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(54) **SHOWER HANGER** (52) **U.S. Cl. 223/85**

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(21) **Appl. No.: 10/121,372**

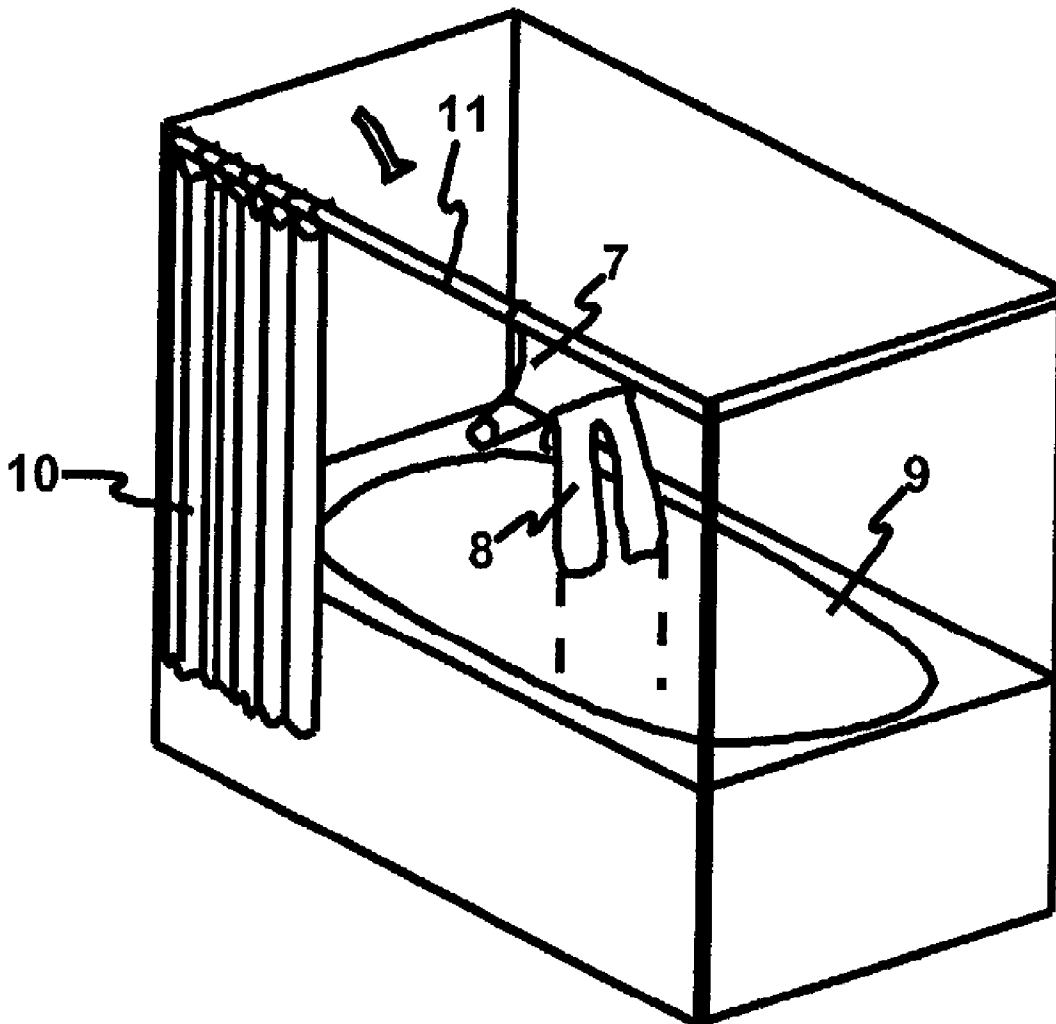
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A specialized shower hanger. This hanger includes a twist-resistant connector that fits on a shower curtain rod or shower door bar for a shower. The hanger also includes an arm. At least a part of the arm extends into the shower when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar. When the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar and an article is placed on the part of the arm that extends into the shower, the hanger supports the article entirely over the shower's basin.



