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(54) **WATER BELT**

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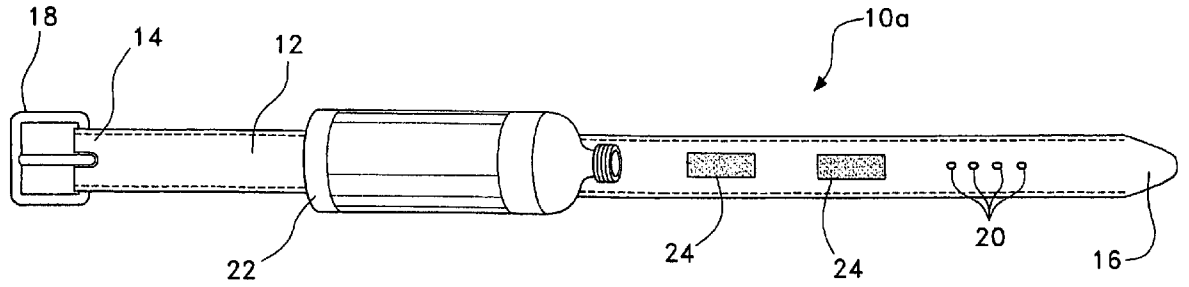
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The water belt is a flat, lightweight foam belt having a sufficient length to encircle a person's waist. A plurality of releasable fasteners, such as hook and loop fasteners or snap fasteners, are affixed along the length of the belt. Small plastic bottles are held onto the water belt using the fasteners. In this manner a user may access the plastic bottles and rehydrate when exercising. The water belt may also be integrated into the waist of a pair of athletic shorts or the waist portion of an athletic shirt. An alternative embodiment reinforces an athletic shirt with vertical straps that extend below the waist of an athletic shirt for attachment to a pair of shorts and provide support for one or more small water bottles removably attached to the shoulders of the athletic shirt.



