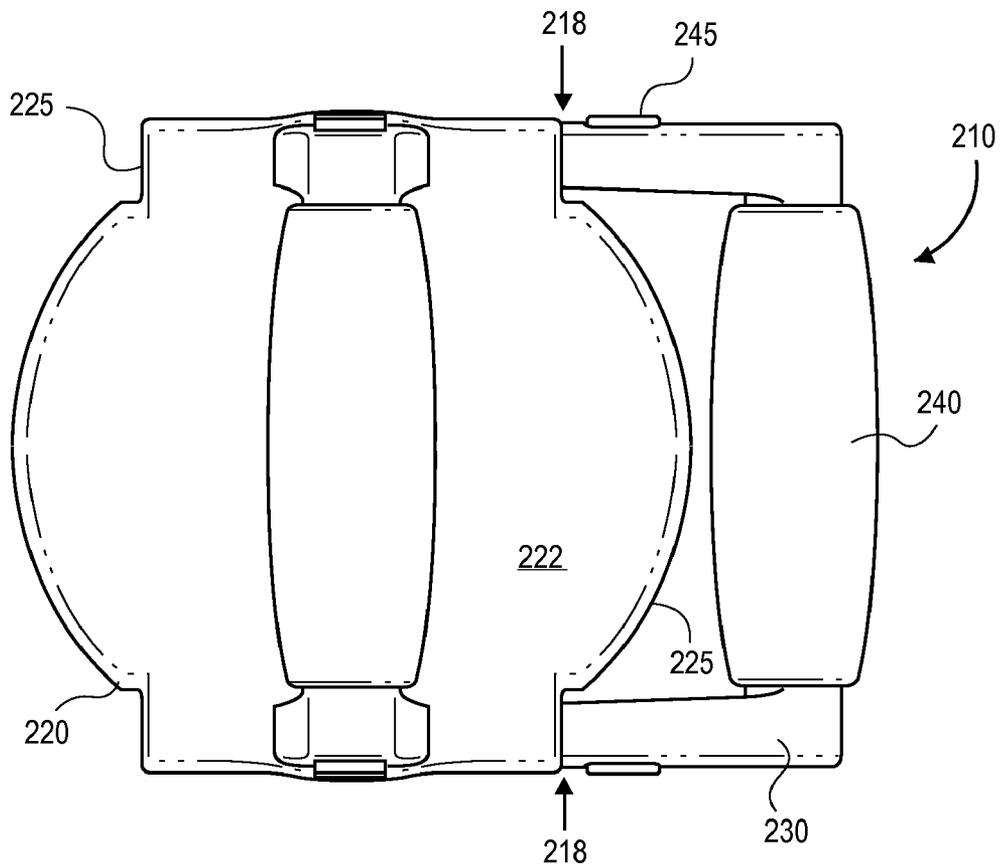


FIG. 7B

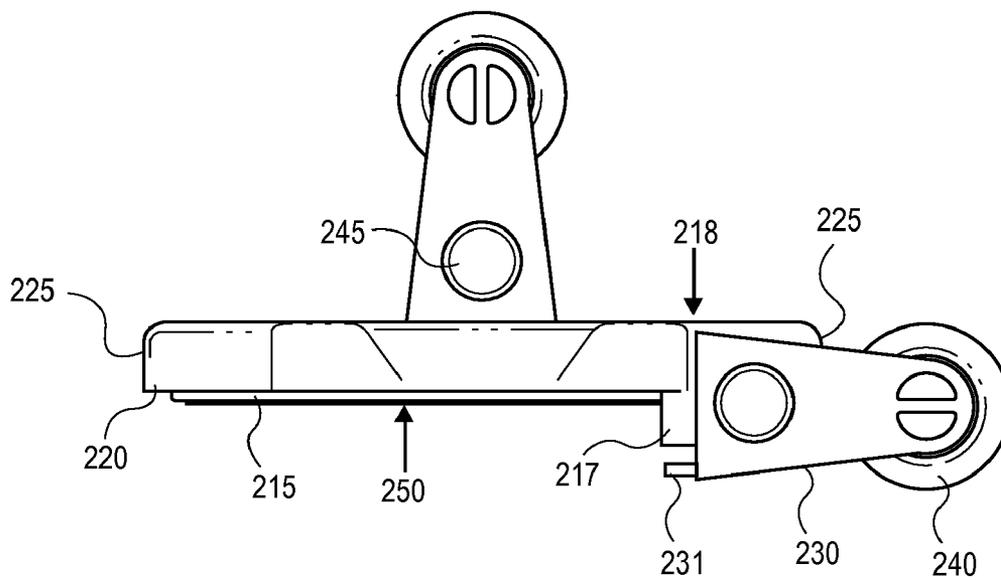


FIG. 8A

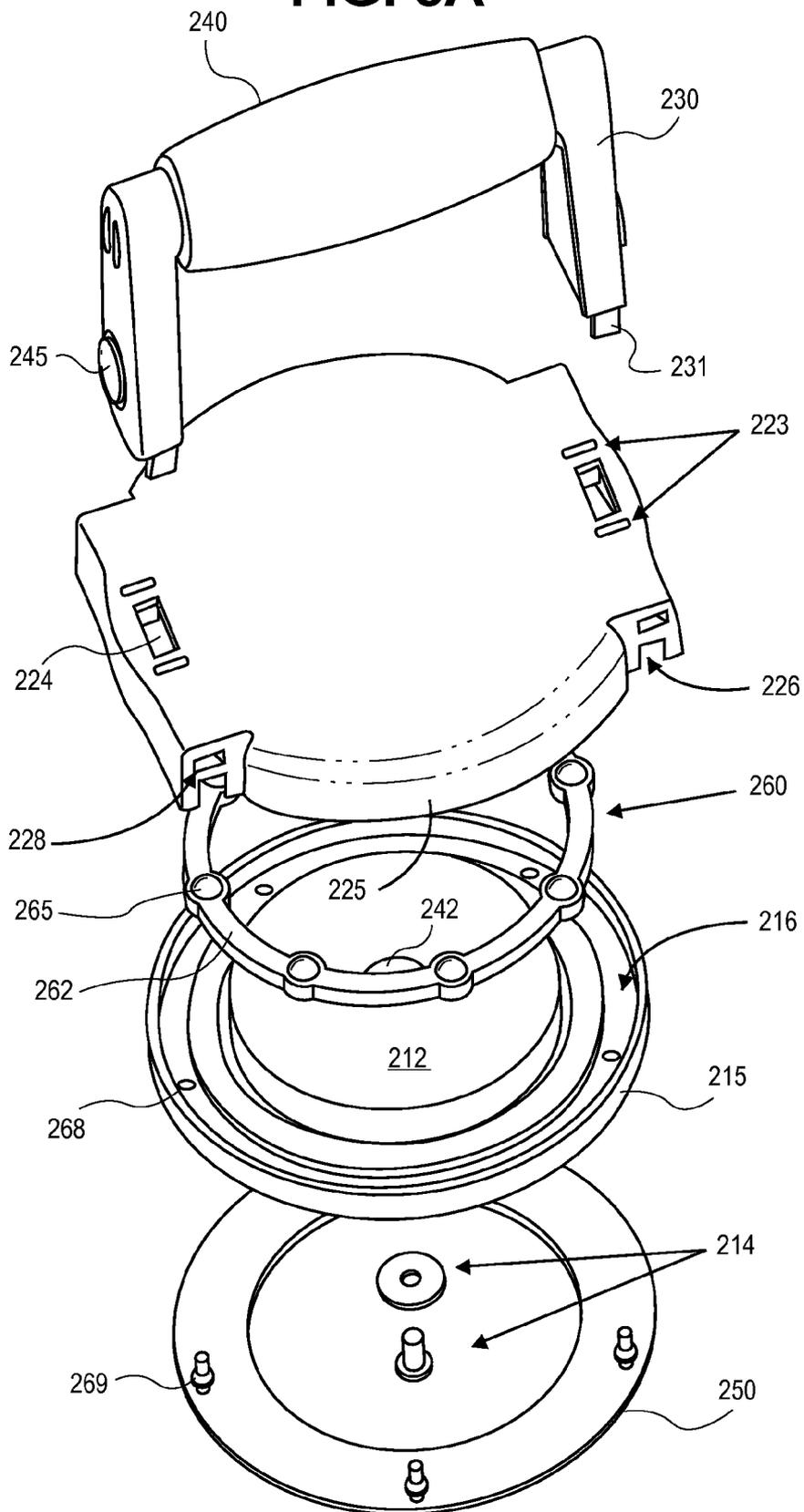


FIG. 8B

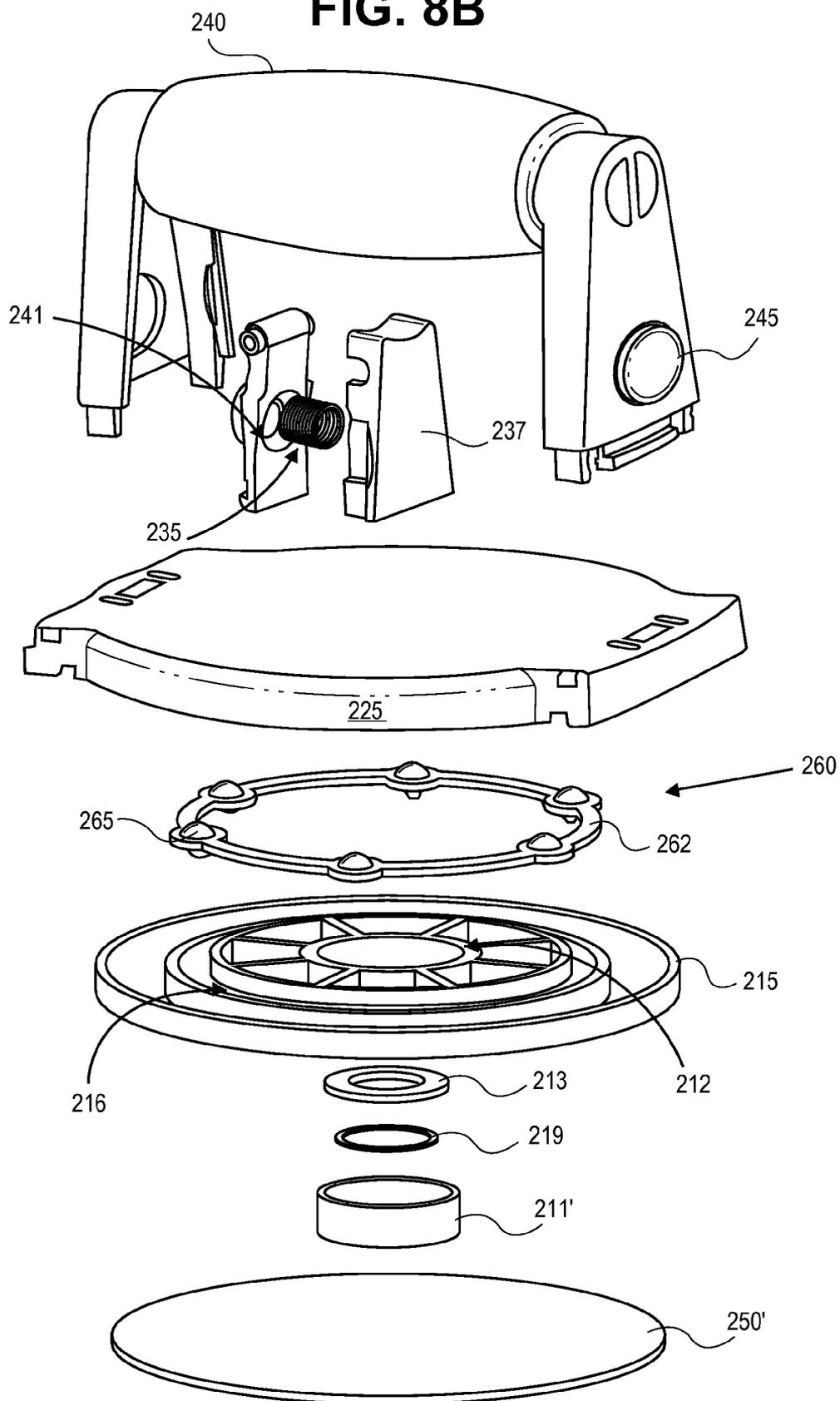


FIG. 9

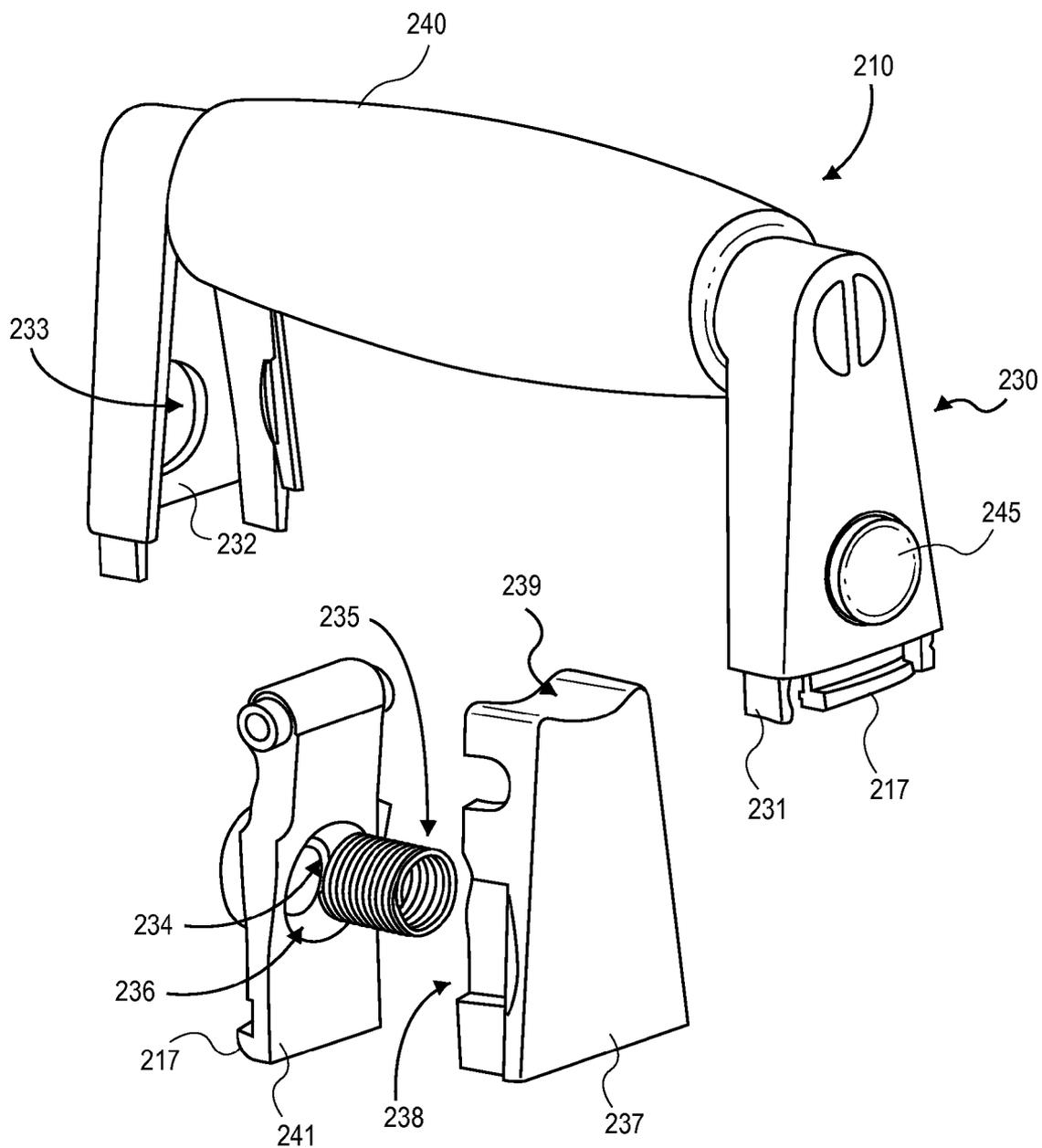
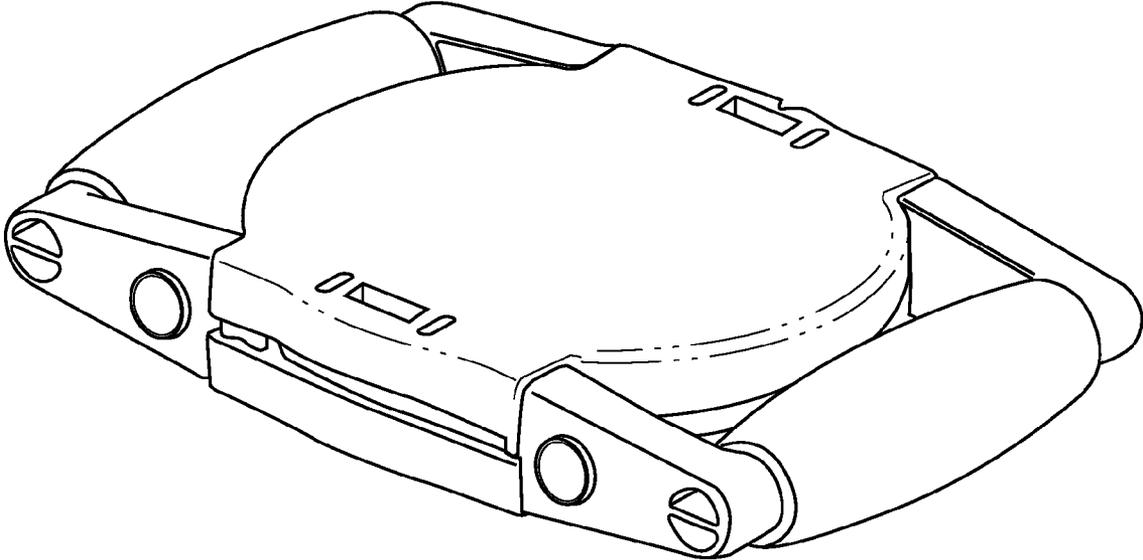


FIG. 10



PUSH-UP EXERCISE UNIT AND DEVICE

PRIORITY STATEMENT

[0001] This application is a divisional of and claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §120 of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/996,152 to Stephen G. Hauser, et al., filed Jan. 18, 2008 and entitled "PUSH-UP EXERCISE UNIT AND DEVICE", now pending. The entirety of the contents of the '152 application are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Example embodiments in general relate to a push-up exercise unit and device for use in performing a push-up type exercise.

[0003] Push-ups are one of the oldest and perhaps most effective exercises for a human being. The push-up exercise is employed by the military and competitive sports teams around the world to gauge overall fitness. Conventional push-ups however, with the hands placed directly on a non-movable hard surface such as a floor, have limitations. Conventional push-ups place stress on wrists, elbows and shoulders, and prevent the natural rotation of muscles and joints.

