A yoga comfort system wedge is provided constructed of medium density, high quality, closed cell foam materials and adhesives comprised of layers and septums which create a uniquely flexible prop. The construction forms a triangularly shaped yoga, fitness, or therapeutic device in the form of a flexible wedge which allows users to achieve or maintain certain poses, stretches, exercises or therapeutic positions while improving tactile comfort and aiding range of motion. Said device has advantages over traditional types of yoga, meditation, fitness, or therapy devices. The invention allows for users with specific physical limitations to comfortably modify and maintain desired poses or exercises which would not ordinarily be possible, while at the same time provides for the advanced user to practice their highly skilled activities with greater comfort and ease.
YOGA COMFORT SYSTEM WEDGE

BACKGROUND

[0001] Embodiments of the present invention relate to apparatuses that constitute a yoga comfort system. More particularly, those embodiments relate to a yoga comfort system wedge.

[0002] Yoga is a practice involving prescribed positions, coupled with concentration and controlled breathing. Over recent decades, it has achieved increasing popularity worldwide, as a method of exercise, health maintenance, physical therapy, relaxation, and enhancing mental and spiritual disciplines.

[0003] Practitioners of yoga, both male and female of all ages, often make yoga a regular practice in their lives. Increasingly, those with physical and/or health limitations are taking up yoga, both voluntarily and doctor-prescribed, as a means to improve mobility, strength, balance, flexibility and breathing capacity. Approaches to practicing yoga include active practices wherein the practitioner purposely engages specific muscle groups, as well as restorative practices, wherein the practitioner is placed in passive, supported positions which facilitate muscle, joint and total body relaxation and also the opening of breathing pathways. The form a practitioner’s body takes in yoga can be referred to as a pose, posture or position.

[0004] Yoga is often performed on surfaces such as wood or tile floors, linoleum, carpeting, or on the ground, outdoors. Yoga can also be performed with the aid of chairs or walls. Mats, rugs, blankets, towels or sheets are used for covering various surfaces. Yoga assistance devices, called yoga props, such as blocks, wedges, bolsters, and folded blankets or mats are used to facilitate entrance into postures and to provide general cushioning and support.

[0005] Conventional yoga props including blocks, rigid wedges or slants, bolsters, folded blankets and rolled up mats are deficient in several aspects. In general, they are not ergonomically configured in size or shape for those practitioners with physical and/or health limitations in order for them to attain and maintain postures that involve pressing on a floor, mat, chair, wall, or similar surface. The conventional yoga block and wedge do not provide the level of tactile comfort needed by practitioners, with or without physical and/or health limitations, while performing certain prescribed positions. Furthermore, the conventional yoga block and wedge are made of rigid materials, such as wood, cork, and non-flexible foam, and thus are limited in their applications for various yoga positions. The folding of blankets, or rolling up parts of mats, to achieve a size and shape for padding is time consuming, laborious and cumbersome, while not always providing the ideal support or comfort needed for the user.

[0006] Accordingly, it is desirable to have a system of apparatuses that accommodates the user’s physical and/or health limitations, allowing the user to comfortably and conveniently maintain yoga postures, as well as positions or exercises found in traditional fitness, physical or massage therapy, and also in meditation and relaxation practices. Such a desirable system of apparatuses can be ergonomically designed in size and shape, and fabricated from flexible materials to provide tactile comfort. One such apparatus is a yoga comfort system wedge.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] A yoga comfort system wedge is ergonomically configured for use by yoga practitioners, particularly those with physical and/or health limitations, to conveniently attain and maintain yoga postures and prescribed positions while experiencing tactile comfort. A yoga comfort system wedge is constructed of selected materials, which provide tactile comfort and flexibility. This includes two or more layers of material, separated by a septum(s), configured with a triangular shaped cross section. By design, yoga comfort system wedges are versatile therapeutic devices in that they can also be configured for use as a comfortable block or supportive bolster, expanding the versatility of a single yoga prop design.

Using yoga comfort system wedges in lieu of various conventional yoga props simplifies the use and need for multiple yoga props.

