



US 20090293168A1

(19) **United States**  
(12) **Patent Application Publication**  
**Lugtu**

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2009/0293168 A1**  
(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 3, 2009**

(54) **BODY COVERING AND METHODS THEREFOR**

**Publication Classification**

(51) **Int. Cl.**  
*A41D 1/00* (2006.01)  
*A41D 27/00* (2006.01)  
(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... 2/69; 2/243.1

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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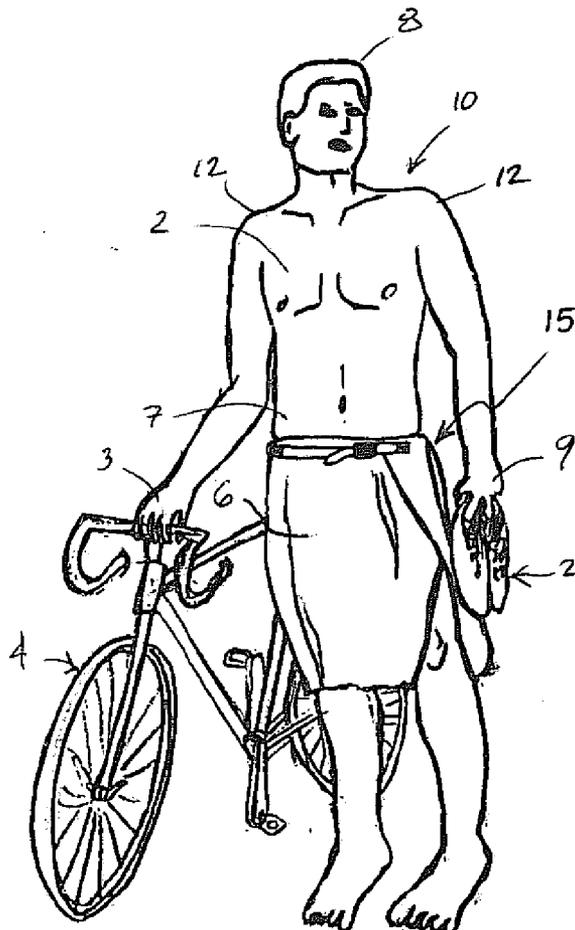
A body covering, comprising a flexible panel having a first edge margin and a second opposite edge margin, and a strap system secured to the flexible panel. The strap system includes an outer strap portion having a first proximal end portion attached proximate to the first edge of the flexible panel, and an opposing first distal free end portion. The strap system also includes a medial strap portion having a second proximal end portion attached to the flexible panel approximately midway between the first and second edge margins, and an opposing second distal free end portion extending away from the flexible panel. The outer and medial strap portions include cooperative fasteners for releasably fastening the body covering about a person's body. Preferably, the cooperative fasteners comprise mateable male and female fittings. The cooperative fasteners may be removably and/or slidably attached to their respective outer or medial strap portions.

(21) Appl. No.: **12/474,951**

(22) Filed: **May 29, 2009**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 61/057,096, filed on May 29, 2008.