SUMMARY

[0004] An example embodiment of the present invention is directed to a push-up exercise unit and device. The device includes a pair of rotatable devices, one for each hand. Each rotatable device includes a handle assembly, a rotatable handle support structure, a fixed base support, and a bearing assembly operatively attached within the handle support structure to permit rotation of the handle assembly and handle support structure. The handle assembly is removable from a top surface of the handle support structure, to be inserted into another surface of the handle support structure to configure the unit for stowage.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] Example embodiments will become more fully understood from the detailed description given herein below and the accompanying drawings, wherein like elements are represented by like reference numerals, which are given by way of illustration only and thus are not limitative of the example embodiments herein.

[0006] FIG. 1 is perspective view of one exercise device 100 of a pair of devices which comprise a push-up unit, in accordance with an example embodiment.

[0007] FIG. 2 is a front view of the device 100.

[0008] FIG. 3 is an exploded view of the device 100 to illustrate constituent components thereof in greater detail.

[0009] FIG. 4A is a perspective view of the end cap 130.

[0010] FIG. 4B is an interior view of the end cap 130.

[0011] FIG. 5 is an underside view of the device 100 to illustrate the rubberized pad 150 in further detail.

[0012] FIG. 6 is perspective view of an exercise device 200 in accordance with another example embodiment.

[0013] FIG. 7A is a top view showing how a handle 240 is configured in preparation for storage.

[0014] FIG. 7B is a side view of FIG. 7A to show the relation of the handle assembly 210 to the base support 215 in further detail.

[0015] FIG. 8A is an exploded view of one device 200 of the pair to illustrate constituent components thereof in greater detail.

[0016] FIG. 8B illustrates an alternative construction of the lower portion of device 200.

[0017] FIG. 9 is a partial exploded view of the handle 240 and support arm 230 of the handle assembly 210 to further detail the components comprising the release mechanism 245.

[0018] FIG. 10 is a perspective view of the complete push-up unit configured for stowage.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXAMPLE EMBODIMENTS

[0019] FIG. 1 is perspective view of one exercise device 100 of a pair of exercise devices which comprise a push-up unit, in accordance with an example embodiment. Referring to FIG. 1, a singular push-up device, hereafter 'device 100' includes a base support 115 which is immediately connected to a main handle support structure 120 via a plurality of interior fasteners such as screws. In practice, a complete push-up unit includes a pair of devices 100, one for each hand, as is known. In each device 100, the handle support structure 120 is operatively connected to a pair of end caps 130. A handle assembly 140 is provided in a cavity or circular aperture formed between the intersections of the end caps 130 and the handle support structure 120.

[0020] In general, the housing of device 100, inclusive of base support 115, handle support structure 120 and the separate end caps 130, can be formed by an injection molding process from a medium or heavy gauge impact plastic such as acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS). ABS is an easily machined, tough, low-cost, rigid thermoplastic material with medium to high impact strength, and is a desirable material for turning, drilling, sawing, die-cutting, shearing, etc.

[0021] Each of the base support 115, main handle support structure 120 and end caps 130 may be made of ABS. ABS is merely one example material; equivalent materials include various thermoplastic and thermoset materials that have characteristics similar to ABS. For example, polypropylene, high-strength polycarbonates such as GE Lexan, and/or blended plastics may be used instead of, or in addition with ABS. The materials comprising device 100 (plastic such as ABS, rubber and lightweight metal materials) provide a light yet durable exercise device 100.

[0022] An exemplary injection molding system for forming molded plastic articles included in device 100 may be the Roboshot® injection machine from Milacron-Fanuc. The Roboshot is one of many known injection molding machines for forming plastic injection molds.

[0023] FIG. 2 is a front view of the device 100. Device 100 includes a handle assembly 140. The handle assembly 140 comprises a chrome steel handle-rod 145 overlaid with or sheathed within a grip 147. The handle-rod 145 may alternatively be comprised of an aluminum hollow member and is received within corresponding recesses (not shown) formed in the end caps 130 and handle support structure 120 which, when aligned, form a circular aperture around each handle end. The grip 147 may be made of a foam rubber or suitable elastomeric material and has a wider or thicker center portion which tapers down to the end portions of grip 147.

[0024] Device 100 includes a solid rubber gripping surface configured as a rubberized pad 150. Pad 150 is provided on the underside of the base support 115. The pad 150 offers a friction surface when the device 100 is resting on a flat surface. The pad 150 may be adhered to the underside of the base

support 115 via suitable epoxy or adhesive, for example. The non-skid rubber pad 150 grips well on carpet and hard floor surfaces.

[0025] A gap 155 is provided between the handle support structure 120 and the base support 115 to assist in permitting rotational movement of the contiguous handle support structure 120 with end caps 130 and handle assembly 140, ostensibly by providing clearance for a bearing assembly, while the base support 115 remains fixed in place. In this example, the rotational movement is facilitated by a turntable or "Lazy Susan" bearing assembly within the device 100, which is interposed between the main handle support structure 120 and base support 115. Thus, the gap 155 provided between the housing of the handle support structure 120 and base support 115 permits collective rotational movement of the contiguous upper portion of the device 100: handle support structure 120, end caps 130 and handle assembly 140.

