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(54) **BOOK SAFE DEVICE FOR HOLDING AN OPEN BOOK**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A device and method for holding an open book in a book holder. The book holder holds a book open without damaging the book. The book holder has a base surface and a rear surface that meets the base surface at a perpendicular. A planar spine support surface extends at an inclined angle between the base surface and the rear surface. A planar front cover support surface extends between the base surface and the side surface, wherein the front cover support surface intersects the spine support surface at an obtuse angle. Similarly, a planar back cover support surface extends between the base surface and the side surface, wherein the front cover support surface intersects the spine support surface at an obtuse angle. All surfaces combine to define a soft, deformable body.

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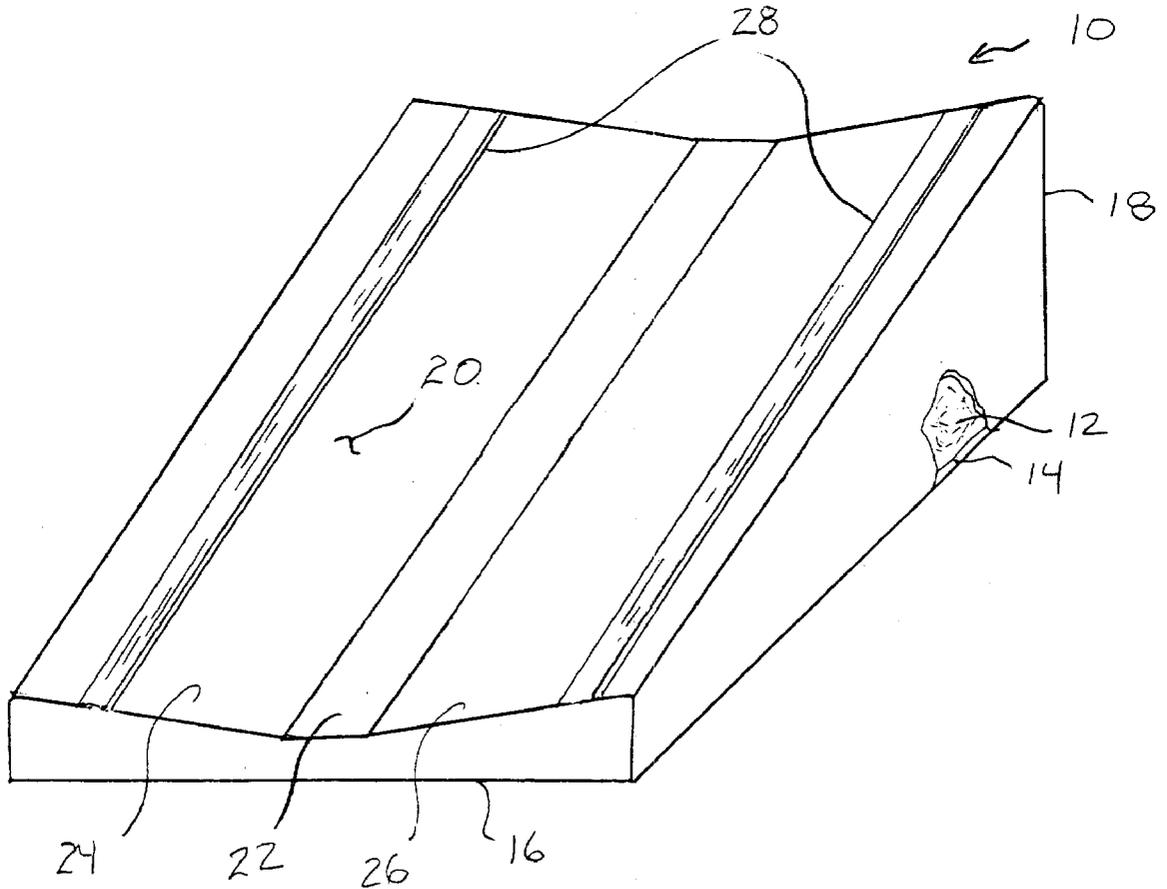
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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 10/094,447, filed on Mar. 11, 2002, now abandoned.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷ A47B 97/04**