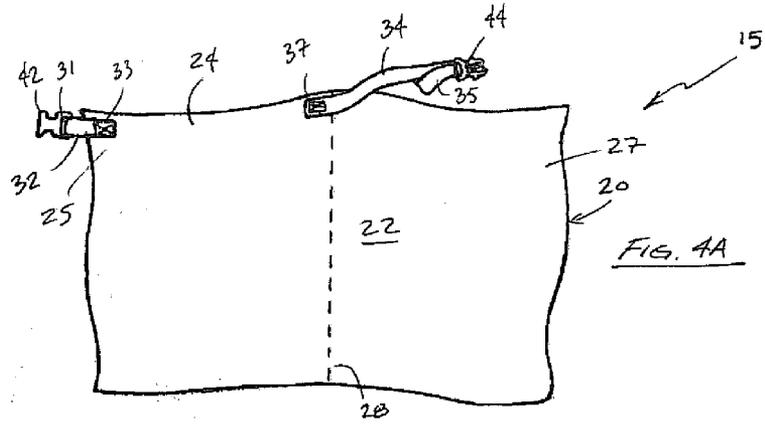


FIG. 4A

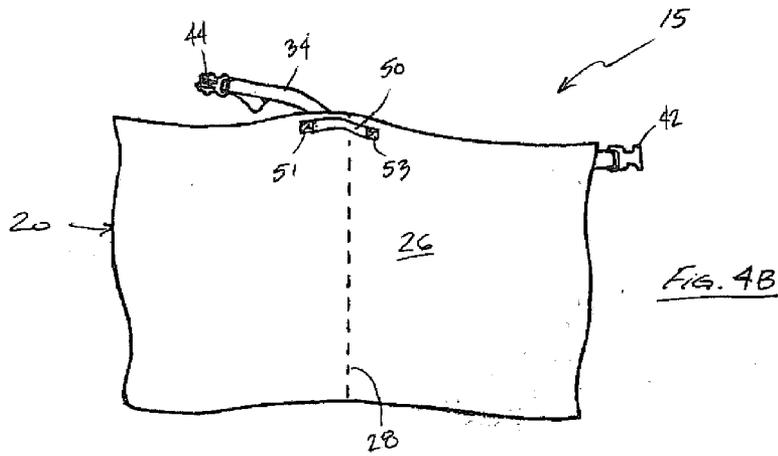


FIG. 4B

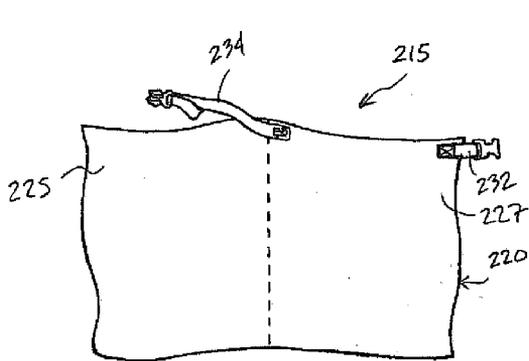


FIG. 5

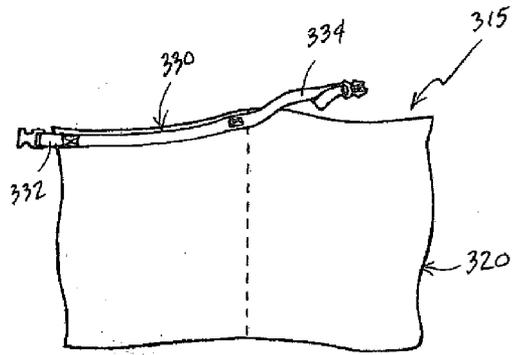
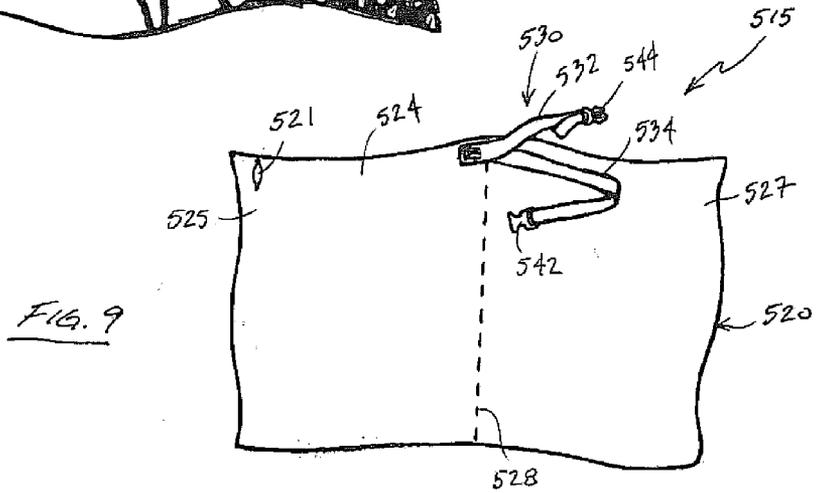
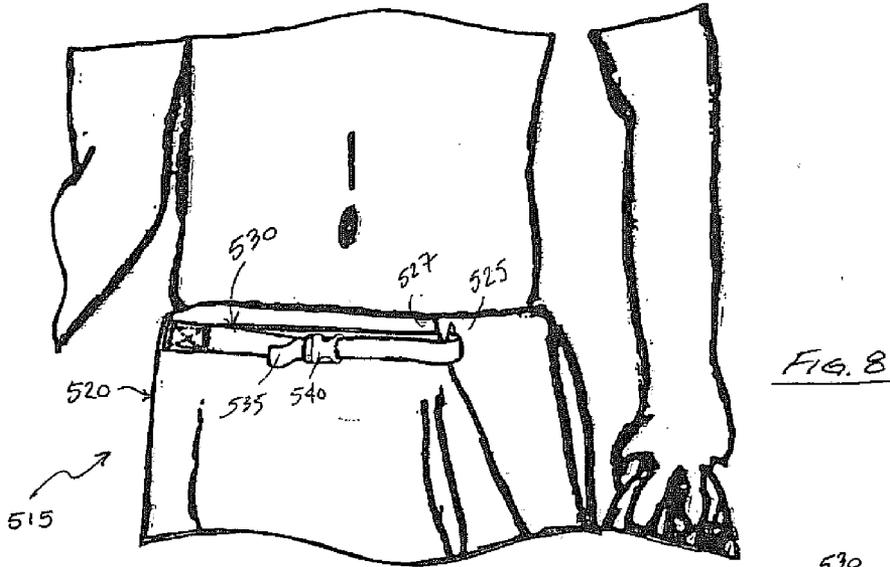
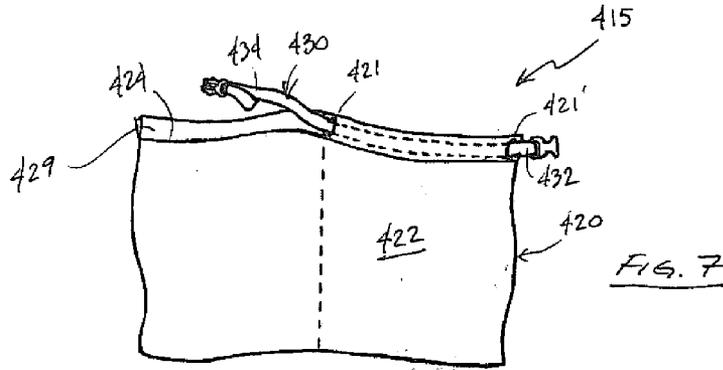


FIG. 6



**BODY COVERING AND METHODS THEREFOR**

**BACKGROUND**

[0001] People often use cotton beach or bath-sized towels to dry off and cover up after swimming, bathing, or other athletic or recreational activities. Towels are usually worn by wrapping and tucking the cotton towels around the wearer's waist or chest. While this means of covering up after being in the water or other activity is somewhat effective, it is an unreliable means of securing the towel to one's body. Quite often, the towel becomes dislodged from its tucked position and falls to the ground. This is also true in the case of athletes and triathletes in particular.

[0002] A triathlon is a timed race that includes three phases: swimming, bicycling, and running. As a triathlete exits the water after the swimming phase, whether during training or racing, it is desirable to have a towel with which to dry off and cover up. However, particularly during a race, a triathlete must move quickly to the next phase of the triathlon and needs both hands to gather equipment and otherwise ready themselves for the next phase. The conventional means of tucking a towel requires the triathlete to either hold the towel with one hand or risk having the towel fall off onto the ground. In addition, triathletes often use a towel to cover their body while changing clothes. In this case, the athlete risks unintentionally embarrassing themselves, other competitors, and spectators should their towel fall.