[0026] FIG. 3 is an exploded view of the device 100. As shown in FIG. 3, the handle assembly 140 includes the elongated handle-rod 145 which has chamfers 146 at ends thereof. The handle-rod 145 is hollow as shown by arrow 148. In an example, the width "a" at central portion of the grip 147 is wider or thicker at a diameter thereof than width "b" at ends thereof. This is to better conform to the user's hand to facilitate grasping the handle assembly 140 of the device 100.

[0027] FIG. 3 also illustrates the handle support structure 120 in further detail. For purposes of clarity, the end caps 130 in FIG. 3 have been removed. The handle support structure 120 includes lower base 122 and two formed columns 124 which slope upward from the lower base 122. A recess 126 having a generally semi-circular surface is formed in each column 124. In each column 124, a stanchion 125 is located generally in the center of its corresponding recess 126 for mating engagement with the chamfers 146 of the handle-rod 145. The top portion of each column 124 includes a pair of posts 127 for mating engagement within corresponding bores (not shown, characterized as crevices within the underside of the end caps 130).

[0028] With continued reference to FIG. 3, the device 100 includes a steel or hard plastic ball-bearing rotational system. In an example, this system may be embodied as a turntable to allow rotation of movement of device 100. In particular, the turntable permits rotation between the upper portion of the device 100 and the base support 115.

[0029] Referring to FIG. 3, there is shown a square "Lazy Susan" turntable 160. The turntable 160 comprises two connected parts, a lower fixed plate 162 and an upper rotatable plate 164. A bearing assembly, indicated generally by arrows 166 surrounding a race (center circumferential opening) within the turntable 160 is provided between the lower fixed plate 162 and upper rotatable plate 164. These bearings are not shown for purposes of clarity.

[0030] In an example, the turntable 160 may be made of lightweight stamped aluminum plates with stainless steel ball bearings therein. For example, the turntable may be a 6"x6" square turntable fabricated by McMaster-Carr, part number 6031K18. However, the example embodiments are not limited to aluminum turntable plates, as galvanized steel, black chromate and yellow chromate are also acceptable materials for the turntable.

[0031] With continued reference to FIG. 3, the base support 115 includes an interior structure shown as a molded element 116. Molded element 116 includes a bore hole 117 at each corner thereof for receiving suitable fasteners 169 such as

self-tapping screws which connect lower fixed plate 162 of the turntable 160 to the base support 115. The base support 115 includes a plurality of spacers 118 for clearance and hence to generate the gap 155 between the base support 115 and handle support structure 120. A plurality of bores 168 are formed through both the lower fixed plate 162 and upper plate 164 to enable fasteners 169 to engage an underside of the handle support structure 120, enabling the upper portion of device 100 to rotate as a contiguous unit with the upper plate 164.

[0032] FIG. 4A is a perspective view of the end cap 130; FIG. 4B is an interior view of the end cap 130. Each end cap 130 has a semi-circular arc 132 provided by recess 133 at a central grasping portion thereof and extends down to a pair of columns 134 which minimally engage the columns 124 of the handle support structure 120 via the posts 127 and interior bores 136 within the underside of end cap 130. As can also be seen in FIG. 4B, the semi-circular recess 133 on the interior underside of each end cap 130, when connected to the columns 124 of the handle support structure 120, forms the circular opening for receiving the handle-rod 145. As best shown in FIG. 4B, the bores 136 receive the posts 127 from the handle support structure 120 as previously shown in FIG. 3, for example.

[0033] Use of device 100 may benefit a workout by imparting rotational movement to force various hand/shoulder orientations, enabling the user to exercise different parts of the arms and shoulders, as well as the upper and lower back. The revolving turntable 160 provides clean rotational movement, since the ball bearings housed in a generally large circular race have a space saving design which is approximately only about $\frac{5}{16}$ " high. As an alternative, notches or detents could be provided on the outer circumferential surface of the rotating plate of the turntable 160 to give a repeatable position capability to the user of the device 100.

[0034] The example device 100 allows the user's arms to rotate naturally during the push-up in much the same way as when the user throws a punch or presses up a dumbbell. This accelerates results by engaging more muscles and reducing strain on the joints—potentially maximizing the user's workout. The rotating base supports 115 thus permit the user's muscles to rotate through its natural arc. Examples of such natural arc of movement include throwing a punch, swinging a golf club or pressing dumbbells, for example.

[0035] Accordingly, the incorporation of the smooth, ball bearing action of the handle assemblies 140/handle support structure 120 on the non-skid base support 115 facilitate the user's workout on any hard floor surface or carpet. The example device 100 may thus enable the user to move with his or her body's natural rotation, so as to engage additional muscle groups with reduced stress on the user's joints, as compared to the conventional push-up exercise.