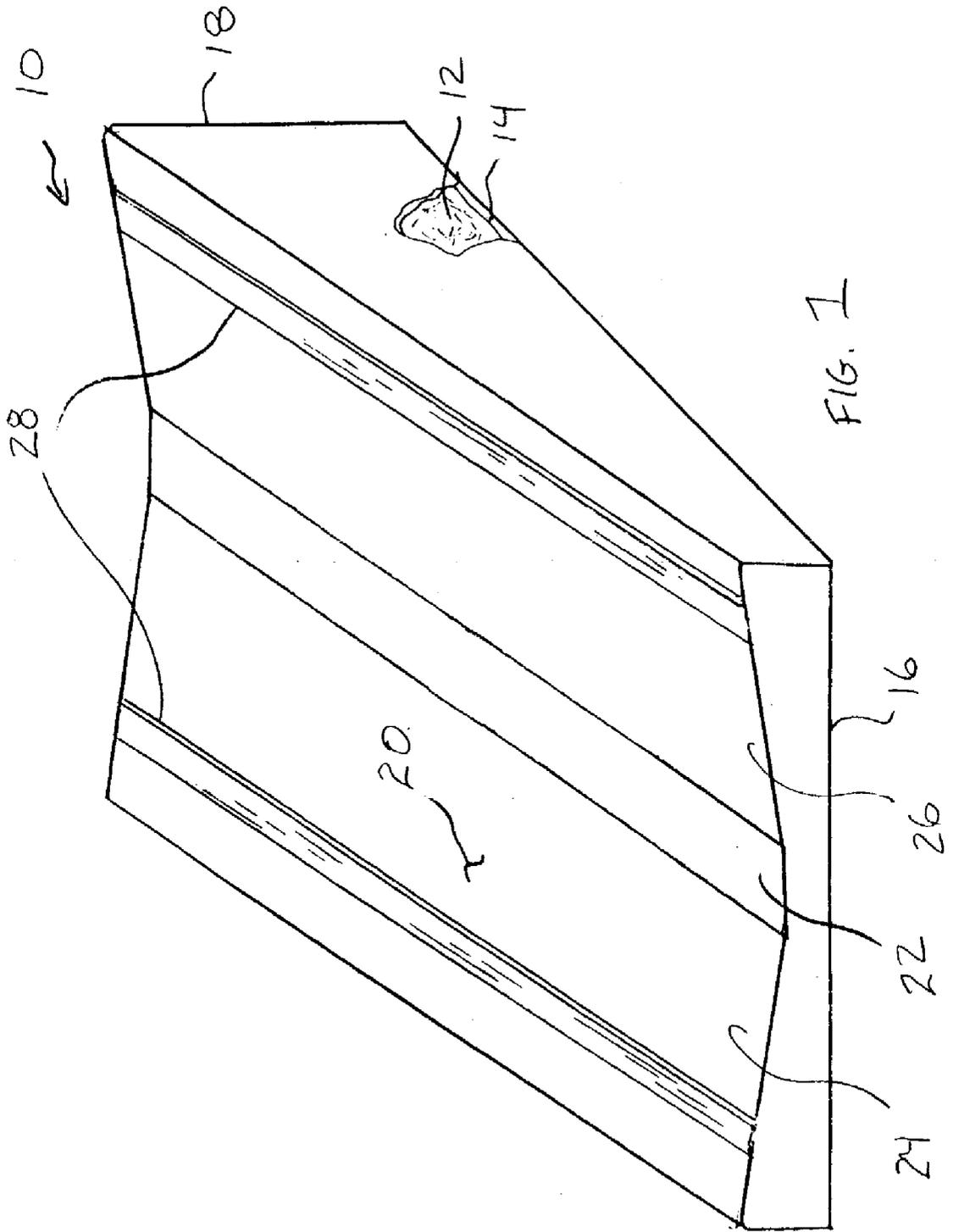


FIG. 1

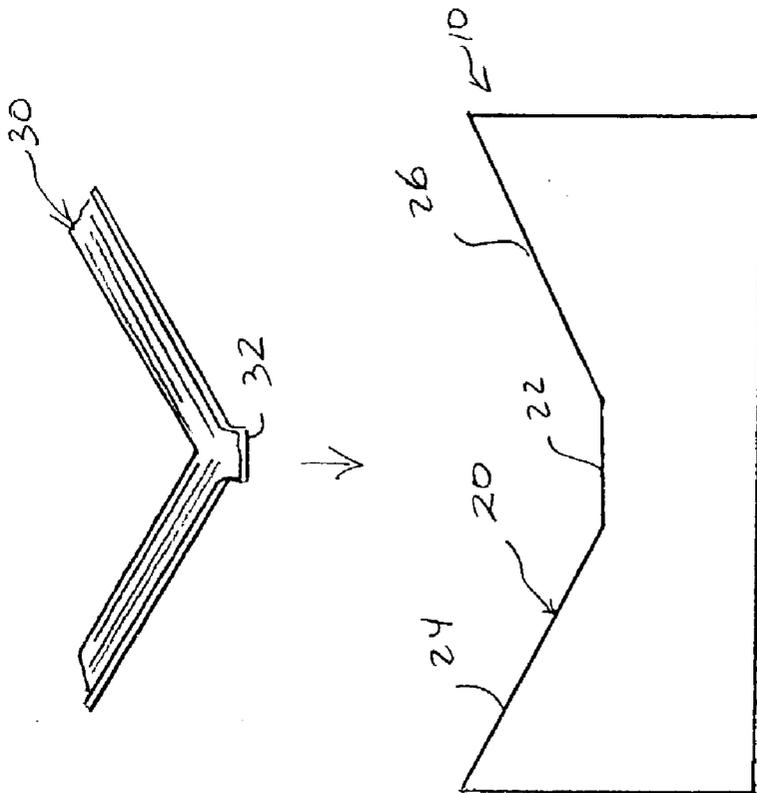


FIG. 2A