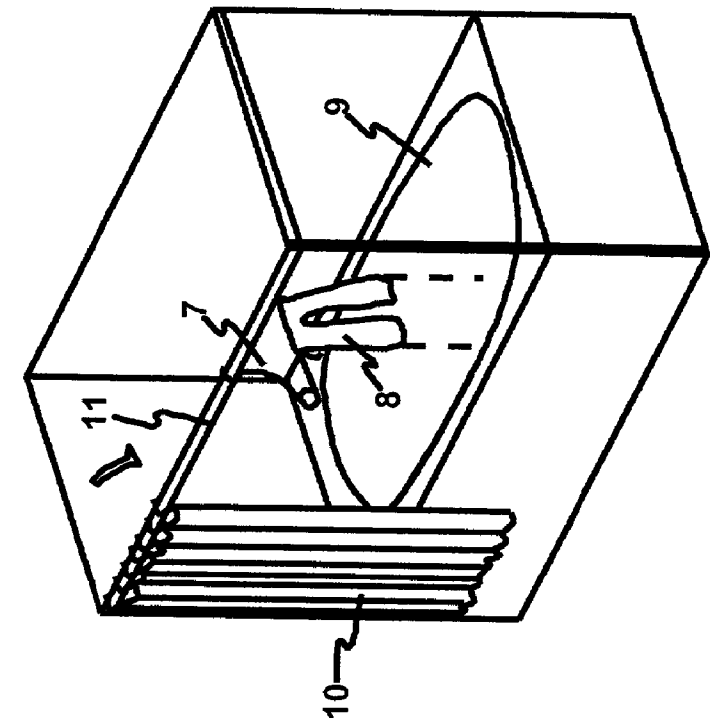


Fig. 1

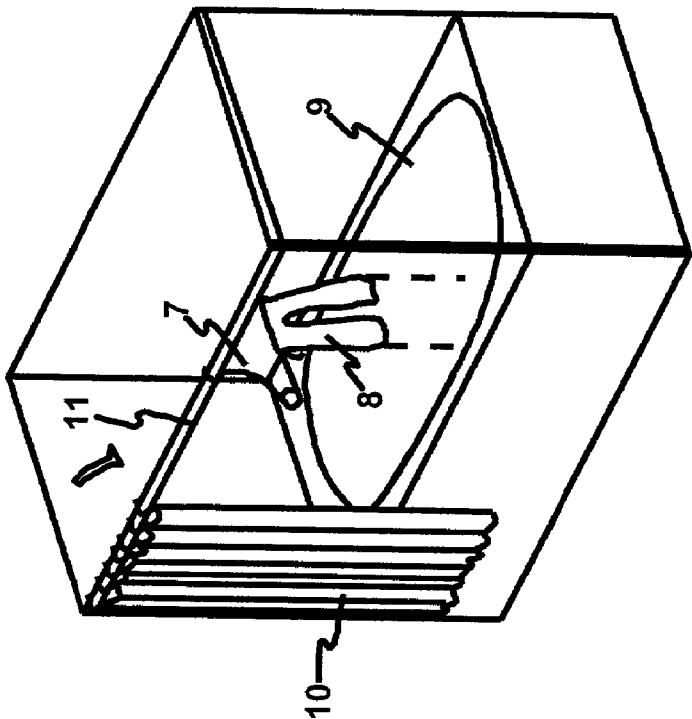


Fig. 2

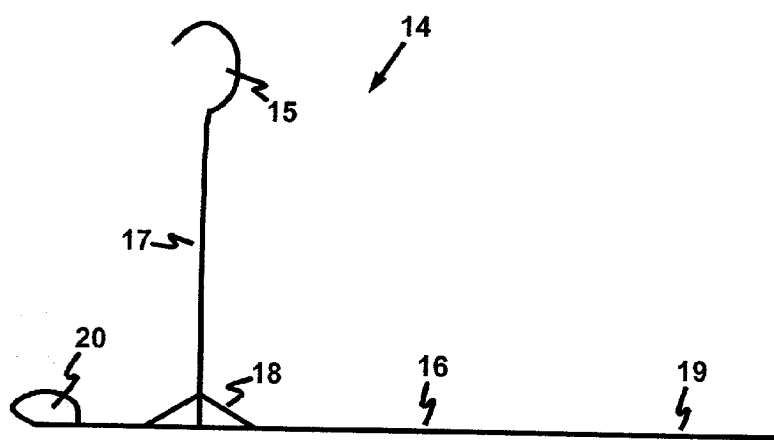


Fig. 3

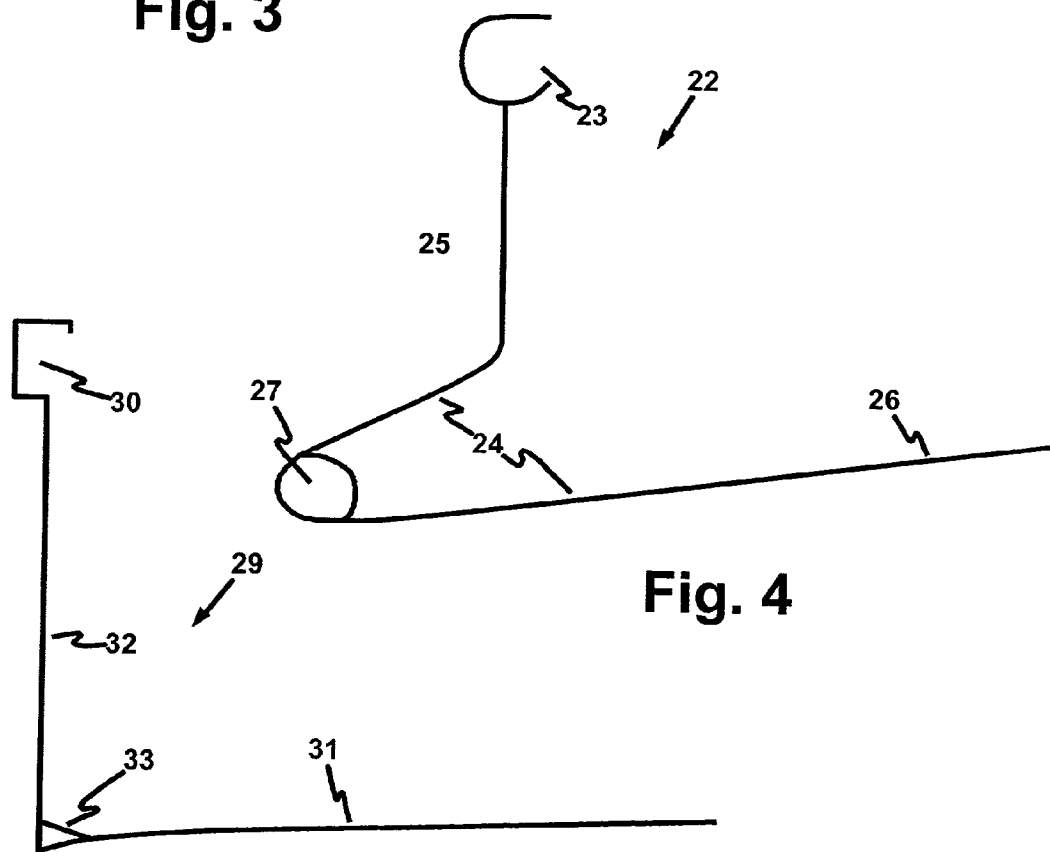


Fig. 4

Fig. 5

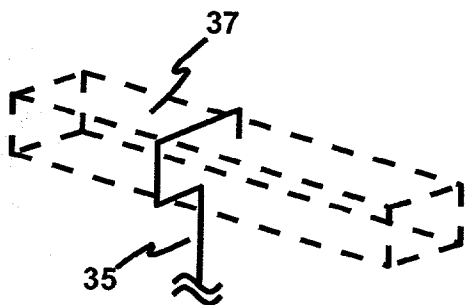


Fig. 6

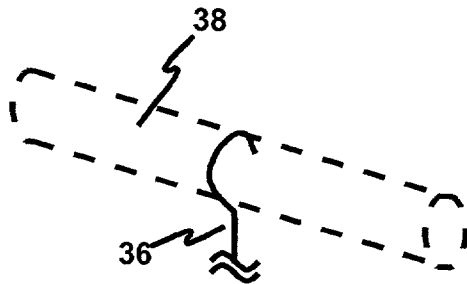


Fig. 7

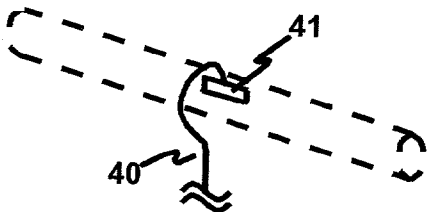


Fig. 8

