April 13, 1965 C. M. BARKER, JR 3,178,015

CONTACT LENS ACCESSORY

Filed Oct. 1, 1963

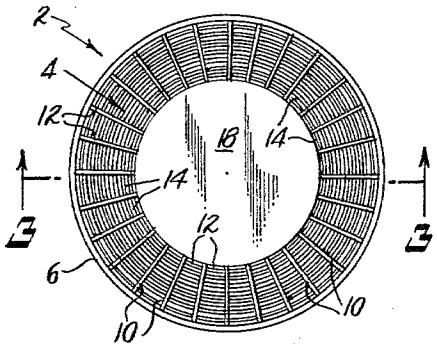


Fig. 2.

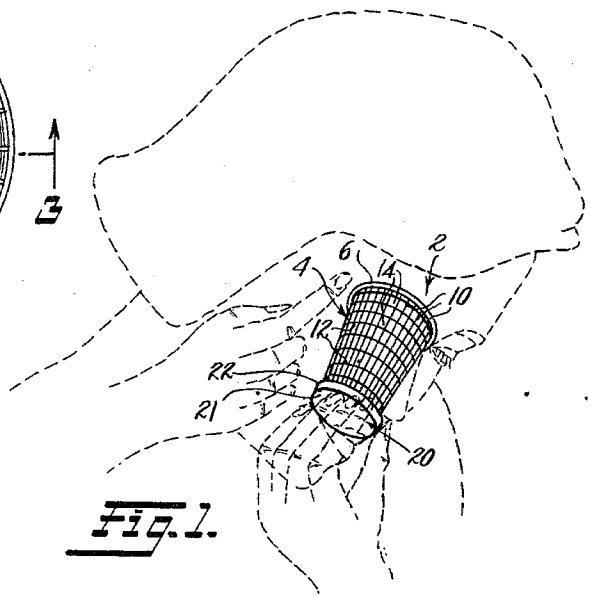
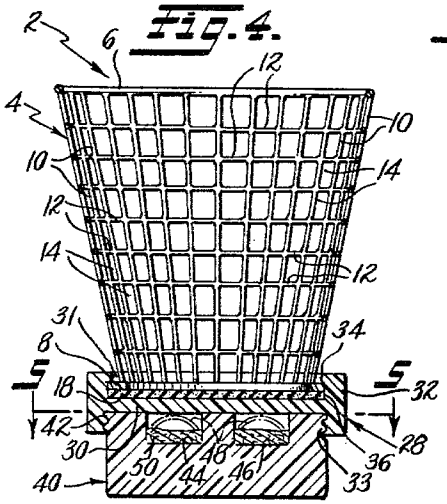


Fig. 1.

Fig. 4.



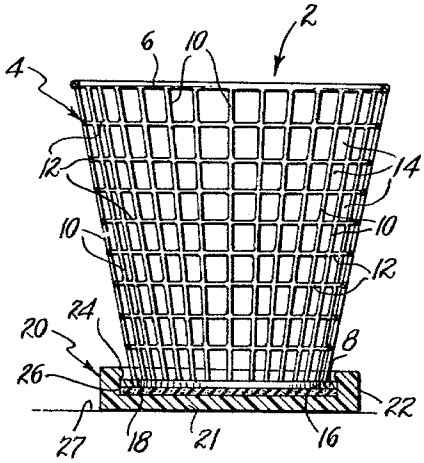


Fig. 3.

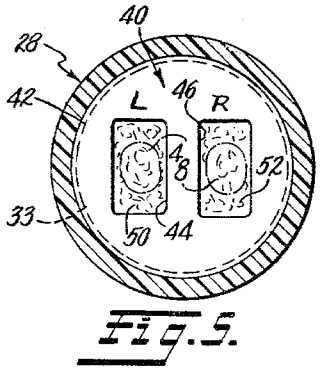


Fig. 5.

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CONTACT LENS ACCESSORY

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The present invention relates to a device for protecting and storing contact lenses. It is known that these lenses easily become lost in the act of applying or removing them from the eyes of the wearer.

The wearer usually, with the head bent over, inserts the lens in the eye with the forefinger of one hand and uses the other hand in a cup-shaped fashion in an attempt to catch the lens in case it does not readily adhere to the eyeball and falls from the forefinger. In removing the lens from the eye, the wearer distorts the area around the eye with the forefinger causing the lens to "pop" or fall out of the eye. This practice results many times in the wearer failing to catch the falling lens with the result that the lens falls on a table or even to the floor, thus becoming marred or scratched and oftentimes lost. Moreover, if the practice is performed out of doors, the lens may fall on the ground or in the grass from which it is even more difficult to recover.

Therefore, it is the principal object of this invention to provide a pliable contact lens receptacle which will catch the lens when it falls either during the act of putting it in the eye or removing it therefrom.

Another object of the invention is to provide a device which is readily available when the wearer of the contact lens wishes to either insert or remove the lens from the eye.

A still further object is to provide a device which may easily be transported in either purse or pocket.