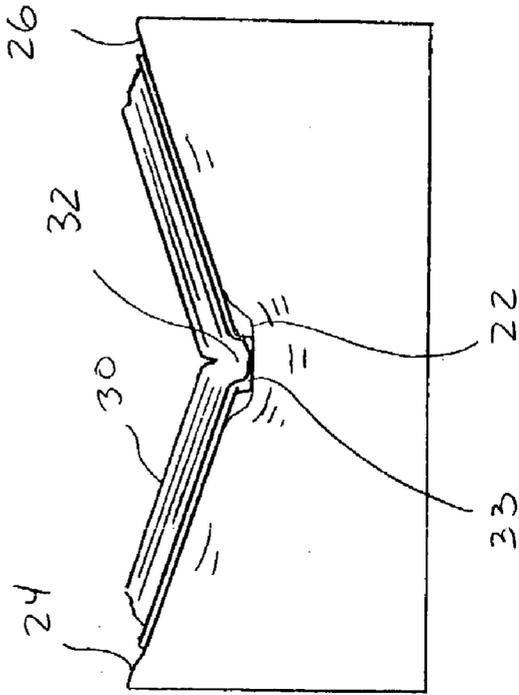
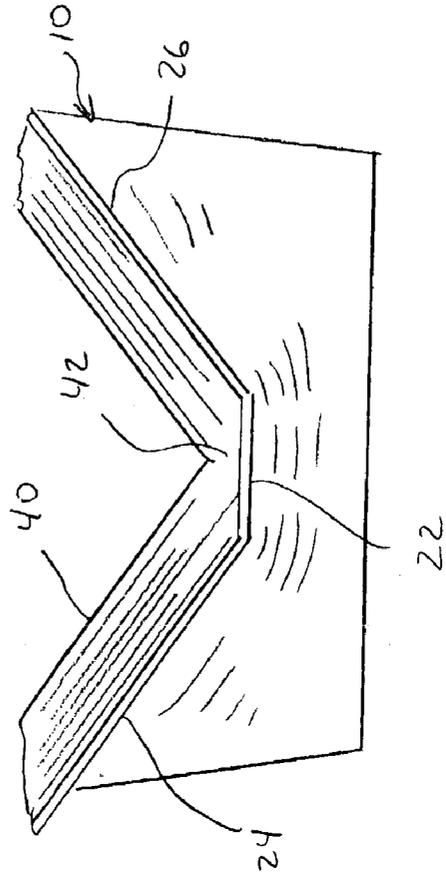
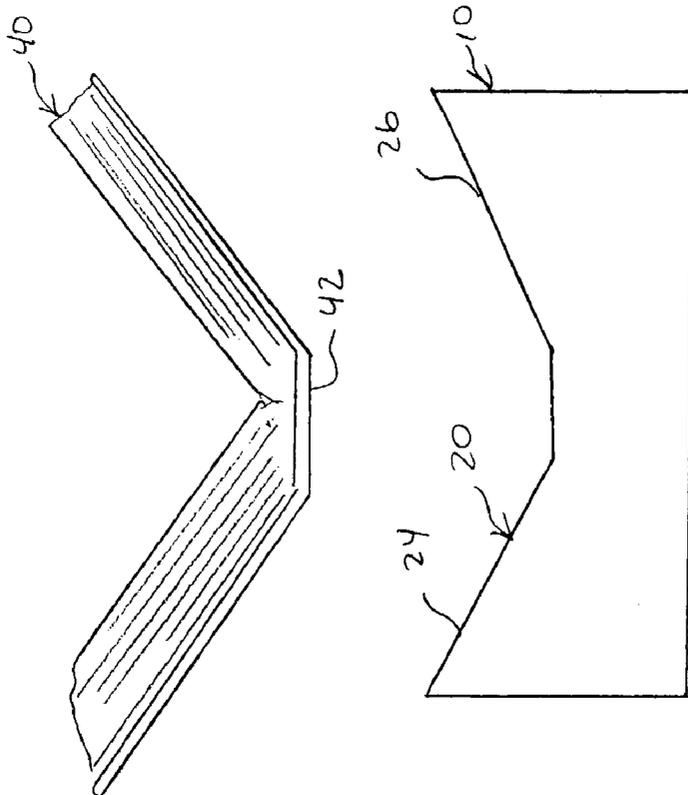