[0008] A yoga comfort system wedge is also ergonomically configured for use in meditation, fitness, and physical or massage therapy applications. A yoga comfort system wedge is also beneficial for advanced users, for the simple benefit of comfort, as well as offering placement in such a way as to provide an added balance challenge to specific postures or exercises.

[0009] The following description and the attached drawings set forth in detail certain illustrative embodiments of the invention. These embodiments are indicative, however, of but a few of the various ways in which the principles of the invention may be employed. The features, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description and accompanying drawings, which illustrate examples of the invention and methods for use.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] The present invention provides a simple means for a multifunctional prop, which can be utilized in yoga, fitness exercises, as well as physical therapy, relaxation and meditation practices. FIGS. 1 through 19 illustrate a yoga comfort system wedge in which similar reference numbers denote similar elements throughout the Figures.

[0011] FIGS. 1 through 3 depict the construction and fabrication of the yoga comfort system wedge in the preferred embodiment and in modified forms of construction, and are illustrative only; changes may be made in the specific construction illustrated and described within the scope of the appended claims.

[0012] FIGS. 4 through 19 depict methods for use of the yoga comfort system wedge, and are not limited to those shown herein. As shown in the Figures, one or more placements of the yoga comfort system wedge are chosen by the user or therapist to facilitate range of motion, and to provide support and tactile comfort in the various positions, as needed by the individual user.

[0013] FIG. 1 depicts the top perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the yoga comfort system wedge according to one version of the present invention. The drawing also details the end profile or cross section. This version is shaped in a right triangular pattern with a truncated angle on its bottom providing a flat edge. It has two layers of flexible material and one septum. Its length spans the width of a standard sized yoga mat.

[0014] FIG. 2 depicts the bottom perspective view that also details the end profile or cross section of the preferred embodiment of the yoga comfort system wedge.

[0015] FIG. 3 depicts the perspective view of a modified form of construction, or version, of the present invention. This version is shaped in a right triangular pattern, and can
have truncated angles on its bottom and/or at the top vertex providing flat edges. It is fabricated from two or more layers of selected material, and can have septums. Modified forms of construction, selected materials, and sizing of the present invention expand the design concept to broader yoga and meditation props and traditional fitness, physical or massage therapy applications.

[0016] FIG. 4 depicts a method for using a yoga comfort system wedge 10 over the top of the foot to enable support and comfort simultaneously to both hands in a lunging yoga pose. The flexibility of the material allows for this form-fitting application with a single yoga prop and is a unique capability of the yoga comfort system wedge 10. The lunging type of exercise shown is also commonly used in fitness and physical therapy routines.

[0017] FIG. 4A is an exploded view of the method of use shown in FIG. 4, with the pant leg removed for clarity. This close-up figure highlights the flexibility of the yoga comfort system wedge 10 material in the preferred embodiment, as shown overlaid on the foot.

[0018] FIG. 5 depicts a method for using two yoga comfort system wedges 10 placed together, with similar planar faces adjoining, creating a rectangularly shaped comfort bolster or block. Said bolster configuration is wide enough for the average user to comfortably sit on, and is shown being used for a seated meditation pose. This positioning facilitates the user's spine to be in proper alignment.

[0019] FIG. 6 depicts a method for using a single yoga comfort system wedge 10 placed beneath the buttocks and between the thighs and calves in Hero, a seated yoga or meditation posture. In the preferred embodiment, the flexibility of the material allows for this form-fitting, comfort application with a single yoga prop and is a unique capability of the yoga comfort system wedge.

[0020] FIG. 7 depicts a method for using three yoga comfort system wedges 10 employed for Easy pose, a seated yoga or meditation posture. One yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed below the torso to provide lift, which allows a user to cross his or her legs comfortably when range of motion is limited. Optional placements are also shown wherein a yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed beneath each ankle to provide added comfort and support in the area of the foot and leg. In the preferred embodiment, the flexibility of the material allows for this form-fitting, comfort application near the feet and legs, and is a unique capability of the yoga comfort system wedge.