[0003] Use of a standard cotton towel is a disadvantage for athletes because they are often bulky, heavy, and occupy a large amount of space in an equipment bag. Space concerns are a problem for athletes who carry gear for training and racing. For example, triathletes must carry equipment for all three phases of the race, as well as food, water, and other necessary items. When a standard cotton towel becomes wet the size and weight of the towel is even more inconvenient.

[0004] Unfortunately, cotton tends to hold moisture longer than other materials. Thus, wet cotton towels typically do not dry quickly, making it inconvenient to carry or leave them inside an equipment bag, gym locker, or vehicle. As such, it is desirable to leave the wet towel outside the equipment bag or gym locker, or inside the vehicle without touching the seats or floor, to prevent other items from becoming wet. Some towels include a means to hang the wet towel away from other items; however, these towels are often susceptible to theft. Some towels include a loop-snap feature. The loop closes when the snap on the end is secured. But, because anyone can easily undo the snap, these towels are easily stolen unless placed inside a secure area with other items. Also, the loop is often placed in such a location that when hung inside a vehicle, the towel touches the seats or floor of the vehicle, causing them to become wet.

[0005] Accordingly, there is a need for a body covering that is securable, in a hands-free manner, to a person's body such that it does not easily fall off with normal activity. Furthermore, there is a need for a securable body covering that is compact and dries quickly. There is a still further need for such a securable body covering that can be locked to the exterior of an equipment bag or gym locker to help prevent theft of the covering while allowing it to dry away from other

items, and that can be hung inside a vehicle in such a way that minimizes its contact with the seats or floor of the vehicle.

**SUMMARY**

[0006] Disclosed herein is a body covering, comprising a flexible panel having a first edge margin and a second opposite edge margin, and a strap system secured to the flexible panel. The strap system includes an outer strap portion having a first proximal end portion attached proximate to the first edge of the flexible panel, and an opposing first distal free end portion. The strap system also includes a medial strap portion having a second proximal end portion attached to the flexible panel approximately midway between the first and second edge margins, and an opposing second distal free end portion extending away from the flexible panel. The outer and medial strap portions include cooperative fasteners for releasably fastening the body covering about a person's body. Preferably, the cooperative fasteners comprise mateable male and female fittings. The cooperative fasteners may be removably and/or slidably attached to their respective outer or medial strap portions.

[0007] The flexible panel may include first and second corners with a third edge margin extending therebetween. The outer strap portion may be attached to the flexible panel proximate to one of the first and second corners.

[0008] In another embodiment the strap system is comprised of a unitary strap including the outer strap portion and the medial strap portion. Furthermore, the flexible panel may include a hem formed along the third edge margin, and wherein the unitary strap is at least partially contained inside the hem.

[0009] The body covering may also include an elongate security strap, comprising aramid fibers, for example. The security strap has first and second opposed ends secured to the flexible panel.

[0010] In yet another embodiment a securable body covering, comprises a flexible panel that includes an edge margin extendable about the body of a person and an opening, such as a reinforced button hole, formed through the flexible panel proximate a first end of the edge margin. The body covering includes a strap system including a first strap portion having a first proximal end portion attached approximately midway along the edge margin, and an opposing first distal free end portion. The strap system also includes a second strap portion having a second proximal end portion attached to the flexible panel approximately midway along the edge margin, and an opposing second distal free end portion. One of the first and second distal free end portions is insertable through the opening.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0011] FIG. 1 is a perspective view illustrating a person wearing a conventional cotton towel by tucking and holding the end of the towel;

[0012] FIG. 2 is a perspective view illustrating a person employing a securable body covering according to a first exemplary embodiment;