FIG. 2B



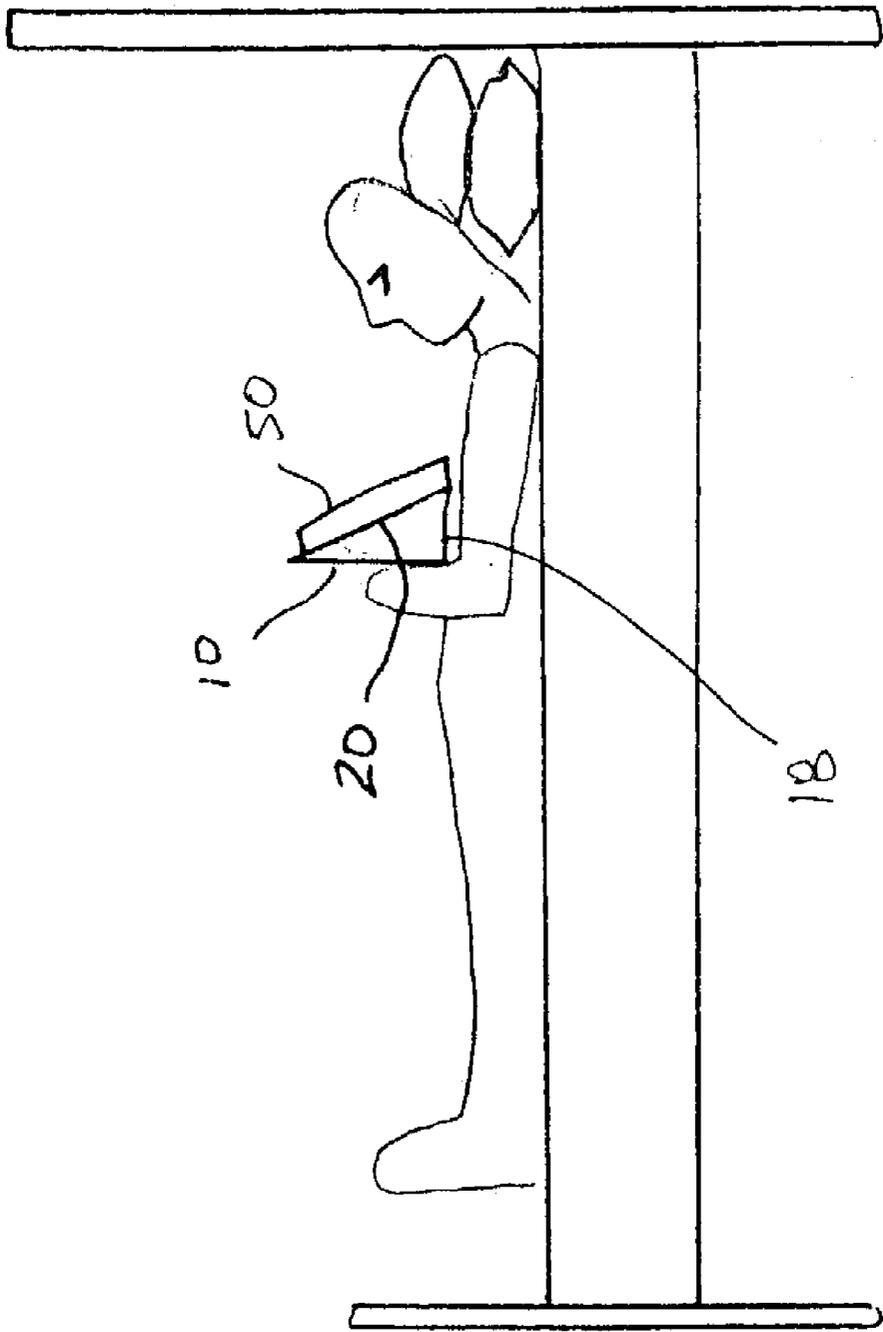


FIG. 4

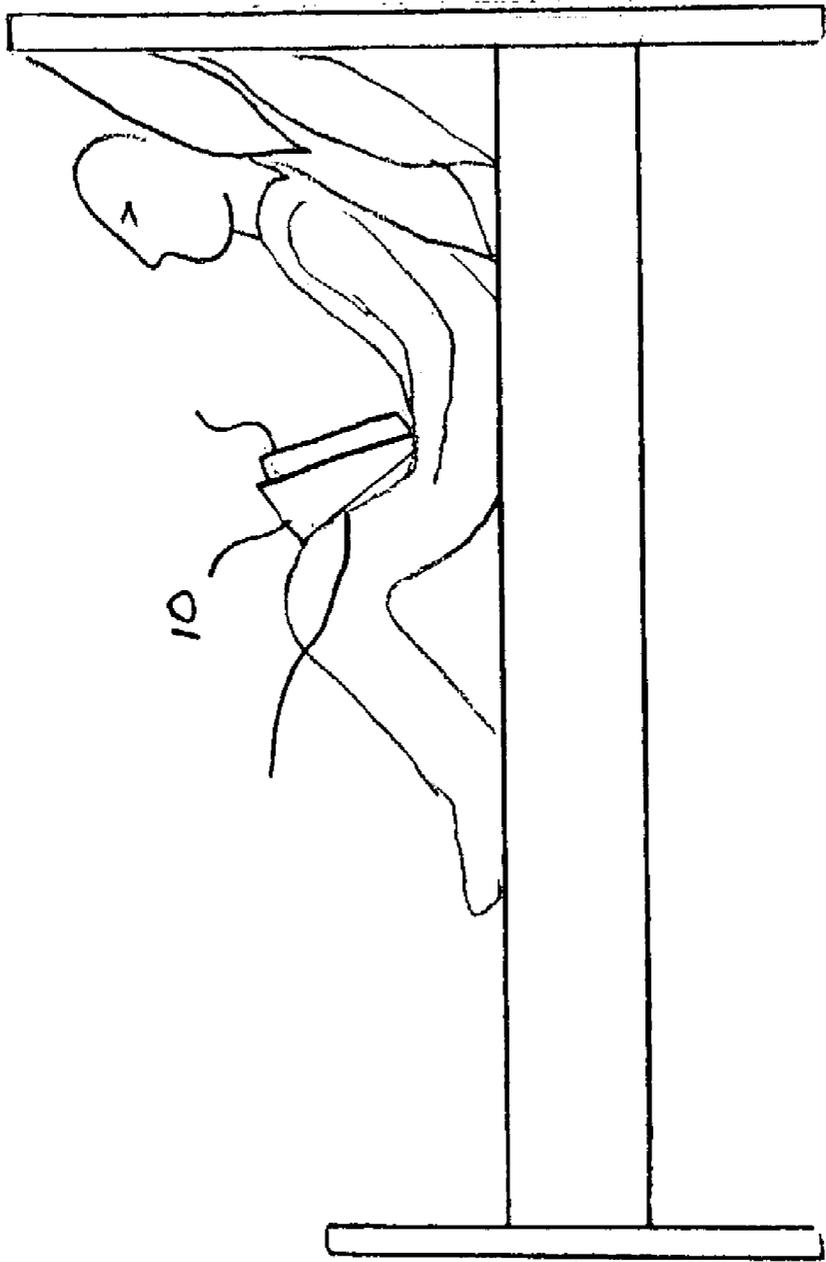


FIG. 5

BOOK SAFE DEVICE FOR HOLDING AN OPEN BOOK

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application No. Ser. 10/094,447, filed Mar. 11, 2002, entitled Device And Method For Supporting An Open Book.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to book holders. More particularly, the present invention relates to book holders that designed to be held upon the lap.

[0004] 2. Prior Art Statement

[0005] There are many different ways to bind a book. The most common way to bind a book is to adhesively bind the pages of the book to a cover, wherein the adhesive both binds the pages of the book together and holds the cover of the book in place. In modern bookbinding, a book cover is provided for use in binding. The book cover has a front cover, a rear cover and a spine between the front cover and the back cover. The pages of a book are then set in cover and adhesively bound to the spine of the cover. In a quality hard cover book, the edges of both the front cover and the back cover are adhesively bound to the page mass of the book. Thin points, called hinges, are formed in the front cover and the back cover just above the adhesive. In this way, when the book is opened wide, the front cover and the back cover of the book will bend at the hinges and the opening of the book will not act to separate the adhesive binding.

[0006] In a quality paperback book, hinges are not used, but strong adhesives are used to bind the pages of the book and to hold the paper cover to the book. When a reader opens the paperback book, the paper front cover and back cover of the book should bend and fold before the opening of the book spreads or breaks the adhesive.