[0021] FIG. 8 depicts a method for use in Pose of the Child, a restorative yoga pose, showing a bolster configuration, as described in FIG. 5, placed under the chest and face for support and comfort. A single yoga comfort system wedge 10 is also placed under the feet for comfort and support. In this drawing, the bottom surface/angle of the yoga comfort system wedge 10 is shown placed against the top of the feet to obtain optimal comfort.

[0022] FIG. 8A depicts a method for use in Pose of the Child, showing three yoga comfort system wedges employed. One yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed between the thighs and calves to provide comfort and facilitate limits in a user's range of motion. One yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed below the chest, while another yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed below the face to provide comfort and support. FIGS. 8 and 8A are modifications of the same yoga pose, depicting but a few of the variations in placements of the yoga comfort system wedge, to provide the tactile comfort and support needed for users with differing physical requirements.

[0023] FIG. 9 depicts a method for using the user placing a portion of the foot on the yoga comfort system wedge 10 for comfort, and also to protect a sensitive area of the user's foot in a standing yoga pose, such as Warrior or Triangle. Various foot placements on a selected angled surface of the yoga comfort system wedge may also be used for physical therapy exercises.

[0024] FIG. 10 depicts a method for use, using a user with both feet placed on an angled surface of the yoga comfort system wedge 10 to provide comfort and/or to increase the balance challenge of the posture. Another yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed between the calves and thighs to provide comfort and support and/or facilitate limits in a user's range of motion. Squatting types of exercises, similar to the yoga pose shown, are also used in fitness and physical therapy routines.

[0025] FIG. 11 depicts a method for use in Wheel pose showing a yoga comfort system wedge 10 placed under the feet and another yoga comfort system wedge 10 placed under the hands to provide comfort and support or to facilitate limits in a user's range of motion. This type of back bending exercise is also popular in gymnastics, as the yoga comfort system wedge may also be used in a multitude of such training routines.

[0026] FIG. 12 depicts a method for use showing the user placing a hand on the yoga comfort system wedge 10 for comfort and support in a modified yoga Side Plank pose or similar Pilate's fitness exercise.

[0027] FIG. 12A depicts a method for use showing the user placing a hand on the yoga comfort system wedge 10 for comfort and support in a fitness exercise while also using a stability ball. Stability ball exercises are also commonly used in physical therapy.

[0028] FIG. 13 depicts a method for use in Mountain pose, showing the user placing just the toes of both feet on the yoga comfort system wedge 10. This pose and physical therapy exercise is used to train the user's feet and body to bear weight properly.

[0029] FIG. 14 depicts a method for use in Cow pose, showing the user placing both hands on the yoga comfort system wedge 10 for comfort and support, and also placing both knees on a yoga comfort system wedge 10 for tactile comfort, which increases the ability to maintain duration in said pose.

[0030] FIG. 15 depicts a method for use in a modification of the Downward Facing Dog pose performed with the aid of a chair. Said yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed under both forearms and also beneath both feet for comfort, support, and range of motion.

[0031] FIG. 15A depicts a method for use in the Downward Facing Dog pose. The yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed under both forearms and also beneath both feet for comfort, support and range of motion.

[0032] FIG. 16 depicts a method for use in a modification of the Warrior pose performed with the aid of a chair. This figure shows three possible placements, or combinations of uses, for the yoga comfort system wedge. Two yoga comfort system wedges 10 are placed in a block, or bolster type of configuration, as described in FIG. 5, underneath the forward foot to bring the floor surface closer to the user's foot. Another yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed under the forward thigh.
for comfort, support and range of motion. A third yoga comfort system wedge 10 is placed beneath the rear foot for comfort, or placed as a mechanical stop to facilitate a limit in the user’s range of motion.

[0033] FIG. 17 depicts a method for use in the Pigeon pose, showing a yoga comfort system wedge 10 being used as a support for the hip and a yoga comfort system wedge 10 being used with the bottom angled surface under the hands for support, comfort and lift. The flexibility of the material allows for this form fitting, comfort and support application under the hip and thigh, and is a unique capability of the yoga comfort system wedge 10.