[0013] FIG. 3 is an enlarged partial view of the body covering shown in FIG. 2;

[0014] FIG. 4A is a top plan view of the body covering shown in FIGS. 2 and 3 illustrating the outside of the covering;

[0015] FIG. 4B is a bottom plan view of the body covering shown in FIGS. 2-4A illustrating the inside of the covering;

[0016] FIG. 5 is a top plan view of a securable body covering according to a second exemplary embodiment;

[0017] FIG. 6 is a top plan view of a securable body covering according to a third exemplary embodiment;

[0018] FIG. 7 is a top plan view of a securable body covering according to a fourth exemplary embodiment;

[0019] FIG. 8 is an enlarged partial view illustrating a person employing a securable body covering according to a fifth exemplary embodiment; and

[0020] FIG. 9 is a top plan view of the body covering shown in FIGS. 8 illustrating the outside of the covering.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0021] Provided herein is a body covering that is securable, in a hands-free manner, to a person's body such that it does not easily fall off with normal activity. This securable body covering is compact and is formed of a quick drying material and includes means for locking the covering to the exterior of an equipment bag or gym locker to help prevent theft of the covering while allowing it to dry away from other items and for hanging inside a vehicle in such a way that minimizes its contact with the seats or floor of the vehicle.

[0022] FIG. 1 illustrates a person 10 wearing a conventional cotton towel 5 by tucking and holding the ends of the towel with his left hand 9. This conventional means of tucking a towel requires the person 10 to either hold the towel with one hand or risk having the towel fall off. FIG. 2 illustrates person 10 wearing a securable body covering 15 according to the first exemplary embodiment of the present invention. Because the body covering is secured to the person's body, both his left and right hands, 9 and 3 respectively, are free to hold equipment. In this case, for example, the person is a triathlete holding a bicycle 4 and shoes 2. It should be understood that while the exemplary embodiments are described with reference to wrapping the securable body covering about waist 7 of person 10, the securable body covering is also suitable for use about a person's chest 2, leg 6, head 8, or shoulders 12.

[0023] Referring to FIG. 3, securable body covering 15 includes flexible panel 20 and strap system 30. Flexible panel 20 is preferably constructed of a lightweight fast drying material, or combination of materials, such as microfiber, bamboo, polyester, polypropylene, spandex, Lycra, Nylon, Rayon, or Angel-tex™, to name a few. With further reference to FIGS. 4A and 4B, strap system 30 includes outer strap portion 32 and medial strap portion 34. Outer strap portion 32 has a proximal end portion 33 which is attached to flexible panel 20 and a distal end portion 31. Medial strap portion 34 includes a proximal end portion 37 secured to flexible panel 20 and a distal end portion 35. Strap system 30 is secured to flexible panel 20 on its outer surface 22 along edge margin 24. In this case, proximal end portion 33 of outer strap portion 32 is attached to the left side 25 of flexible panel 20. Proximal end portion 37 of medial strap portion 34 is attached approximately in the middle of flexible panel 20, as represented by phantom line 28. However, it should be noted that the attachment points for strap portions 32 and 34 may vary depending on various factors such as, for example, the length of the towel and/or the particular body part to be covered. As perhaps best shown in FIG. 3, strap portions 32 and 34 are attached to flexible panel 20 by stitching 36, and may be attached by other methods, such as heat fusion, glue, rivets, and the like. Strap

portions 32 and 34 may be constructed from materials such as Nylon or polypropylene webbing, binding, string, ties, and the like.

[0024] Strap system 30 includes fastener 40 for releasably fastening the strap system about the person's waist, chest, shoulders, or other body locations. Fastener 40, in this case, is a buckle including cooperative female and male fittings 42 and 44 respectively. Female fitting 42 is secured to distal end portion 31 of outer strap portion 32 and male fitting 44 is adjustably attached to the distal end portion 35 of medial strap portion 34. It should be readily understood that the male and female fittings 44 and 42 may be reversed. It should also be understood that fastener 40 may be any suitable fastener such as a buckle, button, snap, tie, loop, hook and eye closure, or cooperative hook and loop material, to name a few.