[0007] The problem is, of course, that not all books are high quality. Books vary greatly in the quality of the adhesives used, the amount of adhesives used and in the application of adhesives. Furthermore, many adhesives used to bind books become brittle over time. Accordingly, it is not uncommon for an adhesive binding of a book to break or spread when a book is opened, especially if a book is opened widely. When a binding breaks or spreads, the cover of the book can partially separate or fully separate from the pages of the book. In some cases, individual pages of the book can fall from the book.

[0008] Many people enjoy reading in bed. When reading in bed, a person typically holds a book open or places the book on a pillow to read. In both scenarios, it is very easy for a reader to lose their page. If a reader holds a book, they must mark the page each time they place the book down. If a book is merely placed open on a pillow, the pages of the book have a tendency to inadvertently fan, thereby losing the reader's page. To help solve this problem, many readers have a tendency to open books as widely as possible thereby intentionally causing a crease in the spine of the book. Many readers often open a book beyond 180 degrees in order to purposely crease the book's spine. By creating a crease in the book's spine, the book tends to remain open on the page

it was creased. This prevents the book from inadvertently fanning closed or fanning to the wrong page. Of course, to make this system work, the reader must crease the spine every new page or every few pages. This subjects the book's adhesive binding to repeated stresses that can cause the binding to become damaged and fail.

[0009] To solve this problem, many prior art book holders have been invented. The book holders are structures that hold books open on a particular page. Many book holders are rigid structures that are meant for office desks or library desks. Such rigid structures are not comfortably used on a person's lap in bed. However, soft book holders do exist. Such book holders are little more than cushions with straps that hold a book open. Such prior art book holders are exemplified by U.S. Pat. No. 1,928,806 to Barcalo, entitled Pillow. A problem with such book holders is that they provide only a flat surface upon which to rest the book. As such, when the book is placed on the book holder, the book must be opened 180 degrees to a flat position. This causes creases in the spine of the book that can damage the binding of the book.

[0010] A need therefore exists for a book holder that is soft, for use in bed, yet does not cause excessive wear or damage to the binding of the book, regardless to the type of book, size of the book and/or quality of the book. This need is met by the present invention as described and claimed below.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The present invention is a device and method for holding an open book in a book holder. The book holder holds a book open without damaging the book. The book holder also allows heavy of cumbersome books to be comfortably supported by the user's body when reading. The book holder has a base surface and a rear surface that meets the base surface at a perpendicular. A planar spine support surface extends at an inclined angle between the base surface and the rear surface. A planar front cover support surface extends between the base surface and the side surface, wherein the front cover support surface intersects the spine support surface at an obtuse angle. Similarly, a planar back cover support surface extends between the base surface and the side surface, wherein the front cover support surface intersects the spine support surface at an obtuse angle.

[0012] The base surface, rear surface, spine support surface, front cover support surface and said back cover support surface are all surfaces that define a soft, deformable body, wherein the base surface, rear surface, spine support surface, front cover support surface and back cover are all soft deformable surfaces.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] For a better understanding of the present invention, reference is made to the following description of an exemplary embodiment thereof, considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0014] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention book holder;

[0015] **FIG. 2A** is a rear view of the embodiment of **FIG. 1**, shown in conjunction with a small book;

[0016] FIG. 2B is a rear view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 where a small book is shown in place on the book holder;

[0017] FIG. 3A is a rear view of the embodiment of FIG. 1, shown in conjunction with a large book;

[0018] FIG. 3B is a rear view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 where a large book is shown in place on the book holder;

[0019] FIG. 4 is a side view of the present invention book holder being used by a person lying in bed; and

[0020] FIG. 5 is a side view of the present invention book holder being used by a person sitting in bed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] Although the present invention can be used to hold a magazine, catalog or any other printed compilation, the present invention is particularly well suited for holding bound books. The books can be either hard covered or soft covered. Accordingly, and by way of example, the present invention will be illustrated and described as holding a bound book, in order to set forth the best mode contemplated for the invention. However, such exemplary embodiments should not be considered a limitation to the intended uses and/or possible uses of the present invention.

[0022] Referring to FIG. 1, there is shown an exemplary embodiment of a book holder 10. The book holder 10 is made of soft foam filling 12 and is covered in a cloth casing 14. Accordingly, the entire book holder 10 is soft and all surfaces of the book holder 10 can be easily deformed. The foam filling 12 can be a particle fill, such as a mass of foam pellets, polyethylene fibers or down feathers. Alternatively, the foam filling 12 can be a single shaped mass of foam or a few large pieces of foam, such as is typically used in furniture cushions. The casing 14 of the book holder can be any material. However, it is preferred that the casing 14 is machine washable. If the foam filling 12 is a particle fill, the casing 12 would not be removable. However, if the foam filling 12 is made of one large piece of foam or a few large pieces of foam, the casing 12 can be made with an openable seam so that it can be readily removed and laundered.