[0034] FIG. 18 depicts a method for use in the Legs Up the Wall, a restorative pose, showing a combination of yoga comfort system wedges 10 arranged to provide a customized bolster under the buttocks and torso. This figure shows yoga comfort system wedges 10 in the preferred embodiment, as well as in modified forms of construction. A yoga comfort system wedge 10 in the arrangement is placed to provide a sloping surface to support the user’s back. A yoga comfort system wedge 10 is also placed beneath each arm to further open the chest, which facilitates easier breathing.

[0035] FIG. 19 depicts a method for use in the restorative Corpse/Relaxation pose, showing two yoga comfort system wedges 10 configured as a bolster, as described in FIG. 8. Said bolster configuration is placed underneath the user’s back. This placement provides tactile comfort while creating a chest opening yoga pose, which facilitates easier breathing. This placement is also beneficial when used in a physical, massage, or relaxation therapy position. This Figure also shows a yoga comfort system wedge 10 placed underneath the legs to provide support and comfort.

[0036] It will be appreciated that the yoga, exercise and therapeutic positions shown in FIGS. 4-19 utilizing the yoga comfort system wedge(s) are but a sampling of the many postures and positions known to yoga and meditation practitioners, fitness enthusiasts, as well as physical and massage therapists. The present invention is not limited in scope by the preferred embodiment and modified forms of construction, or the Figures showing methods for use. Additional methods for use, using a single yoga comfort system wedge, or using combinations of one or more yoga comfort system wedges placed within a given posture, exercise, or therapeutic bodily position will reveal themselves to those skilled in their practice(s). Additional methods for use in convenience, improvements, and advantages will also reveal themselves to those skilled in their practice(s).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0037] Now referring to the drawings detailing the construction and fabrication, the Figures illustrate a yoga comfort system wedge in which similar reference numbers denote similar elements throughout the Figures.

[0038] FIG. 1 depicts the top perspective view of the yoga comfort system wedge 10 according to the preferred embodiment version of the present invention. FIG. 2 depicts the bottom perspective view of the yoga comfort system wedge 10 according to the preferred embodiment version of the present invention. The size, shape, and angled surfaces of this preferred embodiment are particularly well suited for use as a yoga prop due to its versatility in application to a variety of yoga postures and therapeutic positions.

[0039] In the preferred embodiment, the yoga comfort system wedge is fabricated from flexible, closed-cell foam materials and adhesives. The materials’ flexibility, coupled with the wedge’s overall length and shape allows unlimited versatile applications or bodily placements that are not possible with conventional rigid yoga wedges, yoga blocks or other props. The materials’ density and softness, coupled with its shape and flexibility, provide tactile comfort not possible from yoga wedges or yoga blocks made of rigid materials.

[0040] In the preferred embodiment, three pieces of material are used: a top piece 18 and a bottom piece 20, separated by a septum 19. The various layers of material can be of different density and softness. The septum 19 can be an adhesive and/or a combination of adhesives(s) and a layer or layers of material of selected density, in order to achieve varying levels of rigidity and to maintain stability and form of the wedge. This embodiment is particularly well suited for users with limited hand, wrist, arm, feet or torso movement or range of motion, and for those needing a tactile soft and stable surface to press against.

[0041] In the preferred embodiment, the yoga comfort system wedge comprises two longitudinal edges 11 and 12 and two longitudinal surfaces 21 and 22 that are equal in a length of 24 inches. It has two side ends 13 and 14 that are equally shaped in a right triangular pattern. The right triangular end profiles 13 and 14 consist of one bottom angle 15 of 90 degrees and a top angle 16 of 67 degrees, and a second bottom reference angle 17 of 23 degrees which is truncated to form a flat edge 11. In the preferred embodiment, the length of the height edge 12 is 2.75 to 3 inches and the length of the bottom width 24 is 6 inches. The length of the edge 11 is a height of 0.25 inch. The septum 19 is in a horizontal plane parallel to the bottom surface 22. The size of the wedge and the slope of the angled surface, results in less bending and/or flexion of a user’s hand, wrist, arm, and/or feet when pressing his or her hands, and/or feet down on the floor, mat, chair, wall or similar surface. By ergonomically tailoring the wedge’s shape to prevent excessive bending and/or flexion of the hand, wrist, arm and/or feet, the user is able to more comfortably attain and maintain certain yoga postures, fitness exercises or therapeutic positions. The yoga comfort system wedge has two longitudinal surfaces available, specifically, the top surface 21 and the bottom surface 22, to offer the user a choice of comfort angles or positions.