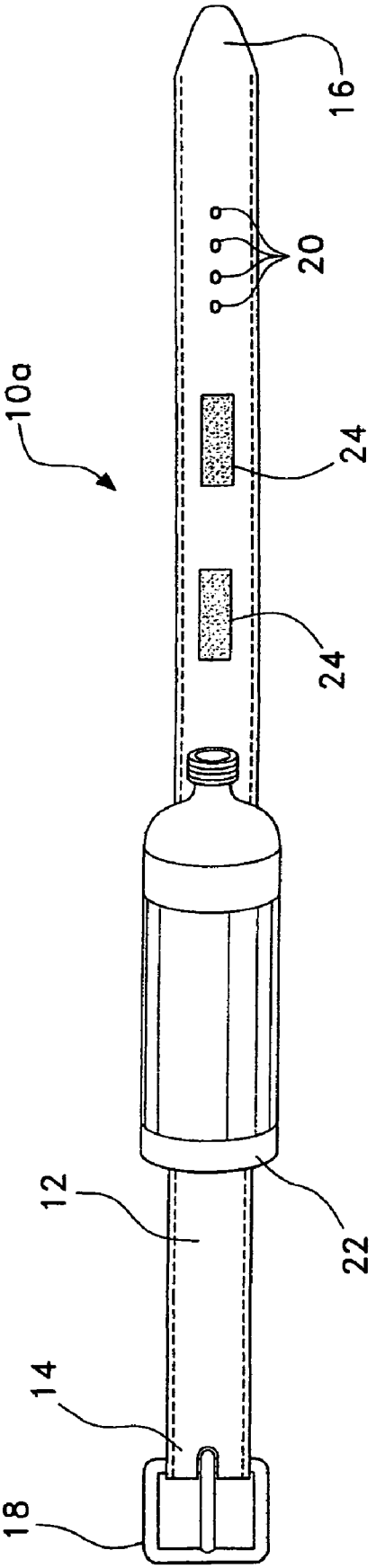


Fig. 1

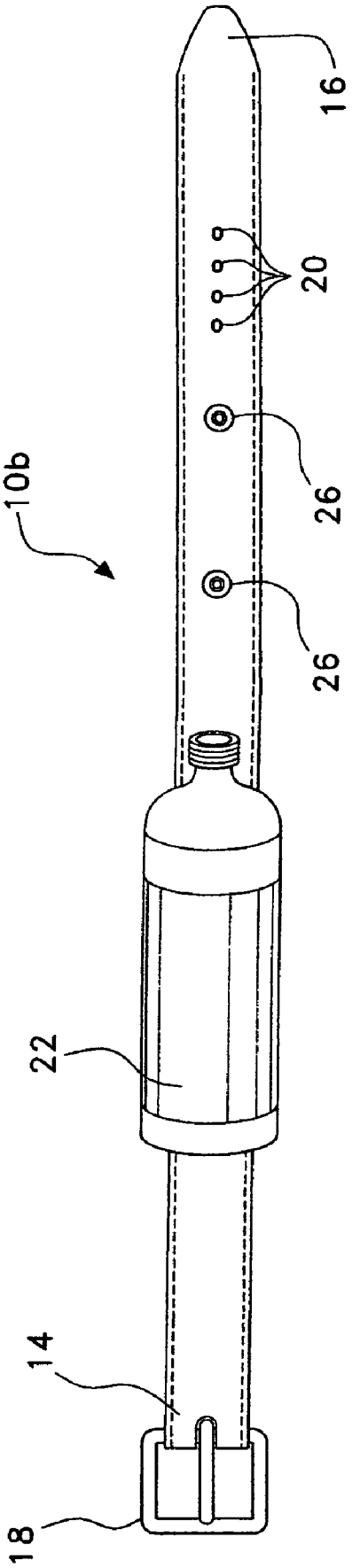


Fig. 2

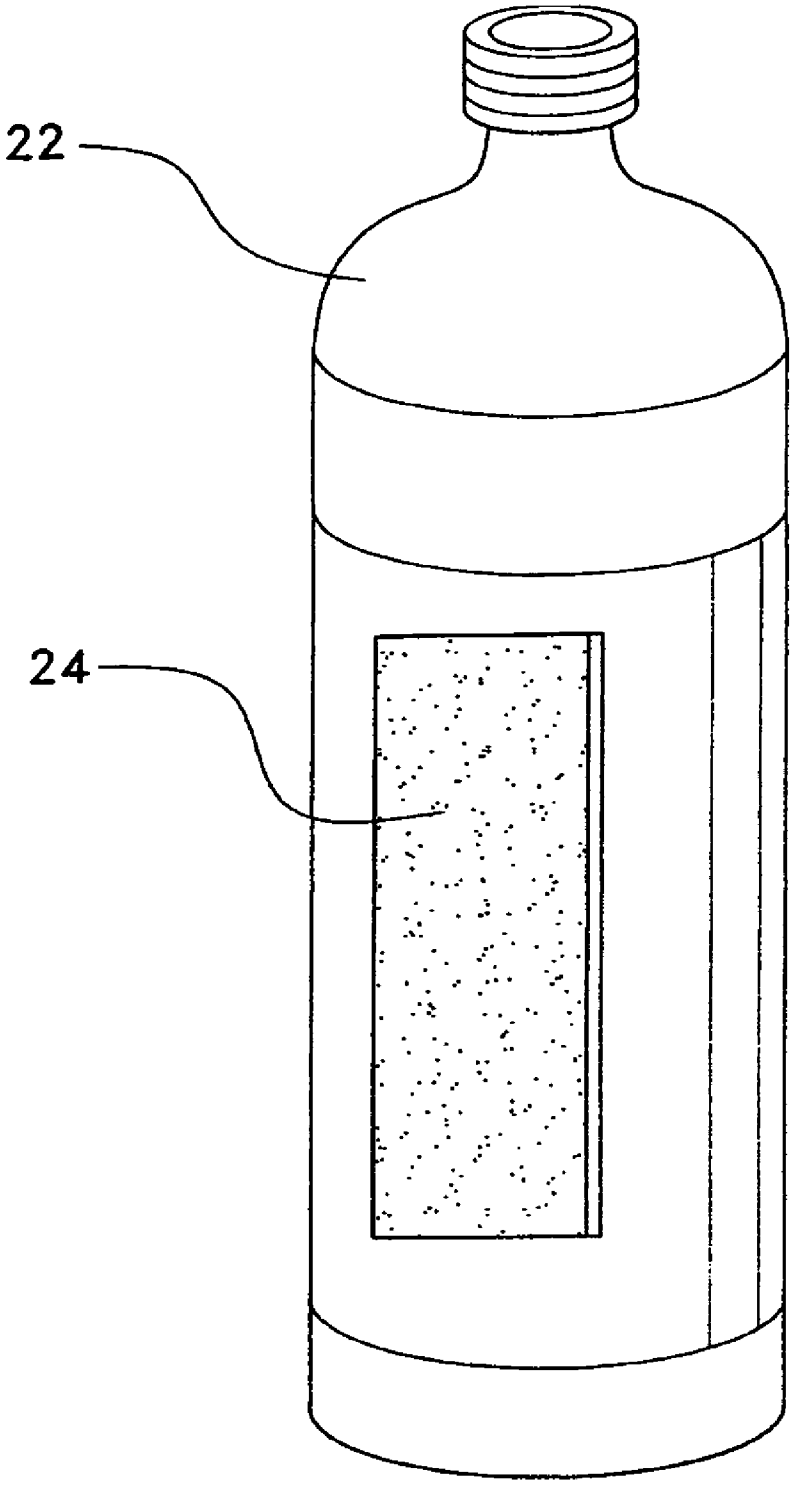


Fig. 3A

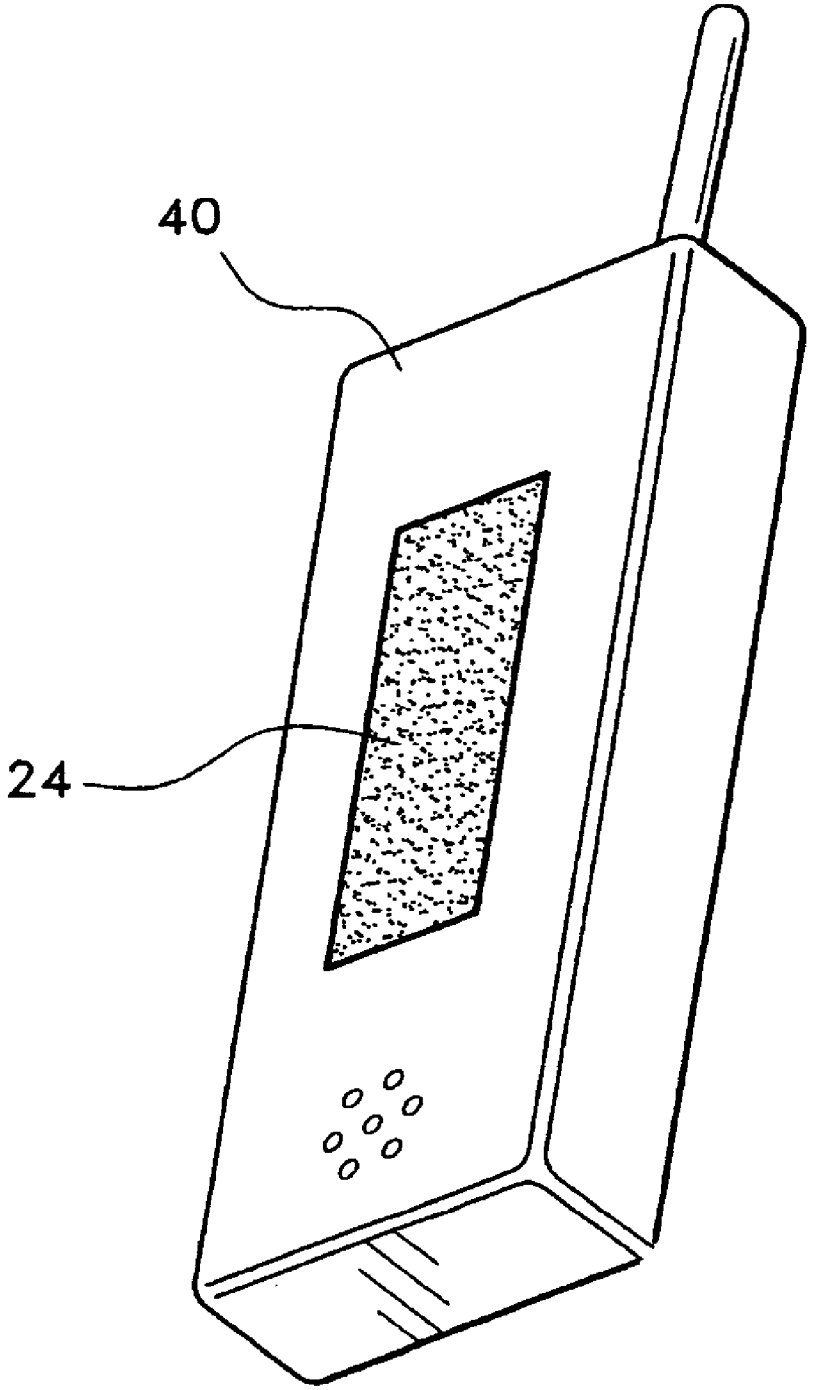


Fig. 3B

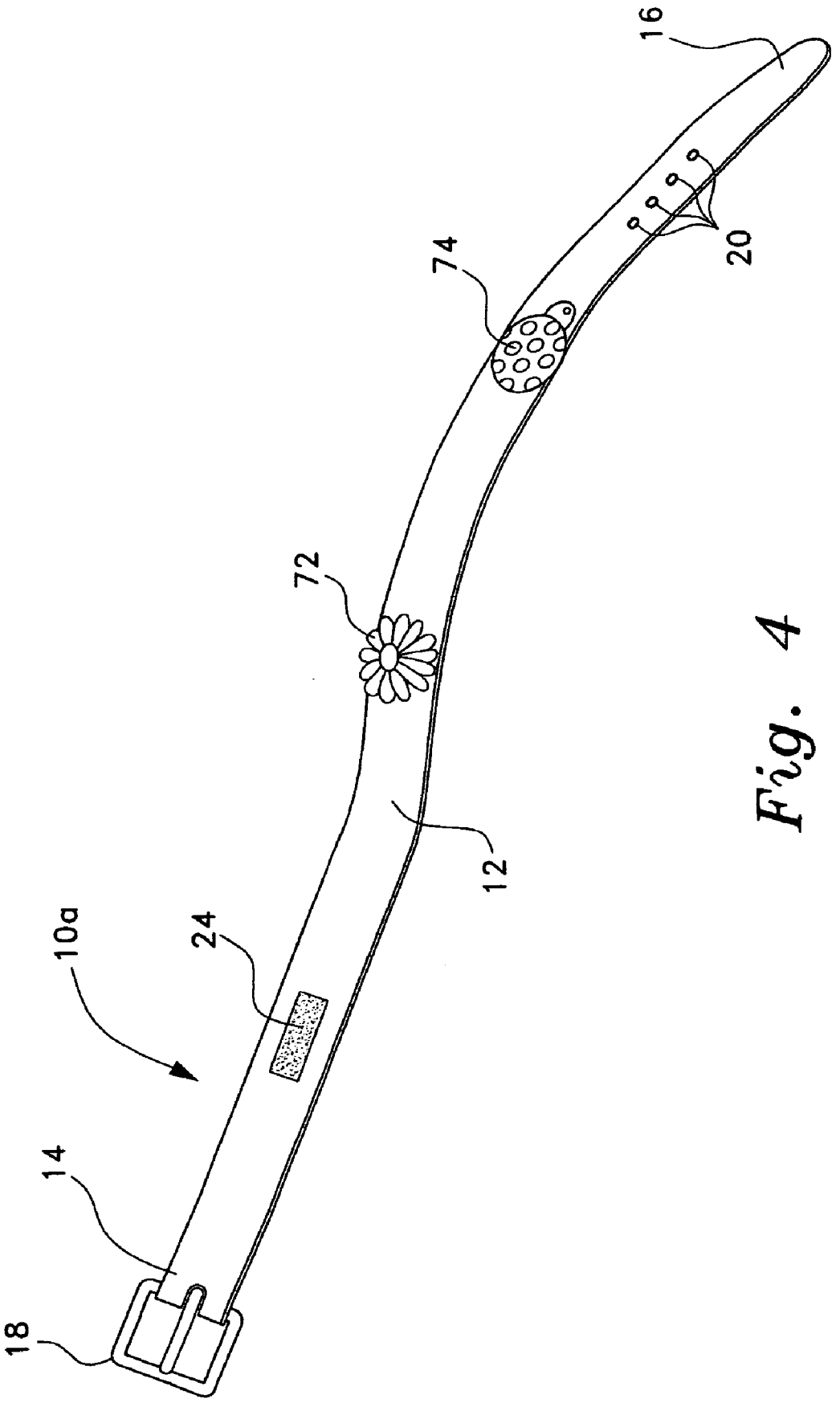


Fig. 4

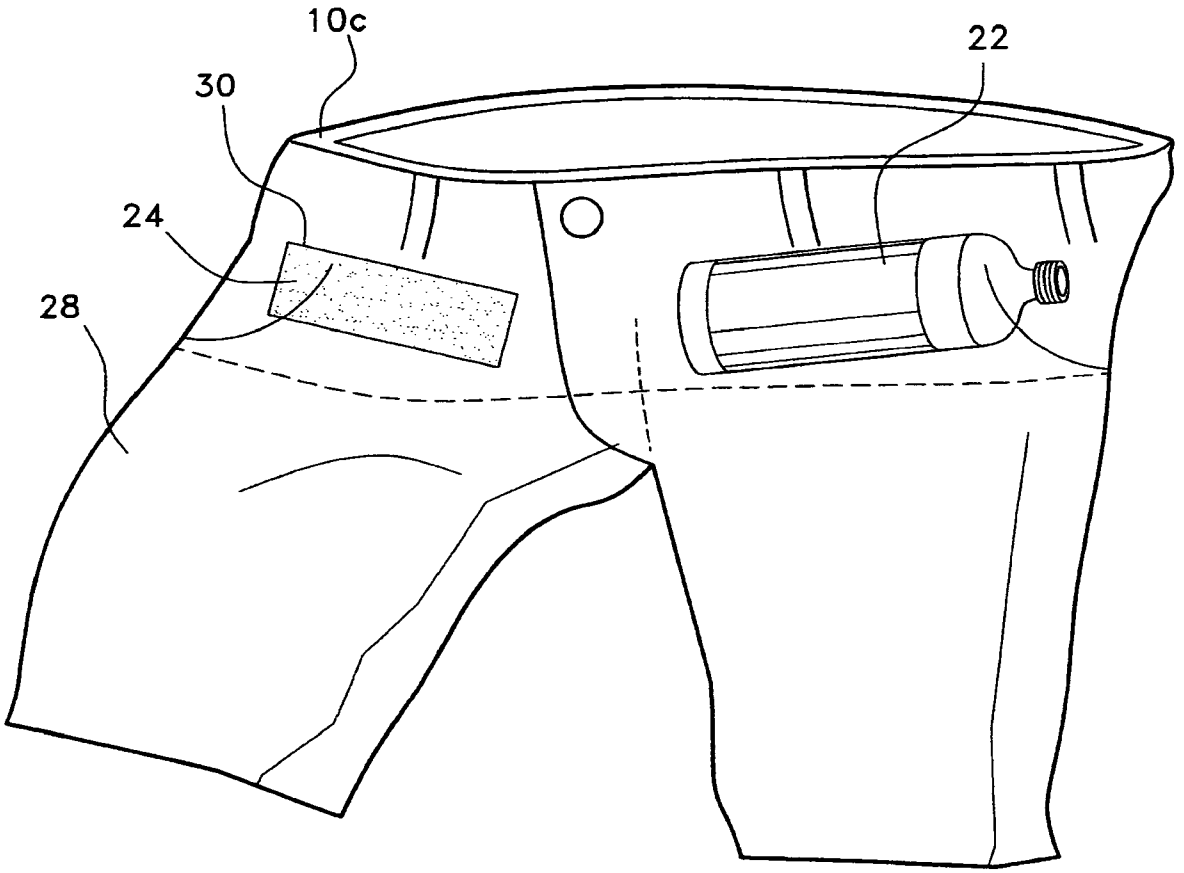


Fig. 5

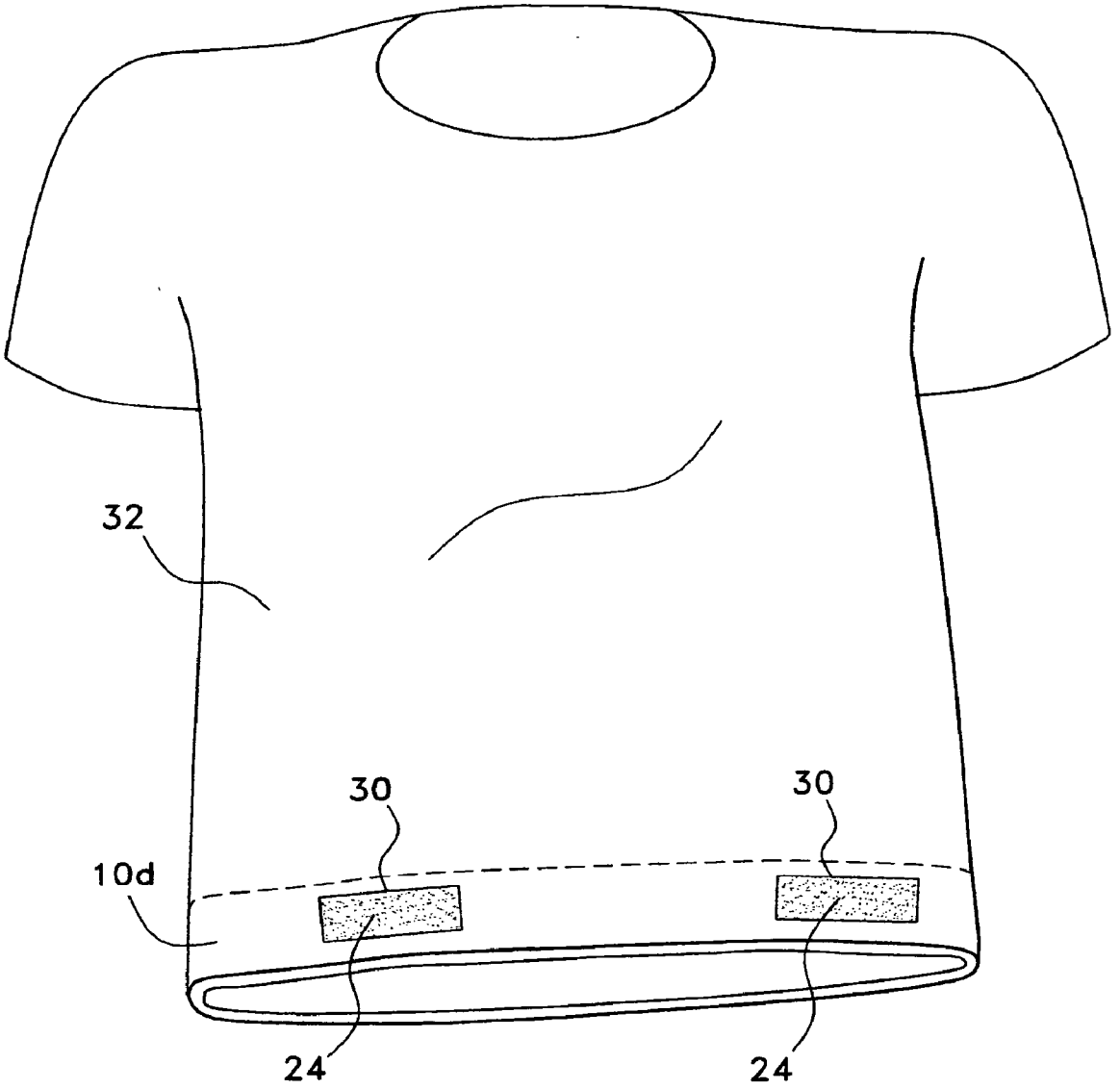


Fig. 6