[0023] The shape of the book holder 10 is unique. The base surface 16 of the book holder 10 is flat. The rear surface 18 of the book holder 10 is also flat, wherein the base surface 16 and the rear surface 18 of the book holder 10 meet at a perpendicular. The base surface 16 of the book holder 10 has a different length than does the rear surface 18. Accordingly, depending upon whether the book holder 10 is rested upon its base surface 16 or its rear surface 18 will determine the angle of inclination for the book holder 10. A reader can therefore selectively change the angle at which a book is held. By resting the book holder 10 on the base surface 16, a book will be held at a first inclined angle. However, if a reader prefers, the book holder 10 can be rotated and placed on its rear surface 18. Any book placed on the face 20 of the book holder 10 would now be held at a second different angle of inclination.

[0024] The face 20 of the book holder 10, however, is not flat. Rather, the face 20 of the book holder 10 is contoured and consists of three separate surfaces. The surfaces of the book holder face 20 include a spine support surface 22 and two opposing cover support surfaces 24, 26 that diverge from the side edges of the spine support surface 22. The

spine support surface 22 extends straight from the elevated end of the rear surface 18 to the front end of the base surface 16. The spine support surface 22 is in the direct center of the face 20 of the book holder 10 and is preferably between one-half inch and two inches wide.

[0025] The two opposing cover support surfaces 24, 26 extend from the side edges of the spine support surface 22 at an obtuse angle of between 110 degrees and 175 degrees. Although the opposing cover support surfaces 24, 26 are not in the same plane as the spine support surface 22, each of the opposing cover support surfaces 24, 26 also extends from the top of the rear surface 18 to the front of the base surface 16. This provides the face 20 of the book holder with a sloped V-shaped configuration.

[0026] The face 20 of the book holder 10 is intended to hold an open book. To help keep a book open, straps 28 are provided that extend across the open pages of a book. The straps 28 pass flat over the opposing cover support surfaces 24, 26 of the face 20. The straps 28 can be opaque. However, it is preferred that the straps 28 are made of a transparent plastic. In this way, the straps 28 can pass over the face of an open book without significantly obstructing words or images contained on the open pages of a book.

[0027] Referring to FIG. 2A, a short book 30 with a narrow binding is shown. The book 30 has a spine 32 that is narrower than the spine support surface 22 of the book holder 10.

[0028] Referring to FIG. 2B, it can be seen that once the book 30 is placed on the book holder 10, the spine 32 of the book 30 deforms the spine support surface 22 of the book holder 30 and slightly deforms the opposing cover support surfaces 24, 26 of the book holder 30, so that the face 20 of the book holder 10 conforms to the contours of the open book 30. Since the spine 32 of the book 30 is fully supported, it is prevented from being inadvertently spread open to a point where the binding in the book's spine 32 can become damaged. Furthermore, since the spine 32 of the book 30 and the covers of the book 32 are fully supported by the deformed face 20 of the book holder 10, the book 30 cannot be hyperextended in its opening. This prevents the creasing of the book's front and back covers. Accordingly, a book purchased new can retain its new appearance even though it has been read cover to cover.

[0029] Referring to FIG. 3A, a large heavy book 40 is shown. This book 40 has a spine 42 that is wider than the spine support surface 22 of the face 20 of the book holder 10.

[0030] Referring to FIG. 3B, it can be seen that the corners of the spine 42 of the book 40 contact the opposing cover support surfaces 24, 26 of the book holder 40 and deform the contacted sections flat. The weight of the book 40 then continues to deform the spine support surface 22 and the opposing cover support surfaces 24, 26 until these surface both support the weight of the book 40 and conform to the contours of the book 40. Since the spine 42 of the book 40 is fully supported, it is prevented from being inadvertently spread open to a point where the binding in the book's spine 42 can become damaged. Furthermore, since the spine 42 of the book 40 and the covers of the book 40 are fully supported by the deformed face 20 of the book holder 10, the book cannot be hyperextended in its opening.

[0031] The weight of the heavy book 40 compresses the entire book holder 40 to some degree. The book holder 40

spreads the weight of the book **40** out across the surface on which the book holder **10** rests. The entire book holder **10** is made from soft material. Accordingly, when the book holder **10** is placed on a reader's lap, the book holder **10** will slightly conform to the shape of the reader's lap. If a large, heavy book **40** is placed on the book holder **10**, the book holder **10** will compress and will conform to the shape of the book **40** as the book holder **10** also conforms more to the shape of the reader's lap. The weight of the book **40** is distributed across the entire area of contact between the book holder **10** and the reader's lap. Accordingly, the weight of the heavy book **40** is widely spread across the reader's lap and a very heavy book can be comfortably read on a reader's lap.