Another object is to provide a device which is easily assembled or disassembled and has a minimum number of parts for ease of manufacture.

A still further object is to provide a device for catching the lens and also for storing the lens when not in use.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will be developed below in the following description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a pictorial view of the contact lens receptacle of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a top plan view of the receptacle of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a vertical sectional view taken on the line 3—3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a vertical sectional view, similar to FIG. 3, of a modification of the contact lens receptacle; and

FIG. 5 is a horizontal sectional view taken on the line 5—5 of FIG. 4.

There is shown generally in FIGURE 1 a protector 2 having a net portion 4 and a base 20. Referring now to FIGURE 3, the net portion 4 has a pliable upper rim 6 and a more rigid lower rim 8 of a small diameter than the upper rim 6. Intermediate the rims 6 and 8 are a series of vertical ribs 10 which taper from the upper rim 6 to the lower rim 8. A series of horizontal rims 12 connect the vertical ribs 10 in spaced relationship forming the openings 14 therebetween. The lower rigid rim 8 has a central opening 16 through which a free falling lens may pass. A foam rubber pad 18 closes the opening 16 in the lower end of the net portion 4. A base portion 20 surrounds the lower end of the net portion 4. The base portion includes a bottom wall 21 and a peripheral flange 22. The peripheral flange 22 has a flexible

rim or bead 24 thereon, the purpose of which will be more fully described hereinafter. A groove 26 is disposed between the bottom wall 21 and the flexible rim 24 on the base portion 20.

It is obvious from FIGURE 2 that the protector may also be used when inserting the contact lens into the eye. The protector is placed in an upright position on a support indicated by the line 27, thus enabling the wearer to have both hands free to assist in placing the lens in the eye. The wearer, when inserting the lens, may then position the eye directly over the protector, force the eye widely open with the fingers of one hand and with the lens on the forefinger of the other hand insert the lens in the eye. However, there are times when the lens fails to adhere to the eyeball in a comfortable position and the lens, therefore, must be removed and the inserting process repeated.

Therefore, it is apparent that the protector device may be used for both inserting and removing the contact lens from the eyes.

It is understood that the openings 14 of the net portion 4 formed by the vertical ribs 10 and the horizontal ribs 12 are of such a size that the contact lenses may not escape therethrough but fall to the foam rubber pad 18 from whence they may be removed.

To assemble the protector 2 the foam rubber pad 18 is first inserted in the groove 26 under the rim 24 of the base portion 20 and the rigid lower rim 8 of the net portion 4 is snapped past the flexible rim 24 and locks the foam rubber pad 18 against the bottom wall 21 between the rim 8 and the rim or head 24. It will thus be seen that the device can easily be assembled and disassembled and the foam rubber pad may be changed easily.

The modification shown in FIGURE 4 discloses a net portion 4 identical to that of FIGURE 3. However, the base portion of the device includes storage compartments for the lenses when they are not in use.

The lower part of the device of FIGURE 4 includes an intermediate ring member 28 and a removable threaded plug element 40.

The intermediate ring member 28 has a horizontal wall 30 disposed between a top opening 31 and a bottom threaded opening 33. A peripheral flange 32 surrounds the horizontal wall 30 and has a rim or bead 34, similar to the bead 24, adjacent the top opening 31 and a groove 36 similar to the groove 26 of FIGURE 3.

The plug element 40 has external threads 42 on the upper part thereof for threadingly engaging the opening 33. The removable plug 40 has two compartments 44 and 46, respectively, for storing the lenses 48 after they have been removed from the eyes. Felt pads 50 and 52 in the compartments 44 and 46, respectively, protect the lenses 48 from becoming marred and scratched.

As seen in FIGURE 5, the compartments for the lenses are identified by the marks "L" (left) and "R" (right) for keeping the lenses separated.

The components that go to make up the contact lens protector, in both embodiments, are formed of molded plastic material, the net portion thereof being especially pliable so as to fit the contours of the face around the eyes snugly when used for removing the lens from the eye.

While two embodiments of the invention have been disclosed, it is to be understood that these are presented by way of example only. Numerous other changes and modifications may be made in the construction and design without departing from the spirit of the invention or the scope of the annexed claims.

I claim:

1. A contact lens accessory comprising: a receptacle having an upstanding peripheral side wall and a bottom wall; said side wall being pliable and of open net-like construction; and a layer of soft cushioning material overlying and covering said bottom wall, on the inside of said receptacle, said bottom wall being provided with an undercut peripheral rim; said side wall having a lower peripheral rim extending removably into said undercut; said cushioning material being held against said bottom wall by said lower peripheral rim, but being otherwise free of securement to said bottom wall.

2. An accessory as defined in claim 1 including a container for contact lenses; and means for removably securing said container to the underside of said bottom wall whereby said bottom wall serves as a cover for said container.

3. An accessory as defined in claim 2 wherein said last-named means comprises an internally-threaded rim on said bottom wall and mating external threads on said container.

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