[0042] By ergonomically tailoring a wedge’s overall shape and size, the user is able to more comfortably attain and maintain certain active or restorative yoga postures, as well as certain prescribed traditional physical therapy positions or exercises. The added comfort is perceived in the user’s skeletal structure, muscles, joints, nerves and/or soft tissue. Finally, two yoga comfort system wedges can be placed together to form a comfortable block or bolster, offering more versatility and applications from a single yoga prop design.

[0043] FIG. 3 shows modified forms of construction, or versions of the present invention, which can contain two or more layers of selected materials of varying thicknesses and densities, two longitudinal surfaces, one or two longitudinal edges, and one or more septums. These modified forms of construction are sized for more specific active or restorative yoga postures, as well as traditional physical therapy exercises or positions. In these embodiments of the present invention, the wedge’s longitudinal edges 11, 12, and 23, and longitudinal surfaces 21, 22 comprise a length ranging from 12 inches to 28 inches. The wedge’s height 12 comprises a length ranging from 1.25 inches to 8 inches, and the wedge’s width 24, comprises a length ranging from 6 inches to 12
inches. The two triangular-patterned sides consist of one bottom angle of 90 degrees, while the selected ranges of lengths for the height and the bottom width define the remaining two angles.

Two or more pieces of material can be used: a top piece and a bottom piece, separated by a septum. When more than two pieces of material are used, they are layered between the top piece and a bottom piece, separated by the respective number of septums which are in a horizontal plane parallel to the bottom surface. The various layers of material can be of different thicknesses, density and softness. The top vertex angle and bottom angle can be truncated to form flat edges and the septum(s) can be an adhesive and/or a combination of adhesives and a layer or layers of material of selected density, in order to achieve varying levels of rigidity and to maintain stability and form of the wedge. A modified form of construction may also include a yoga comfort system wedge constructed of one layer of flexible material, when appropriate for the specific application of use. These embodiments, or versions of the yoga comfort system wedge, the size of the wedge, the slope of the angled surface, and the flat edges are chosen to ergonomically accommodate additional yoga and meditation props, fitness, and physical or massage therapy applications for a wide range of hand, feet, and torso sizes and shapes. These yoga comfort system wedges of modified forms of construction also have two longitudinal surfaces available, specifically, the top surface and the bottom surface, to offer the user a choice of comfort angles or positions. These embodiments are also well suited for users with limited hand, wrist, arm, feet or torso movement or range of motion, and for those needing a tactile soft and stable surface to press against.

By ergonomically tailoring a wedge in the modified forms of construction's overall shape and size, the user is able to more comfortably attain and maintain certain active or restorative yoga postures, as well as certain prescribed traditional physical therapy positions or exercises. The added comfort is perceived in the user's skeletal structure, muscles, joints, nerves and/or soft tissue.

Finally, embodiments of two yoga comfort system wedges can be placed together with similar planar faces adjoining to form a comfortable block or comfort bolster, offering more versatility and applications from a single yoga prop design. A variety of yoga comfort system wedges can also be stacked or arranged to provide additional methods for use.

Patent claims:

1. A yoga comfort system wedge in the preferred embodiment comprising a construction and fabrication of selected materials, size, shape, and two different angled surfaces, which provide tactile comfort and a flexible shape when used as a yoga prop.

2. A yoga comfort system wedge in the preferred embodiment whose materials' density and softness, coupled with its size, shape, and flexibility, provide tactile comfort and bodily placements not possible from yoga wedges or yoga blocks made of rigid materials or other types of props.

3. The yoga comfort system wedge in claims 1 and 2 is constructed of two layers of flexible material, separated by a septum.