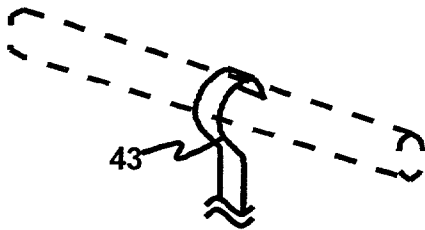


Fig. 9

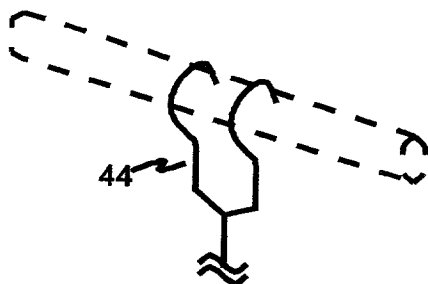


Fig. 10

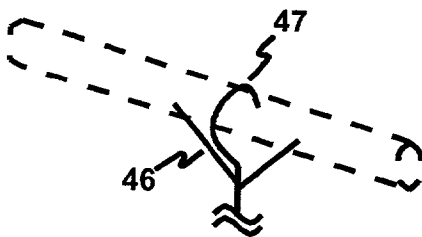


Fig. 11

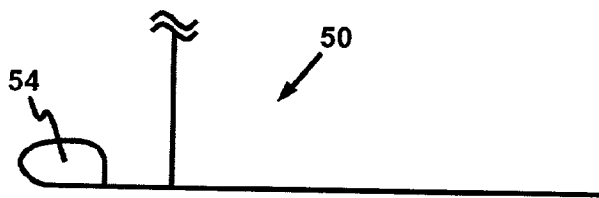


Fig. 12

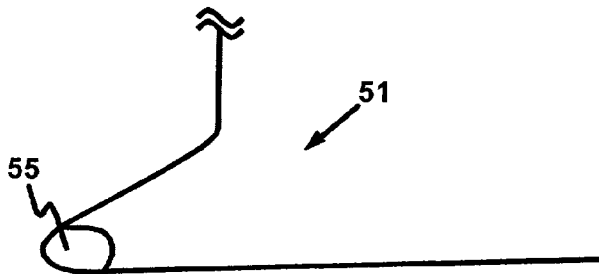


Fig. 13

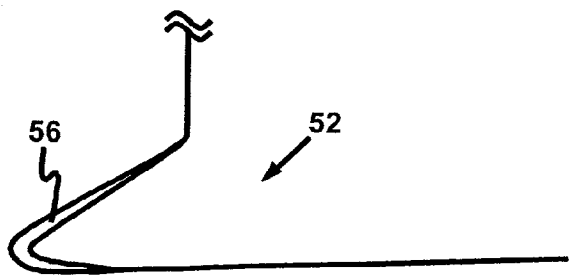


Fig. 14

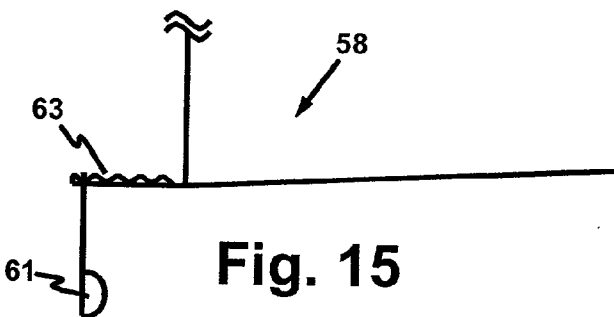


Fig. 15