[0036] FIG. 6 is perspective view of an exercise device 200 in accordance with another example embodiment. Device 200, shown as a pair ("push-up unit"), is similar to device 100 as shown in FIGS. 1-5; thus only the differences will be described in detail hereafter for sake of brevity. Each device 200 includes a handle assembly 210 comprising a handle 240 attached between a pair of support arms 230. The handle 240 may be fabricated from a solid rod of steel, aluminum or plastic, for example.

[0037] Each of the base support 215, handle support structure 220 and support arms 230 may be made of ABS or another thermoplastic and/or thermoset material having char-

acteristics similar to ABS, such as polypropylene, high-strength polycarbonates such as GE Lexan, and/or blended plastics. These equivalent materials can be used in lieu of or in addition to ABS. The handle **240** may be a steel or chrome rod sheathed with a suitable rubber or plastic grip. The handle support structure **220** envelops a base support **215**. The fixed base support **215** has a non-skid pad **250** on an underside thereof, similar to device **100**.

[0038] Unlike device **100**, each handle assembly **210** is readily detachable via a release mechanism **245** from its corresponding handle support structure **220** at a first location on a lower base **222** thereof, to be re-attached at a second location on the push-up unit so as to couple the two base supports **215** together as a tight package formed within the two base support structures **220**, which mate with each other and which are secured by a locking action of the two handle assemblies **210** into the front and rear facings **225** of each handle support structure **220**.

[0039] FIG. 7A is a top view showing how a handle **240** is configured in preparation for storage; FIG. 7B is a side view of FIG. 7A to show the relation of the handle assembly **210** to the base support **215** in further detail. For purposes of clarity, the handle support structure **220** of one device **200** of the pair has been removed to better show the interconnection of a handle assembly **210** from a front or rear facing **225** of a given handle support structure **220**. In particular, once removed from the lower base **222** of its corresponding handle support structure **220** by depressing the release mechanism, each support arm **230** of the handle assembly is inserted into corresponding slots at a junction **218**. Each support arm **230** on the handle assembly includes a locking lug **217** which engages a corresponding slot (not shown) in the front or rear facing of the handle support structure **220** to enable a snap fit.

[0040] FIG. 8A is an exploded view of one device **200** of the pair to illustrate constituent components thereof in greater detail. Only one base support **215** and handle support structure **220** is shown, it being understood that in its stowed configuration, the two base supports **215** are sandwiched between the base support structures **220** which are locked together by the pair of handle assemblies **210**. To assemble a given device **200**, a handle assembly **210** is removed from the front or rear facings **225** of the base support structures **220**. In particular, the user depresses both release mechanisms **245** to release the corresponding locking lugs **217** from the locking slots **226** formed in the facings **225** of the support structures **220**, when the two base support structures are in a mating relationship to enclose the facing base supports **215**.

[0041] As can be seen in FIG. 8A, each of the support arms **230** includes a central locking lug **217** arranged between two foot members **231**. The handle assembly **210**, once removed from the facings **223**, then snaps into the lower base **222** of its corresponding handle support structure **220**. In particular, the locking lug **217** engages a top locking slot **224** and the two feet **231** align with slots **223** so as to properly orient the handle assembly **210** on the lower base **222** of the handle support structure **220**. This results in a secure snap fit, such that a lip of the lug **217** secures the support arm **230** within locking slot **224**.

[0042] With continued reference to FIG. 8A, each device **200** includes a steel or hard plastic ball-bearing rotational system somewhat similar to that shown in FIG. 3, so to permit rotation between the upper portion of the device **200** and the base support **215**. This system **260** includes a bearing ring or race **262** supporting a plurality of glass bearings **265** config-

ured in spaced relation around a circumference thereof. The ball-bearing rotational system **260** is supported within a circular channel **216** of base support **215** around a center post **212** of the base support **215**. The base support **215** includes a plurality of bores **268** which receive fasteners **269** extending from a rubber ring pad **250'**. The center post **212** has a central aperture **242** to receive fastening elements **214** which fasten the fixed base support **215** to the rotating contiguous handle support structure **220** and handle assembly **210** of the device **200**. The rubber ring pad **250'** is adhered to the bottom of base support **215** to provide a friction surface.

[0043] FIG. 8B illustrates an alternative construction of the lower portion of device **200**, only the differences from FIG. 8A are described in detail. In FIG. 8B, the bearing race **262** containing glass bearings **265** seats in channel **216** of base support **215**. However, instead of a rubber ring pad **250'** adhered to the underside of base support **215**, and the fastening means **214** (screw/washer) connected base support **250** to handle support structure **220** via a bore through center post **212**, the example of FIG. 8B employs a full size rubber ring pad **250'** attached to the bottom of base support **215** with adhesive. There is also a washer **213** and a retainer ring **219** enclosed by a fixed cap **211** which seats within the interior of the center post **212**.