[0032] In addition to providing a book holder that allows a book to be read cover-to-cover with little or no damage to the binding of the book, the present invention book holder also enables the book to be supported at different angles. As was previously mentioned, the base surface of the book support and the rear surface of the book support have different lengths. Accordingly, depending upon the orientation of the book holder, the slope of the face of the book holder can be changed.

[0033] Referring to FIG. 4, it can be seen that when the book holder **10** is placed on its rear surface **18**, a book **50** on the face **20** of the book holder **10** can be supported at a steep angle. This is appropriate for a person lying down and having the book holder **10** on his/her chest.

[0034] Referring to FIG. 5, it can be seen that when the book holder **10** is placed on its base surface **14**, a book **50** on the face **20** of the book holder **50** is held at a less steep angle. This orientation is appropriate for a person sitting up and placing the book holder **10** on his/her lap.

[0035] In either configuration, the book holder **10** conforms to the shape of the book **50** and distributes the weight of the book **50** on the reader, as has been previously described.

[0036] It will be understood that the embodiments of the present invention book holding system that are described and illustrated herein are merely exemplary and a person skilled in the art can make many variations to the embodiment shown without departing from the scope of the present invention. For example, the length, width and height of the book holder can be varied to proportions other than are illustrated. All such variations, modifications and alternate embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A device for holding an open book, comprising:

- a base surface;
- a rear surface that meets with said base surface at a perpendicular;
- a planar spine support surface extending at an inclined angle between said base surface and said rear surface surface, wherein said spine surface has a first side edge and a second side edge that extend in parallel between said base surface and said rear surface;
- a planar front cover support surface extending between said base surface and said side surface, wherein said

front cover support surface intersects said first side edge of said spine support surface at an obtuse angle;

a planar back cover support surface extending between said base surface and said side surface, wherein said front cover support surface intersects said second side edge of said spine support surface at an obtuse angle;

wherein said base surface, said rear surface, said spine support surface, said front cover support surface and said back cover support surface are all surfaces that define a soft, deformable body, wherein said base surface, said rear surface, said spine support surface, said front cover support surface and said back cover are all soft deformable surfaces.

2. The device according to claim 1, further including straps that extend across said front cover support surface and said back cover support surface.

3. The device according to claim 1, wherein said base surface and said rear surface have different lengths, whereby said inclined angle of said spine support surface has a first slope when said body rests upon said base surface and a different second slope when said body rests upon said rear surface.

4. The device according to claim 1, wherein said base surface, said rear surface, said spine support surface, said front cover support surface comprise parts of a fabric case filled with a soft fill material.

5. The device according to claim 2, wherein said straps are transparent.

6. The device according to claim 1, wherein said front cover support surface and said back cover support surface both diverge from said spine support surface at an angle of between 110° and 175°

7. A method of retaining a book in a book holder, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a book holder completely fabricated from soft, deformable material both internally and externally, said book holder having,

a base surface;

a rear surface that meets with said base surface at a perpendicular;

a planar spine support surface extending at an inclined angle between said base surface and said rear surface;

a planar front cover support surface extending between said base surface and said side surface, wherein said front cover support surface intersects said spine support surface at an obtuse angle;

a planar back cover support surface extending between said base surface and said side surface, wherein said front cover support surface intersects said spine support surface at an obtuse angle; and

placing an open book across said spine support surface, said front cover support surface and said back cover support surface, wherein the said spine support surface, said front cover support surface and said back cover support surface at least partially conforms to the open book.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein each of said diverging planar surfaces of said inclined book support have a first slope when said book holder is placed in a first

orientation and a different second slope when said book support surface is placed in a second orientation.

9. The method according to claim 7, further including the steps of biasing said open book against said book holder with elastic straps.

10. A book holding device, comprising:

- a body having a base surface, a rear surface and an inclined book support face, said inclined book support face including a spine support surface and two diverging planar surfaces that diverge from opposite sides of said spine support surface at a diverging angle of between 110° and 175° , said body being fabricated both

internally and externally solely from soft deformable material, wherein said book support face has a slope that is dependent upon whether said body is set upon said base surface or said rear surface; and

flexible bands coupled to said body for engaging and retaining an open book in abutment with said book support face.

11. The device according to claim **12**, wherein said body of soft material is comprised of a fabric case filled with a soft stuffing material.

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