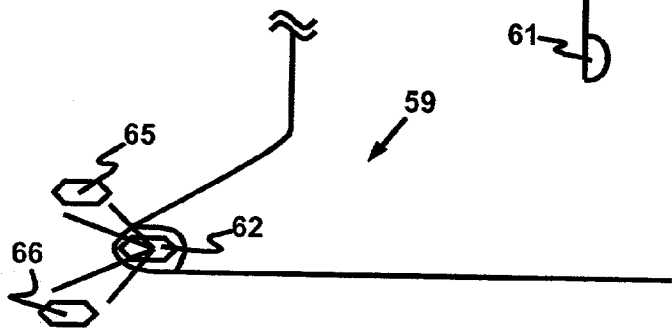


Fig. 16

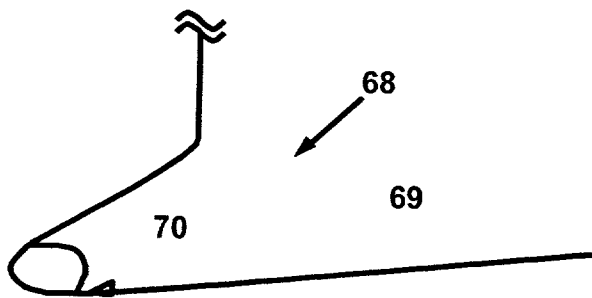


Fig. 17

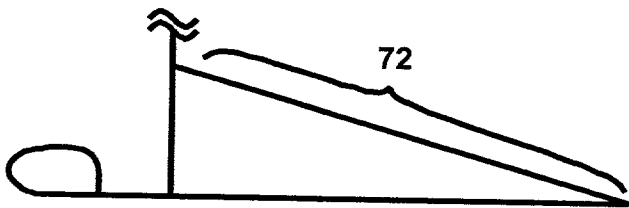


Fig. 18

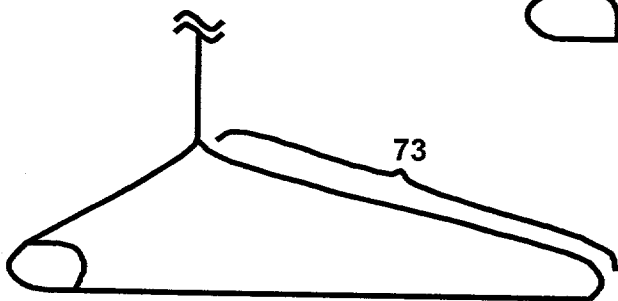


Fig. 19

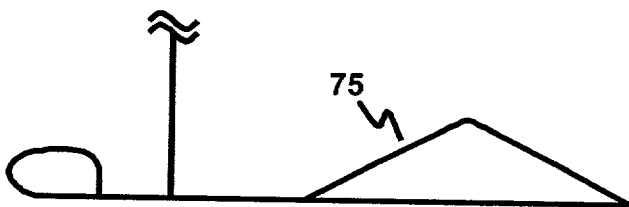


Fig. 20

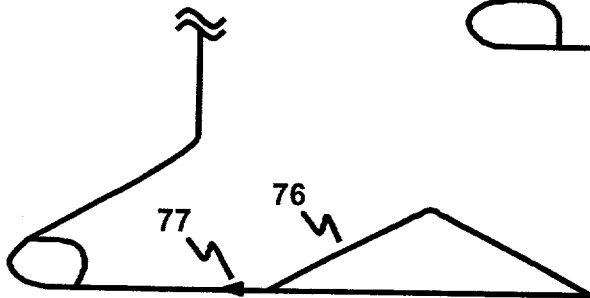
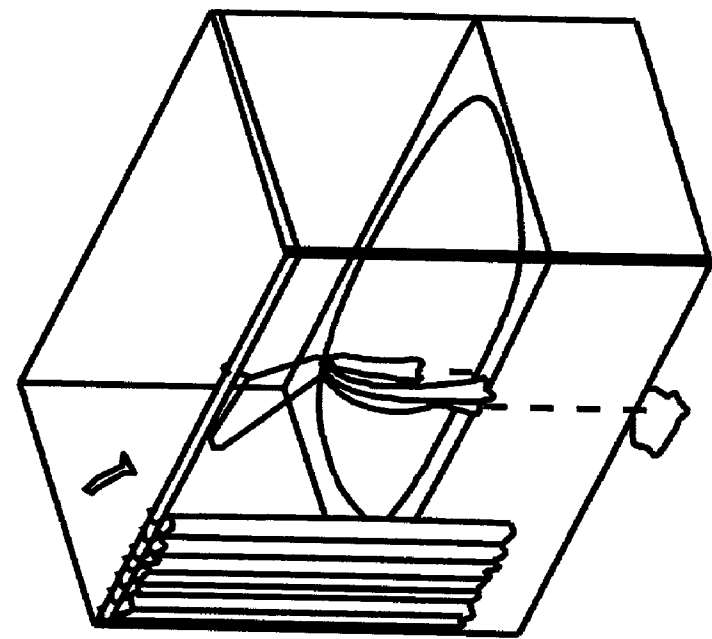
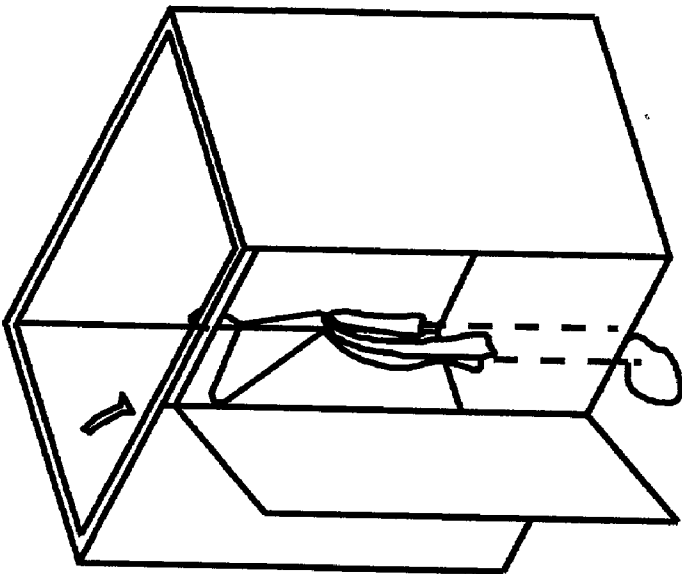