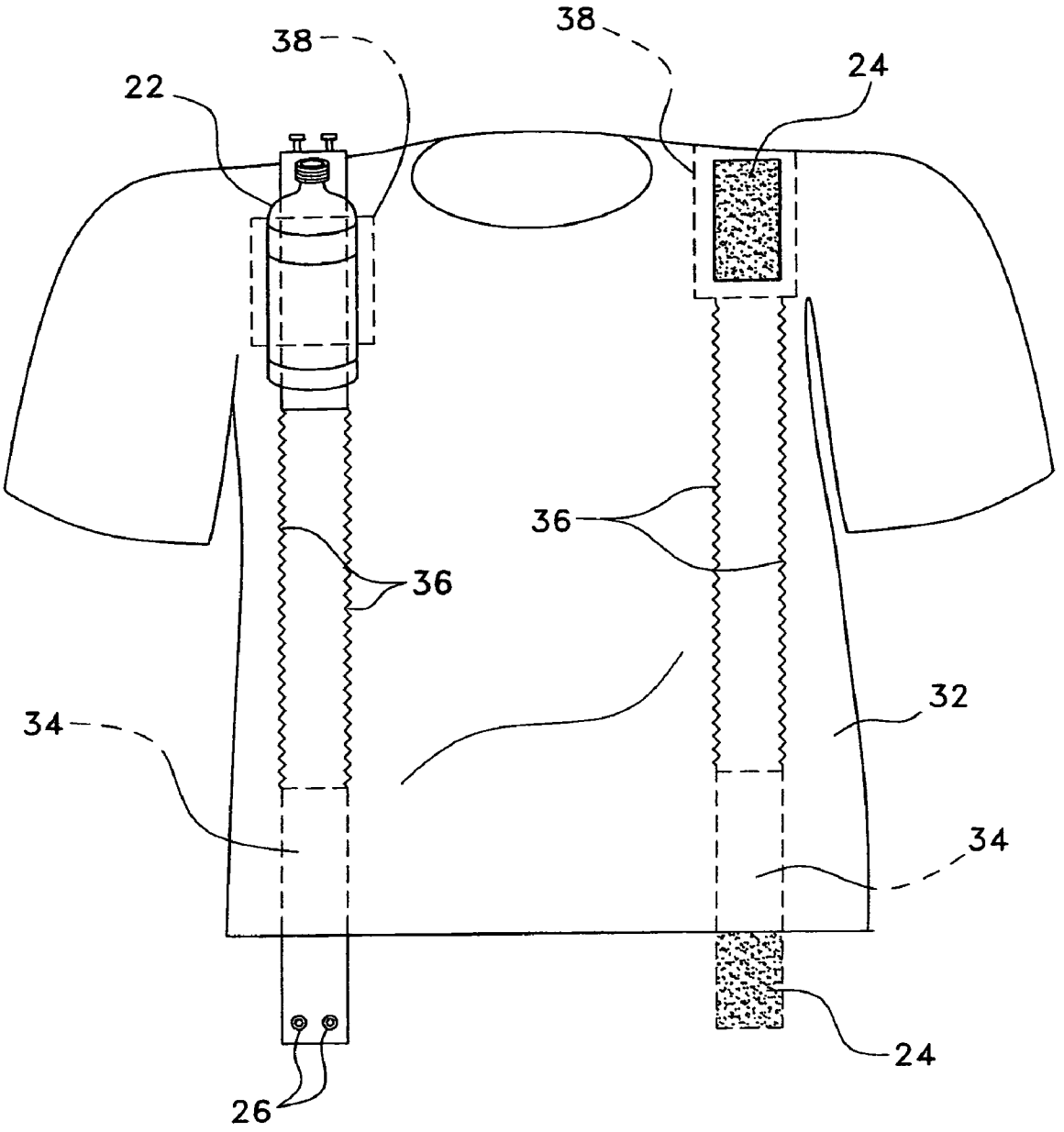


Fig. 7

WATER BELT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/625,576, filed Nov. 8, 2004.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to a water belt, and particularly to a lightweight belt capable of supporting one or more small water bottles in order to hydrate a user while exercising.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] People that engage in exercise, such as jogging, running or walking, often carry water or other fluids with them to rehydrate themselves due to fluids lost during exercise. Although some people simply carry a water bottle in their hands, others choose to have the bottle attached to their person.

[0006] A variety of ideas have been put forward for apparatus to inexpensively and efficiently carry fluid while exercising. Examples include waist belts with attached water bottles, and more complicated systems in which a reservoir of fluid is accessed through a tube to the user's mouth. The apparatus currently in use have disadvantages, however. In the example of the waist belt systems, commonly one or two large water bottles are used that sit below a runner's center of gravity and impede the runner's exercise. Further, as a water bottle is emptied, the remaining water creates a free surface effect in the bottle as water sloshes back and forth. This free surface effect can hinder a runner's balance and performance.