4. The yoga comfort system wedge in claims 1 and 2 is fabricated from flexible, closed-cell foam materials of selected density and softness.

5. The yoga comfort system wedge in claims 1 and 2 has a septum, which is fabricated from an adhesive or combination of adhesives and/or a layer or layers of material of selected densities.

6. The yoga comfort system wedge in claims 1 and 2 is configured with a triangular shaped cross section with a truncated angle on its bottom providing a durable flat edge near the point, and has a nominal length, which spans the width of a standard sized yoga mat.

7. A yoga comfort system wedge in modified forms of construction, or versions, comprising overall wedge sizes (length, height and width), slopes of the angled surface, two different angled surfaces, and flat edge(s) chosen to ergonomically accommodate additional yoga and meditation props, fitness, and physical or massage therapy tools.

8. The yoga comfort system wedge in claim 7 is shaped in a right triangular pattern; and can have truncated angles on its bottom and/or at the top vertex providing flat edges.

9. The yoga comfort system wedge in claim 7 is fabricated from one, two or more layers of selected materials having the thickness, density and softness to achieve varying levels of rigidity and to maintain stability and form of the wedge, and may contain one or more septums, which can be an adhesive and/or a combination of adhesives and/or a layer or layers of materials of selected density; contains a top vertex angle and a bottom angle, which can be truncated to form flat edges; can have a durable flat edge near the point; and can have a larger flat edge near the top for added comfort.

10. A yoga comfort system wedge in the preferred embodiment in claims 1 and 2 and in the modified forms of construction, or versions, in claim 7 is particularly well suited for users with limited hand, wrist, arm, feet or torso movement or range of motion, and for those needing a tactile soft and stable surface to press against when used for a variety of applications such as yoga, fitness, physical and massage therapy, meditation and relaxation props or tools.

11. The yoga comfort system wedge in claims 1, 2 and 7 is ergonomically configured to conveniently attain and maintain yoga postures, fitness exercises, prescribed physical therapy positions, relaxation and massage therapy positions, and meditation positions while experiencing tactile comfort.

12. The yoga comfort system wedge in claims 1, 2 and 7 is ergonomically configured to improve training goals, and can be placed in selected positions to increase the challenge of specific balance exercises of advanced yoga practitioners, fitness enthusiasts or physical therapy patients.

13. Methods for use of a yoga comfort system wedge in the preferred embodiment in claims 1 and 2 and in the modified forms of construction, or versions, in claim 7 comprising sizes, shapes and two different angled surfaces for use as yoga, fitness, physical and massage therapy, meditation and relaxation props or tools comprising placing the yoga comfort system wedge(s) against a part of the body to achieve the tactile comfort and support desired.

14. Methods for use of a yoga comfort system wedge in the preferred embodiment in claims 1 and 2 and in the modified forms of construction, or versions, in claim 7 comprising sizes, shapes and two different angled surfaces for use as yoga, fitness, physical and massage therapy, meditation and relaxation props or tools comprising placing the yoga comfort system wedge(s) against various surfaces such as the floor, mat, or rug, on the seat of a chair, or against a wall, and placing the appropriate body part onto the yoga comfort system wedge to achieve the tactile comfort and support desired.
15. A method of performing yoga, fitness, physical or massage therapy routines, or meditation, placing two yoga comfort system wedges in the preferred embodiment in claims 1 and 2 and in the modified forms of construction, or versions, in claim 7 together with similar planar faces adjoining creating a rectangularly shaped comfort bolster, and said bolster configuration placed against a part of the body to achieve the tactile comfort and support desired. These configurations may include arranging or stacking several yoga comfort system wedges with similar planar faces adjoining creating rectangularly shaped comfort bolster(s) which may be placed side by side, or on top of one another, creating a larger, customized bolster configuration, and placing said customized bolster(s) against a part of the body to achieve the tactile comfort and support desired. These arranged configurations may also include placing a single yoga comfort system wedge on top of, or next to, a bolster configuration to provide a sloping or slanted surface, which may be placed against a part of the body to achieve the tactile comfort and support desired.

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