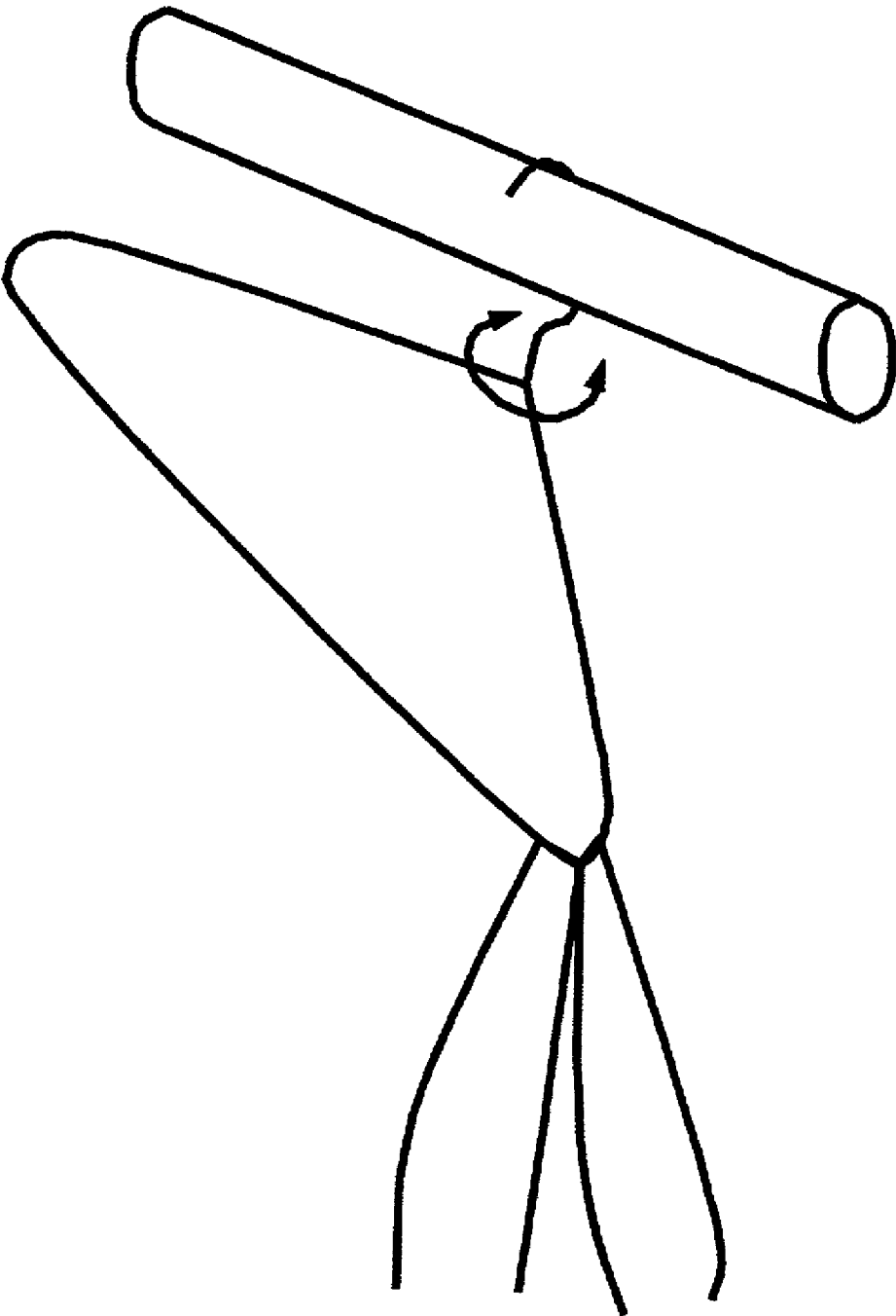
Fig. 21



PRIOR ART
Fig. 22



PRIOR ART
Fig. 23



PRIOR ART

Fig. 24

SHOWER HANGER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] This invention relates to a specialized hanger that can be used to hang clothes or other items in a shower, for example to air dry. In particular, the invention relates to such a hanger that can support the clothes or other items entirely over the shower's basin.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] One natural location for air drying clothes, hose, socks, swimwear, towels, and other items is in a shower or over a bathtub. Different devices have been conceived to allow a person to hang such articles in a shower or over a bathtub.

[0005] For example, a clothes hanger bar can be mounted between a wall and a horizontal member such as a curtain rod or upper edge of a shower stall door. Then, articles can be hung on the bar, either directly or via conventional hangers. One example of this arrangement, in which the hanger bar is readily mountable and dismountable, is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 4,087,006.

[0006] While the hanger bar approach is useful, it suffers from several drawbacks. First, repeated mountings and dismountings of the bar against the wall can scuff or otherwise damage the wall. Second, it is often simply too much trouble to mount the bar for drying one or two small articles.

[0007] Thus, even people who own such hanger bars often simply place wet articles on conventional hangers. Then, the hangers can be hung from a shower curtain rod or shower door bar for a shower. This arrangement is illustrated in **FIGS. 22 and 23**.

[0008] In **FIG. 22**, a conventional hanger has been used to hang a wet article from a shower door bar. Because of the weight of the article, the hanger has rotated about the shower door bar. As a result, the article hangs directly below the shower door bar. As water drips from the article, some of the water is bound to fall outside of the shower's basin. This is illustrated in **FIG. 22** by a dashed line leading to a puddle outside of the shower's basin.

[0009] In **FIG. 23**, a conventional hanger has been used to hang a wet article from a shower curtain rod. As in **FIG. 22**, at least some of the water dripping from the article is bound to fall outside of the shower's basin, which in **FIG. 23** is a bathtub. This is illustrated in **FIG. 23** by a dashed line leading to a puddle outside of the bathtub.

[0010] Another problem with using a conventional hanger is that the hanger will tend to twist on the shower door bar or shower curtain rod. For example, as shown in **FIG. 24**, a hanger that is hanging an article from a shower curtain rod will tend to twist in the direction of the circular double-ended arrow. Because of this twisting, even if the article starts out completely over the shower's basin, the article is still likely to end up dripping on the floor outside of the basin.

[0011] Thus, use of a conventional hanger for air drying articles above a shower or bathtub often results in a wet floor. This can be inconvenient and annoying.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] Accordingly, what is needed is an item that is as convenient to use for hanging wet articles over a shower's basin as a conventional hanger, but that is capable of supporting those articles entirely over the basin.

[0013] The invention addresses this need with a specialized shower hanger. This hanger includes a twist-resistant connector that fits on a shower curtain rod or shower door bar for a shower. The hanger also includes an arm. At least a part of the arm extends into the shower when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar. When the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar and an article is placed on the part of the arm that extends into the shower, the hanger supports the article entirely over the shower's basin.