[0025] As shown in FIG. 4B securable body covering 15 includes security strap 50 that provides a means for locking the covering to the exterior of an equipment bag or gym locker in order to help prevent theft of the covering while allowing it to dry away from other items. Security strap 50 also provides a means for hanging the covering inside of a vehicle in such a way that minimizes the covering coming into contact with the seats or floor of the vehicle. The ends 51 and 53 of security strap 50 are secured to inner surface 26 of flexible panel 20 forming a loop that may be locked to a gym locker or the like. Ends 51 and 53 of security strap 50 may be secured by stitching, heat fusion, glue, rivets, or other suitable means of attachment. Preferably the security strap 50 is formed of a strong material such as heavy duty nylon webbing or aramid fiber, such as Kevlar for example.

[0026] In order to put on securable body covering 15, the wearer wraps the flexible panel 20 about their body with inner surface 26 facing towards their body. Left side 25 of flexible panel 20 is placed on top of right side 27 and cooperative fittings 42 and 44 are mated to secure the covering on the wearer's body. If necessary, distal end portion 35 may be adjusted by pushing or pulling it through male fitting 44 to increase or decrease the effective length of medial strap portion 34. Thus, securable body covering 15 is infinitely adjustable to fit children as well as adults of many shapes and sizes.

[0027] FIG. 5 illustrates a securable body covering 215 according to a second exemplary embodiment. Securable body covering 215 is similar to that shown in FIG. 4A; however, outer strap portion 232 is attached to the right side 227 instead of left side 225. FIG. 6 illustrates a securable body covering 315 according to a third exemplary embodiment. In this case, strap system 330 is comprised of a unitary strap incorporating outer strap portion 332 and medial strap portion 334. FIG. 7 illustrates a securable body covering 415 according to a fourth exemplary embodiment. In this embodiment, flexible panel 420 includes hem 429 formed along edge margin 424. Strap system 430 is comprised of a unitary strap partially contained inside hem 429. Medial strap portion 434 extends out of hem 429 through opening 421. Similarly, outer strap portion 432 extends out of hem 429 through opening 421'. Openings 421 and 421' are preferably, reinforced button holes as is known in the art. Openings 421 and 421' may also be represented by loops attached to the edge or outer side of the covering.

[0028] Finally, FIG. 8 illustrates a securable body covering 515 according to a fifth exemplary embodiment. Securable body covering 515 includes flexible panel 520 and strap system 530. Strap system 530 includes a first strap 532 and a second strap 534. Alternatively, Strap system 530 may

include a unitary strap comprised of first strap 532 and second strap 534. Each of the first and second straps 532 and 534 has a proximal end portion attached to edge margin 524 and approximately in the middle of flexible panel 520. Each of the first and second straps 532 and 534 includes a cooperative buckle fitting 544 and 542 respectively. It should also be understood that cooperative buckle 544 and 542 may be any suitable fastener such as a button, snap, tie, loop, hook and eye closure, or cooperative hook and loop material, to name a few. An opening 521 is formed in edge margin 524 on the left side 525 of flexible panel 520. Opening 521 may be a reinforced button hole or a loop.

[0029] In order to put on securable body covering 515 the wearer wraps the flexible panel 520 about their body with the inner surface facing towards their body. Left side 525 of flexible panel 20 is placed on top of right side 527 and cooperative female fitting 542 is inserted through opening 521 to connect with male fitting 544. If necessary, distal end portion 535 may be adjusted by pushing or pulling it through male fitting 544 to increase or decrease the effective length of strap system 530.