[0007] Hydration systems utilizing reservoirs and bladders also have disadvantages. One disadvantage is that it is hard for a runner to control his or her intake of fluid. Since bladders and reservoirs can hold thirty-two ounces of fluid or more, a runner may inadvertently drink more water than they should and subject themselves to cramps. Hydration systems can also be bulky and expensive.

[0008] A water belt that is both lightweight and further allows a user to regulate the amount of their water consumption is needed. Thus, a water belt solving the above problems is desired.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The water belt is a flat, lightweight foam belt having a sufficient length to encircle a person's waist. A plurality of fasteners, such as hooks and loop fasteners or snap fasteners, are affixed along the length of the belt. Small plastic bottles are held onto the water belt by the fasteners. In this manner a user may access the small water bottles and rehydrate when exercising. The fasteners may be used to affix another accessory, such as a cell phone or canister of pepper spray, which a user may require while exercising. The water belt may also be integrated into the waist of a pair of athletic shorts or the waist portion of an athletic shirt. An alternative embodiment of the water belt reinforces an athletic shirt with vertical straps that extend below the waist of an athletic shirt for attachment to a pair of shorts and that provide support for one or more small water bottles removably attached to the shoulders of the athletic shirt.

[0010] These and other features of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] **FIG. 1** is a front view of an embodiment of a water belt according to the present invention having hook and loop fasteners.

[0012] **FIG. 2** is a front view of an embodiment of a water belt according to the present invention having snap fasteners.

[0013] **FIG. 3A** is a perspective view of an embodiment of a water bottle according to the present invention having hook and loop fasteners.

[0014] **FIG. 3B** is a perspective view of a cell phone featuring hook and loop fasteners for use with a water belt according to the present invention.

[0015] **FIG. 4** is a perspective view of an embodiment of a water belt with water bottles shaped as a flower and a ladybug.

[0016] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of a water belt integrated into a pair of athletic shorts according to the present invention.

[0017] **FIG. 6** is a perspective view of an embodiment of a water belt integrated into an athletic shirt according to the present invention.

[0018] **FIG. 7** is a front view of an athletic shirt with straps and water bottle attachments according to the present invention.

[0019] Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0020] The present invention is a water belt, a first embodiment of which is referred to generally as **10***a* in **FIG. 1**. The water belt **10***a* is a flat, lightweight foam strap **12** having a first end **14** and a second end **16**. A buckle **18** is attached to the first end **14** and a series of apertures **20** are bored into the second end **16** to receive the tongue of the buckle **18**. The strap **12** is of sufficient length to encircle a person's waist.

[0021] One or more small plastic bottles **22** are attached to the water belt **10***a*. **FIG. 1** shows an embodiment of the belt **10***a* having one or more hook and loop fastener strips **24** affixed along the length of the water belt **10***a*. **FIG. 2** shows another embodiment of the water belt **10***b* that is substantially the same as belt **10***a*, but has a plurality of snap fasteners **26** affixed to the strap instead of hook and loop strips **24**. The fasteners may also be raised away from the surface of the strap **12** to keep possible condensation on the

plastic bottle **22** from reaching the user. Mating fasteners, such as hook and loop strips **24** or snap fasteners, are also affixed to one side of the plastic bottle **22**, as shown in **FIG. 3A**. It is contemplated that other articles besides plastic bottles **22** can be attached to the water belt **10***a* or **10***b* according to the needs of the user. Examples include a cellular phone **40** (shown in **FIG. 3B**) or a canister of pepper spray. It is contemplated that the plastic bottles **22** are small and hold approximately three ounces of liquid. The small size of the plastic bottles **22** would allow a user to accurately monitor their fluid intake. Further, because a user would likely consume all three ounces of liquid at once, the free surface effect of a bottle of liquid sloshing back and forth on a user's waist would be eliminated. For aesthetic reasons, plastic bottles **22** could take unconventional shapes, such as a flower-shaped bottle **72** or a ladybug-shaped bottle **74**, as seen in **FIG. 4**.

[**0022**] Another embodiment of the water belt integrates the water belt into an athletic garment. **FIG. 5** shows an embodiment of the water belt **10***c* integrally formed as part of a pair of athletic shorts **28**. In **FIG. 5**, the water belt **10***c* is attached inside the waist of the athletic shorts **28** and the athletic shorts **28** are provided with openings **30** so that the hook and loop strips **24** or other releasable fasteners are available for the attachment of a plastic bottle **22**. Similarly, a water belt **10***d* may be integrated into an athletic shirt **32**, as shown in **FIG. 6**. The water belt **10***d* is attached inside the waist portion of the athletic shirt **32** and the athletic shirt **32** is provided with openings **30** so that the hook and loop strips **24** are available for the attachment of a plastic bottle **22**. It is contemplated that the water belt **10***c* or **10***d* may be integrated into the inside or the outside of an athletic shirt **32** or pair of athletic shorts **28**.