[0014] In one embodiment, the connector is a hook that fits over the shower curtain rod or shower door bar. The connector can be twist-resistant by virtue of a snug fit on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar. In this case, the connector can be square or rectangular shaped so as to fit snugly over square or rectangular shaped shower curtain rods or shower door bars, or round shaped so as to fit snugly over round shower curtain rods or shower door bars.

[0015] Alternatively, the connector can be twist-resistant by virtue of a twist-resisting horizontal stop on the connector, by virtue of a horizontal thickness of the connector, or by virtue of a plurality of horizontally-spaced pieces that each fit over or about the shower curtain rod or shower door bar. Other arrangements can be used to make the hanger twist-resistant.

[0016] In the snug-fitting embodiment, the snug fit of the connector on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar can help to prevent the hanger from rotating about the rod or bar. As a result, the snug fit can help the hanger to support the article entirely over the shower's basin.

[0017] An approach that does not depend on a snug fit is to counter-weight the hanger opposite the part of the arm that extends into the shower. The hanger can be counter-weighted with a counterweight integral to or removeably attached to the part of the hanger opposite the part of the arm that extends into the shower. Preferably, the counterweight is adjustable.

[0018] In any of these embodiments, the arm preferably is asymmetrical about the connector. In order to accommodate shirts or blouses, a triangular-shaped structure can be included in the part of the arm that extends into the shower.

[0019] This brief summary has been provided so that the nature of the invention may be understood quickly. A more complete understanding of the invention may be obtained by reference to the following description of the preferred embodiments thereof in connection with the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] **FIG. 1** shows an embodiment of a hanger according to the invention used with a shower door bar such as is commonly found on shower stalls.

[0021] **FIG. 2** shows an embodiment of a hanger according to the invention used with a shower curtain rod such as is commonly found with bathtubs.

[0022] FIGS. 3 to 5 illustrate examples of various connector and hanger designs according to the invention.

[0023] FIGS. 6 to 11 illustrate examples of various connectors that can be used with a hanger according to the invention.

[0024] FIGS. 12 to 16 illustrate examples of various counterweight arrangements that can be used with a hanger according to the invention.

[0025] FIG. 17 illustrates an example of an adjustable arm that can be used with the invention.

[0026] FIGS. 18 and 19 illustrate examples of hangers according to the invention with additional structural supports.

[0027] FIGS. 20 and 21 illustrate examples of triangular-shaped structures that can be used with the invention.

[0028] FIGS. 22 and 23 illustrate problems with using conventional hangers to hang articles from a shower door bar or shower curtain rod for air drying.

[0029] FIG. 24 illustrates a twisting problem that tends to occur when hanging articles from a shower door bar or shower curtain rod with a conventional hanger for air drying.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0030] Briefly, a hanger according to the invention includes a twist-resistant connector that fits on a shower curtain rod or shower door bar for a shower. The hanger also includes an arm, with at least a part of the arm extending into the shower when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar. When the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar and an article is placed on the part of the arm that extends into the shower, the hanger supports the article entirely over the shower's basin.

[0031] The hanger of the invention is preferably made from any suitably strong, lightweight, and water-resistant material. Examples of good materials for the hanger include, but are not limited to, plastic, wood, non-rusting metals, and many other natural and synthetic materials.

[0032] FIG. 1 shows an embodiment of a hanger according to the invention used with a shower door bar such as is commonly found on shower stalls. In FIG. 1, hanger 1 supports article 2 entirely over the basin of shower 3. Thus, any water dripping from article 2 falls within the shower.

[0033] Hanger 1 is resistant to twisting. In this disclosure, the term "twisting" refers to rotation about a substantially vertical axis, for example as shown by the circular double-headed arrow in FIG. 24. Thus, hanger 1 maintains article 2's position over the basin of shower 3.

[0034] Article 2 can be any item such as clothes, hose, socks, swimwear, towels, and other items.

[0035] Shower 3 is shown as a typical shower stall with door 4 and shower door bar 5. Preferably, hanger 1 does not interfere with the action of door 4, although this does not have to be the case.

[0036] Shower door bar 5 is shown as a bar with a rectangular or square cross section. While this is typical of

shower door bars, the invention is not limited to use with such bars. The invention is equally applicable to use with differently shaped bars. Furthermore, the invention is not limited to use with shower stalls.

[0037] FIG. 2 shows an embodiment of a hanger according to the invention used with a shower curtain rod such as is commonly found with bathtubs. In FIG. 2, hanger 7 supports article 8 entirely over bathtub 9. Thus, any water dripping from article 8 falls within the bathtub.

[0038] Hanger 7 is resistant to twisting. Thus, hanger 7 maintains article 8's position over bathtub 9.

[0039] Article 8 can be any item such as clothes, hose, socks, swimwear, towels, and other items.

[0040] Bathtub 9 in FIG. 2 doubles as a shower, with bathtub 9 serving as the basin for the shower. In this disclosure, the term "shower basin" or the like also includes any bathtub that is accompanied by a shower or shower curtain.

[0041] Bathtub 9 is accompanied by shower curtain 10 on shower curtain rod 11. This shower curtain rod is shown as a rod with a round cross section. While this is typical of shower curtain rods, the invention is not limited to use with such shower curtain rods. The invention is equally applicable to use with differently shaped rods.

[0042] Hanger 1 in FIG. 1 and hanger 7 in FIG. 2 have significantly different shapes. However, they both have at least two elements in common. First, both hangers have a twist-resistant connector that fits on a shower door bar or shower curtain rod. Second, both hangers have an arm, at least a part of which extends into the shower.

[0043] FIGS. 3 to 5 illustrate examples of various connector and hanger designs according to the invention.

[0044] In FIG. 3, hanger 14 includes a connector in the form of rounded hook 15. This hook is shaped somewhat akin to hooks found on conventional hangers, except that the hook is twist-resistant. Twist-resistant hooks are explained in more detail below with respect to FIGS. 6 to 11.