[0044] FIG. 9 is a partial view of the handle **240** and support arm **230** of the handle assembly **210** to further describe components comprising the release mechanism **245**. Each support arm **230** includes an outer sidewall **232** having an aperture there through to receive the release mechanism **245**, which is shown as a spring actuated button **245**. Each support arm **230** terminates from its apex to its bottom into two feet **231** to be received in one of slots **223** in the lower base **222** of the handle support structure **220**, or into slots **228** on the facings **225** of the front or rear of the handle support structure **220** if the push-up unit is to be configured for stowage.

[0045] Each support arm **230** includes a central member **241** between the outer sidewall **232** and an inner sidewall **237**. The central member **241** has an aperture **236** which aligns with aperture **233** in the outer sidewall **232** so as to receive a post **234** of the release mechanism **245**. The post **234** contacts a compression spring **235** to compress the spring **235** against a counter force provided by the wall surface (shown generally at **238**) of the inner sidewall **237**. The central member **241** terminates at its lower end as the locking lug **217**. The top surface **239** of inner sidewall **237** is shaped so as to mate flush with the rounded outer surface of handle **240**.

[0046] FIG. 10 is a perspective view of the complete push-up unit configured for stowage. As shown, the generally flat, compact design enables the unit to be stowed for travel, for example. The two handle assemblies **210** interconnect between the facing base support structures **220** so as to secure the base support structures **220** and corresponding base supports **215** together. The push-up exercise unit comprising devices **200** thus provides a small, lightweight embodiment that can be disassembled and stowed for travel. This enables the user to more easily store and transport the unit when going on trips.

[0047] The example embodiments being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. For example, the bearing systems in FIGS. 3 and 8 can be interchangeable between devices **100**, **200**. Further, instead of forming separate end caps **130** and handle support structure **120**, the housing could be a single molded article. Such variations are not to be regarded as departure from the

example embodiments, and all such modifications as would be obvious to one skilled in the art are intended to be included herein.

- 1. A push-up exercise unit, comprising:
 - a pair of rotatable devices, one for each hand, each device including:
 - a handle assembly,
 - a rotatable handle support structure,
 - a fixed base support attached to the handle support structure, and
 - a bearing assembly operatively attached within the handle support structure to permit rotation of the handle assembly and handle support structure on the base support,

wherein each handle assembly is removed from a top surface of the handle support structure, the two handle support structures are placed together so that the base supports contact each other and so that a pair of spaced cavity slots are formed on a front side and a rear side of the facing handle support structures, and each handle assembly is inserted into a corresponding pair of formed cavity slots of the front and rear sides to sandwich the base supports between the handle support structures in a snap-fit locked position and configure the unit for stowage.

- 2. The unit of claim 1, wherein
 - the handle assembly includes a pair of support arms which support the handle, each support arm having a locking lug at a lower end thereof, and
 - the top surface includes a plurality of slots for releasably securing the locking lugs therein.

3. The unit of claim 2, further comprising a release mechanism provided in each support arm, the release mechanism actuated to detach the locking lugs from the slots on the handle assembly top surface for insertion of the locking lugs into the cavity slots formed in the facing handle support structures of the two devices.

- 4. A push-up exercise device, comprising:
 - a handle assembly,
 - a rotatable handle support structure having a top horizontal surface and a downwardly extending vertical facing around a circumference thereof, the vertical facing having a front side with a pair of spaced slots and a rear side with a pair of spaced slots,
 - a fixed base support attached to the handle support structure, and

a bearing assembly operatively attached within the handle support structure to permit rotation of the handle assembly and handle support structure, the handle assembly being removed from the top surface of the handle support structure and configured to be inserted sideways into the spaced slots of either the front side or rear side of the vertical facing.

- 5. The device of claim 4, wherein
 - the handle assembly includes a pair of support arms which support the handle, each support arm having a locking lug at a lower end thereof, and
 - the top surface includes a plurality of slots for releasably securing the locking lugs therein.

6. The device of claim 5, further comprising a release mechanism provided in each support arm, the release mechanism actuated to detach the locking lugs from the slots on the top surface for insertion of the locking lugs into the spaced slots of either the front side or rear side of the vertical facing.

- 7. (canceled)
- 8. A push-up exercise unit, comprising:
 - a pair of rotatable devices, one for each hand, each device including:
 - a handle,
 - a handle support structure,
 - a fixed base support attached to the handle support structure, and
 - a bearing assembly operatively attached within the handle support structure to permit rotation of the handle and handle support structure on the base support,

wherein to configure the unit for stowage, the handles are removed, the handle support structures are placed together so that the base supports contact each other in facing relation, and the handles are inserted into gaps formed in front and rear sides of the facing handle support structures.

9. The unit of claim 8, wherein upon removal the handles are rotated approximately 90 degrees from an installed position on top of the handle support structures for sideways insertion into the front and rear sides of the facing handle support structures.

10. The unit of claim 8, wherein in its stowed configuration, the facing handles support structures with base supports are connected between the two handles in the same horizontal plane, so that the unit lies flat on a horizontal surface.

* * * * *