[**0023**] A further embodiment of the technology associated with the water belt can be seen in **FIG. 7**. An athletic shirt **32** has vertically positioned straps **34** stitched along the lower portion of the athletic shirt **32** that extend below the waist of the athletic shirt **32**. The lower portion of the straps **34** are equipped with either hook and loop fasteners **24** or snap fasteners **26** and the vertical straps may extend below the waist of an athletic shirt for attachment to a pair of shorts, and provide support for one or more small water bottles removably attached to the shoulders of the athletic shirt. The hook and loop fasteners **24** or snap fasteners **26** on the straps **34** may also be attached to a water belt, as described in the first embodiment, above, to increase the rigidity of the athletic shirt **32**.

[**0024**] The rigidity of the athletic shirt **32** is further increased by hard or supportive stitching **36** extending vertically upwards from the straps **34** to the shoulder area of the athletic shirt **32**. Fitted to the shoulder area of the athletic shirt **32** are soft foam pads **38** that are also equipped with hook and loop fasteners **24** or snap fasteners **26**. In this manner a plastic bottle **22** may be attached to the pads **38**. Some users would prefer to have a plastic bottle **22** positioned above their center of gravity. The straps **34** and hard supportive stitching **36** keep the plastic bottle **22** from swaying due to a user's motion.

[**0025**] It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.

I claim:

1. A water belt, comprising:

an elongated strap having a first end and a second end, the strap being dimensioned and configured to encircle a person's waist, the strap having a plurality of apertures longitudinally positioned along the second end;

a buckle attached to the first end of the strap, the strap and the buckle forming a belt;

a plurality of first releasable fasteners affixed along the length of the belt; and,

a plurality of plastic bottles, each of the bottles having at least one second releasable fastener affixed thereto releasably mating with at least one of said first releasable fasteners for attaching the bottles to the belt, the bottles being adapted for containing water.

2. The water belt of claim 1, wherein said first and second releasable fasteners comprise hook and loop fasteners.

3. The water belt of claim 1, wherein said first and second releasable fasteners comprise snap fasteners.

4. The water belt system of claim 3, wherein said snap fasteners are raised away from a surface of said strap sufficient to keep condensation on said bottles from reaching the user.

5. The water belt of claim 1, wherein each of said bottles has a capacity for holding a volume of about three ounces of liquid.

6. The water belt of claim 5, wherein said bottles are flower-shaped.

7. The water belt of claim 5, wherein said bottles have a shape simulating a lady bug.

8. The water belt according to claim 1, further comprising a pair of shorts having a waistband having a plurality openings defined therein, said strap being affixed to the waistband within the shorts with said plurality of first fasteners being accessible through the openings defined in the waistband for releasably mating said second fasteners to said first fasteners in order to attach the bottles to the shorts.

9. The water belt according to claim 1, further comprising a shirt having a lower portion defining a waist opening, the lower portion having a plurality of openings defined therein, said strap being affixed to the lower portion within the shirt with said plurality of first fasteners being accessible through the openings defined in the lower portion for releasably mating said second fasteners to said first fasteners in order to attach the bottles to the shirt.

10. The water belt according to claim 1, further comprising:

a shirt having an upper portion defining shoulders and a lower portion defining a waist opening;

a plurality of reinforcement straps extending from the shoulders of the shirt to below the waist opening;

a plurality of third releasable fasteners attached to the straps below the waist opening, the third releasable fasteners mating with the first releasable fasteners in order to attach said belt to the shirt;

a plurality of foam pads attached to the shoulders of the shirt; and

a plurality of fourth releasable fasteners attached to the foam pads, said second releasable fasteners mating

with the fourth releasable fasteners in order to attach said bottles to the shoulders of the shirt.

11. The water belt according to claim 10, wherein said reinforcement straps are stitched to the shirt from the shoulders to the waist opening in order to prevent said bottles from swaying.

12. The water belt according to claim 1, wherein said elongated strap forming the belt is made from a foam material.

13. An athletic garment with attachable water bottles, comprising:

a shirt having an upper portion defining shoulders and a lower portion defining a waist opening;

a plurality of reinforcement straps extending from the shoulders of the shirt to below the waist opening;

a pair of shorts having a waistband and a plurality of first releasable fasteners attached to the waistband;

a plurality of plastic bottles, each of the bottles having at least one second releasable fastener affixed thereto, the bottles being adapted for holding water;

a plurality of third releasable fasteners attached to the reinforcement straps below the waist opening, the third releasable fasteners mating with the first releasable fasteners in order to attach the shirt to the shorts;

a plurality of foam pads attached to the shoulders of the shirt; and

a plurality of fourth releasable fasteners attached to the foam pads, the second releasable fasteners mating with the fourth releasable fasteners in order to attach the bottles to the shoulders of the shirt.

14. The athletic garment according to claim 13, wherein said reinforcement straps are stitched to the shirt from the shoulders to the waist opening in order to prevent said bottles from swaying.

15. The athletic garment according to claim 13, wherein each of said bottles has a capacity for holding a volume of about three ounces of liquid.

* * * * *