[0045] Hook 15 in FIG. 3 is connected to arm 16 via neck 17. Neck 17 is optional. The length of neck 17 preferably is chosen to permit convenient access to articles hung on the hanger. Optional strengthening members 18 provide added strength to the joint between arm 16 and neck 17.

[0046] When hook 15 is hung on a shower curtain rod or shower door bar, at least part 19 of arm 16 extends into the shower. In this disclosure, the term "hung" is meant to broadly encompass any act of connecting the connector to the rod or bar, including but not limited to hanging the connector in a manner akin to a conventional hanger.

[0047] In the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, an article placed on part 19 of arm 16 that extends into the shower is counter-balanced by counterweight 20. This counter-balancing allows hanger 14 to support the article entirely over the basin of a shower.

[0048] FIG. 4 shows another embodiment of a hanger according to the invention. In this embodiment, hanger 22 includes a connector in the form of rounded clamp 23. This clamp also is twist-resistant.

[0049] Clamp 23 in FIG. 4 is connected to arm 24 via neck 25. Neck 25 is optional. The length of neck 25 is preferably chosen to permit convenient access to articles hung on the hanger.

[0050] When clamp 23 is hung on a shower curtain rod or shower door bar, at least part 26 of arm 24 extends into the shower. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 4, an article placed on part 26 of arm 24 that extends into the shower is counter-balanced by counterweight 27. This counter-balancing allows hanger 22 to support the article entirely over the basin of a shower.

[0051] Arm 24 is angled slightly upwards so that if the arm gives or bends, or if the connector for the hanger rotates somewhat about an axis formed by the shower door bar or shower curtain rod, an article placed on the arm will not slide off. This type of angling can be applied to any of the other embodiments and examples discussed in this disclosure.

[0052] Another embodiment of the hanger is shown in FIG. 5. Hanger 29 includes square-shaped hook 30 connected to arm 31 by neck 32. Again, hook 30 is twist-resistant, and neck 32 is optional. Strengthening members 33 are also optional.

[0053] The embodiment shown in FIG. 5 does not include a counterweight. Instead, a fit of hook 30 about a square or rectangular shaped shower door bar or shower curtain rod is sufficiently snug to resist rotation about an axis formed by the bar or rod. As a result, an article placed on arm 31 is supported over the shower for the shower door bar or shower curtain rod.

[0054] The invention is not limited to the particular examples shown in FIGS. 3 to 5. For example, each of the hooks or clamps could face in the opposite directions as those shown. Other embodiments of the invention are possible. Parts of some of these other embodiments are shown in the remaining figures.

[0055] FIGS. 6 to 11 illustrate examples of various connectors that can be used with a hanger according to the invention. These connectors can be used with any of the other embodiments and examples discussed in this disclosure.

[0056] Connectors 35 and 36 in FIGS. 6 and 7 are twist-resistant by virtue of a snug fit on rectangular bar or rod 37 and round bar or rod 38, respectively. Preferably, the connectors are somewhat pliant so that they can be "snapped" onto bars or rods.

[0057] The snug fit of connectors 35 and 36 also helps resist rotation about an axis formed by the bars or rods, thereby helping hangers with these connectors to support articles entirely over a shower's basin. In this regard, the square-shaped connector is likely to be much more successful at preventing rotation. With the round-shaped connector, rotation is more likely. As a result, some other rotation-preventing element preferably is used with the round connector, even if it is snug fitting. An example of such an element is a counterweight. Some possible counterweight arrangements are discussed in more detail below with respect to FIGS. 12 to 16.

[0058] Other elements can be used to provide twist resistance, either in addition to or instead of a snug fit. Some of these are shown in FIGS. 8 to 11. For the sake of brevity,

these other elements are only shown with respect to a round shower door bar or shower curtain rod. However, applications of these elements to square and rectangular shaped bars and rods is self-evident from this disclosure. The invention includes these applications.

[0059] In FIG. 8, connector 40 is twist-resistant by virtue of twist-resisting horizontal stop 41. If connector 40 starts to twist, stop 41 will prevent the twisting motion.

[0060] In FIG. 9, connector 43 is twist-resistant by virtue of a horizontal thickness of the connector.

[0061] Connector 44 in FIG. 10 is twist-resistant by virtue of a plurality of horizontally-spaced sub-connectors that each hang over the shower curtain rod or shower door bar. Substantially the same effect can be achieved without using more than one whole sub-connector. For example, as shown in FIG. 11, a plurality of horizontally-spaced pieces 46 that each fit over or about the shower curtain rod or shower door bar can help connector 47 resist twisting.

[0062] A great many other twist-resistant designs can be created and are within the scope of the invention.

[0063] FIGS. 12 to 16 illustrate examples of various counterweight arrangements that can be used with a hanger according to the invention. All of FIGS. 12 to 16 show parts of hangers with counter-weights situated opposite parts of arms that can extend into a shower.

[0064] Any suitably heavy material can be used for the counterweights. Examples of such materials include, but are not limited to, lead, metal, and heavy plastic. The counterweight material can be enclosed in the material used for the rest of the hanger, both for reasons of aesthetics and to protect the weights from moisture.

[0065] The arrangements shown in FIGS. 12 to 16 can be used with any of the other embodiments and examples discussed in this disclosure. For example, any of the connectors in FIGS. 6 to 11 can be attached to the embodiments shown in FIGS. 12 to 16 at the break lines.

[0066] In FIGS. 12 to 14, parts of hangers 50, 51 and 52 are counter-weighted with counterweights 54, 55 and 56 that are integral to parts of the hangers. Counterweights 54 and 55 in FIGS. 12 and 13 are attached or fixed to the corresponding arms. In FIG. 14, counterweight 56 is formed from or within a thickened part of hanger 52.

[0067] FIGS. 15 and 16 likewise show parts of hangers 58 and 59 counter-weighted with counterweights 61 and 62. These counterweights have the added feature that they are removeably attached to their respective hangers. In this disclosure, the term "removeably attached" means that the counterweights either rest on or are connected to the hangers in such a way that they can be manually removed, replaced, and possibly changed or moved.