[0030] Accordingly, the present invention has been described with some degree of particularity directed to the exemplary embodiments of the present invention. It should be appreciated, though, that the present invention is defined by the following claims construed in light of the prior art so that modifications or changes may be made to the exemplary embodiments of the present invention without departing from the inventive concepts contained herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A body covering, comprising:
  - A. a flexible panel having a first edge margin and a second opposite edge margin; and
  - B. a strap system secured to said flexible panel, said strap system including:
    - i. an outer strap portion having a first proximal end portion attached proximate to said first edge of said flexible panel, and an opposing first distal free end portion; and
    - ii. a medial strap portion having a second proximal end portion attached to said flexible panel approximately midway between said first and second edge margins, and an opposing second distal free end portion extending away from said flexible panel;
 wherein said outer and medial strap portions include cooperative fasteners for releasably fastening the body covering about a person's body.
2. A body covering according to claim 1, wherein said flexible panel includes first and second corners with a third edge margin extending therebetween, and wherein said outer strap portion is attached to said flexible panel proximate to one of said first and second corners.
3. A body covering according to claim 1, wherein said strap system is comprised of a unitary strap including said outer strap portion and said medial strap portion.
4. A body covering according to claim 3, wherein said flexible panel includes a hem formed along said third edge margin, and wherein said unitary strap is at least partially contained inside said hem.
5. A body covering according to claim 1, wherein said cooperative fasteners comprise mateable male and female fittings.

6. A body covering according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said cooperative fasteners is removably attached to its respective one of said outer and medial strap portions.

7. A body covering according to claim 6, wherein said at least one of said cooperative fasteners is slidably attached to its respective one of said outer and medial strap portions.

8. A body covering according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said cooperative fasteners is slidably attached to its respective one of said outer and medial strap portions, said cooperative fasteners comprising mateable male and female fittings.

9. A securable body covering, comprising:

A. a flexible rectangular panel having an edge margin extendable about the body of a person; and

B. a strap system including:

- i. a first strap portion having a first proximal end portion attached proximate a first end of said edge margin, and an opposing first distal free end portion extending away from said flexible panel; and
- ii. a second strap portion having a second proximal end portion attached to said flexible panel approximately midway along said edge margin, and an opposing second distal free end portion extending away from said flexible panel;

wherein said first and second strap portions include cooperative fasteners for releasably fastening the body covering about a person's body.

10. A securable body covering according to claim 9, wherein said cooperative fasteners comprise mateable male and female fittings.

11. A securable body covering according to claim 9, wherein at least one of said cooperative fasteners is removably attached to its respective one of said first and second strap portions.

12. A securable body covering according to claim 9, wherein at least one of said cooperative fasteners is adjustably attached to its respective one of said first and second strap portions.

13. A securable body covering according to claim 9, including an elongate security strap having first and second opposed ends secured to said flexible panel.

14. A securable body covering according to claim 13, wherein said first and second strap portions are attached to a first surface of said flexible panel and said security strap is secured to an opposed second surface.

15. A securable body covering according to claim 14, wherein said first surface is an outer surface and said second surface is an inner surface.

16. A securable body covering according to claim 13, wherein said security strap is comprised of aramid fibers.

17. A securable body covering, comprising:

A. a flexible panel including an edge margin extendable about the body of a person and an opening formed through said flexible panel proximate a first end of said edge margin; and

B. a strap system including:

- i. a first strap portion having a first proximal end portion attached approximately midway along said edge margin, and an opposing first distal free end portion; and
- ii. a second strap portion having a second proximal end portion attached to said flexible panel approximately midway along said edge margin, and an opposing second distal free end portion;

wherein one of said first and second distal free end portions is insertable through said opening, and wherein said first and second strap portions are releasably securable to each other.

**18.** A securable body covering according to claim 17, wherein said first and second strap portions include cooperative fasteners.

**19.** A securable body covering according to claim 17, wherein said strap system is comprised of a unitary strap including said first and second strap portions.

**20.** A securable body covering according to claim 17, wherein said opening is a reinforced button hole.

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