[0068] In FIG. 15, counterweight 61 sits among teeth 63. The counterweight can be placed to rest between any of these teeth, thereby making the counterweight adjustable. The further that the weight is toward the end of the hanger (i.e., away from the connector), the more force the weight will apply to counter any article placed on the arm. In addition, plural or different counterweights can be removeably attached, making the weight further adjustable.

[0069] In FIG. 16, counterweight 62 can be removed from the hanger. The counterweight can be replaced with one or more of counterweights 65 and 66. Thus, the weight for hanger 59 also is adjustable.

[0070] Adjustable counterweights allow for customization of a hanger for a particular article. For example, a lighter weight or shorter distance from the connector could be used when hanging hose or a light shirt or blouse. A heavier weight or longer distance from the connector could be used when hanging heavier articles such as blue jeans or a towel.

[0071] In a preferred embodiment, different locations for placing the counterweights or different weights could be marked with a label or picture identifying a particular type of article. Likewise, for hangers with fixed counterweights, the hangers themselves could be so marked.

[0072] Other designs for making the counterweights removeably attached and/or adjustable are possible and are within the scope of the invention. Likewise, other designs for fixed counterweights are within the scope of the invention.

[0073] FIG. 17 illustrates an example of an adjustable arm that can be used with the invention. In addition to or instead of adjustable counterweights, an adjustable arm can be used to accommodate different articles. Thus, in FIG. 17, hanger 68 includes adjustable arm 69 that can be set at various angles with adjustable connection 70.

[0074] FIGS. 18 and 19 illustrate examples of hangers according to the invention with additional structural supports 72 and 73. These supports illustrate that many elements can be added to the hangers according to the invention to impart greater strength, for aesthetic reasons, etc.

[0075] It would be inconvenient for the hangers according to the invention to extend out of a shower as far as they extend into the shower. Thus, the arms for the hangers tend to be asymmetrical about the connectors for those hangers. However, this is not a requirement.

[0076] FIGS. 20 and 21 illustrate examples of triangular-shaped structures that can be used with the invention.

[0077] Because the hangers are designed to hold articles away from the part of the hangers below their connectors, placing a shirt or blouse on one of the hangers over the connector and neck (if present) would defeat the purpose of the invention. The shirt or blouse would hang and possibly drip water below the connector, creating a problem akin to the one shown for conventional hangers in FIGS. 22 and 23.

[0078] One possible solution to this problem is to incorporate a triangular structure for supporting a shirt or blouse on a part of the hanger that is supported entirely over a shower basin. FIGS. 20 and 21 show examples of these types of triangular structures, namely structures 75 and 76. Structure 76 has the added feature that it is removeably attached at coupling 77 so that a shirt or blouse can be placed on the structure, and then the structure can be attached to its hanger.

[0079] Alternative Embodiments

[0080] Although preferred embodiments of the invention are disclosed herein, many variations are possible which remain within the content, scope and spirit of the invention. For example, any of the aspects of the invention illustrated

for round shower door bars or curtain rods can be applied to square or rectangular shaped shower door bars or curtain rods, and vice versa. Likewise, any of the connectors, necks (or lack of necks), arms, angled arms, adjustable arms, integral counterweights, removeably attachable counterweights, adjustable counterweights, and removeable structure arrangements can be used in any combination. Any other combinations incorporating some or all of the features discussed above are also possible and within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A hanger, comprising:

a twist-resistant connector that fits on a shower curtain rod or shower door bar for a shower; and

an arm, at least a part of the arm extending into the shower when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar;

wherein when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar and an article is placed on the part of the arm that extends into the shower, the hanger supports the article entirely over the shower's basin.

2. A hanger as in claim 1, wherein the connector is a hook that fits over the shower curtain rod or shower door bar.

3. A hanger as in claim 1, wherein the connector is twist-resistant by virtue of a snug fit on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar.

4. A hanger as in claim 3, wherein the connector is square or rectangular shaped so as to fit snugly over square or rectangular shaped shower curtain rods or shower door bars.

5. A hanger as in claim 3, wherein the connector is round shaped so as to fit snugly over round shower curtain rods or shower door bars.

6. A hanger as in claim 1, wherein the connector is twist-resistant by virtue of a twist-resisting horizontal stop on the connector.

7. A hanger as in claim 1, wherein the connector is twist-resistant by virtue of a horizontal thickness of the connector.

8. A hanger as in claim 1, wherein the connector is twist-resistant by virtue of a plurality of horizontally-spaced pieces that each fit over or about the shower curtain rod or shower door bar.

9. A hanger as in claim 1, wherein the hanger supports the article entirely over the shower's basin by virtue of a snug fit of the connector on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar.

10. A hanger as in claim 9, wherein the connector is square or rectangular shaped so as to fit snugly over square or rectangular shaped shower curtain rods or shower door bars.

11. A hanger as in claim 9, wherein the connector is round shaped so as to fit snugly over round shower curtain rods or shower door bars.

12. A hanger as in claim 1, wherein the hanger is counter-weighted opposite the part of the arm that extends into the shower when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar.

13. A hanger as in claim 12, wherein the hanger is counter-weighted with a counterweight integral to a part of the hanger opposite the part of the arm that extends into the shower when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar.

14. A hanger as in claim 13, wherein the counterweight is adjustable.

15. A hanger as in claim 12, wherein the hanger is counter-weighted with a counterweight removeably attached to a part of the hanger opposite the part of the arm that extends into the shower when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar.

16. A hanger as in claim 15, wherein the counterweight is adjustable.

17. A hanger as in claim 1, wherein the arm is asymmetrical about the connector.

18. A hanger as in claim 17, wherein the part of the arm that extends into the shower when the connector is hung on the shower curtain rod or shower door bar includes a triangular-shaped structure configured to support a shirt or blouse.

19. A hanger as in claim 18, wherein the triangular-shaped structure is removeably attached to the hanger.

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