# United States Patent [19]

**Stanley**

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[54] **GOLF PRACTICE DEVICE**


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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/186 R;** 273/183 B; 273/187 R; 273/195 A

[51] **Int. Cl.** ..... **A63b 69/36**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/183, 186, 187, 195, 273/188



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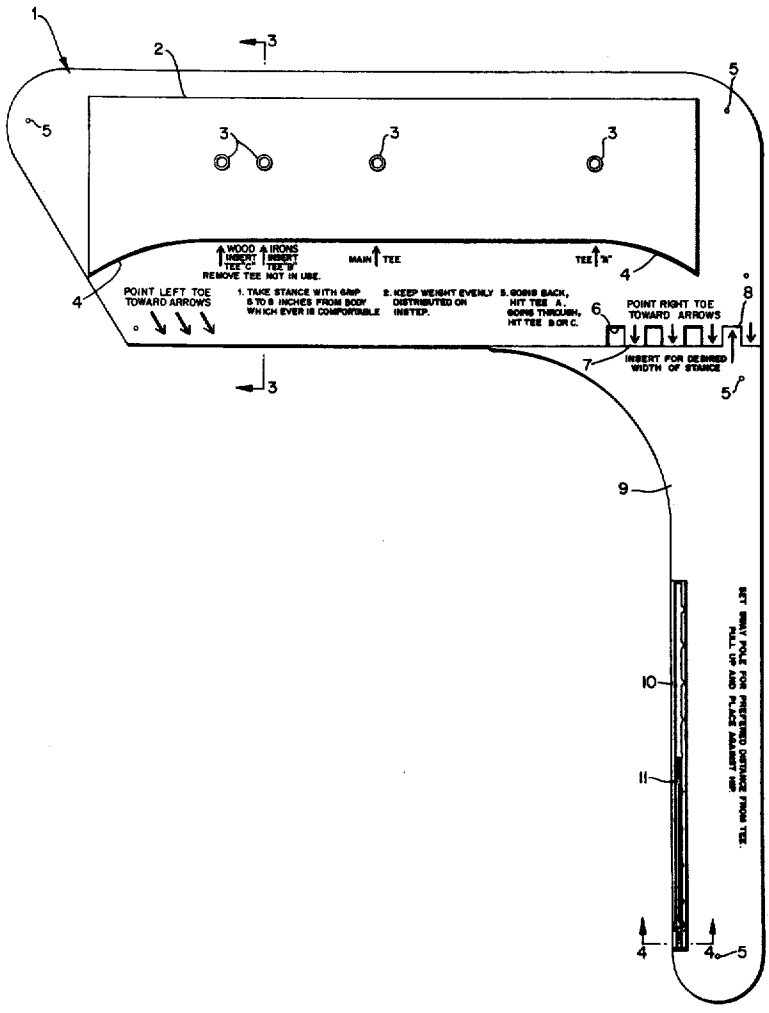
[57] **ABSTRACT**

A golf practice device is provided for use in perfecting a golf swing which includes a substantially rectangular planar base having affixed thereto a turf-like mat, wherein said base and said turf-like mat include a plurality of linearly disposed ball supporting means; and wherein said base has a leg extending substantially perpendicularly from one side of said base; having affixed thereto a track to retain a vertically adjustable indicating member which provides linear and arcuate motion substantially along a longitudinal axis of the perpendicular extension.


**9 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures**



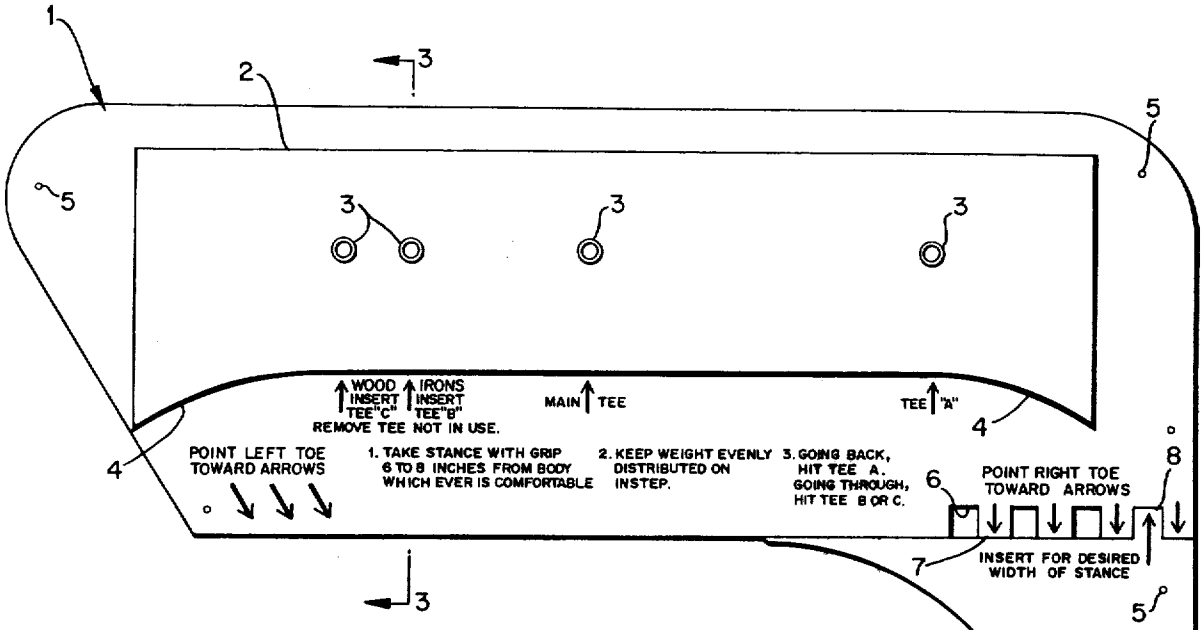



FIG. 1

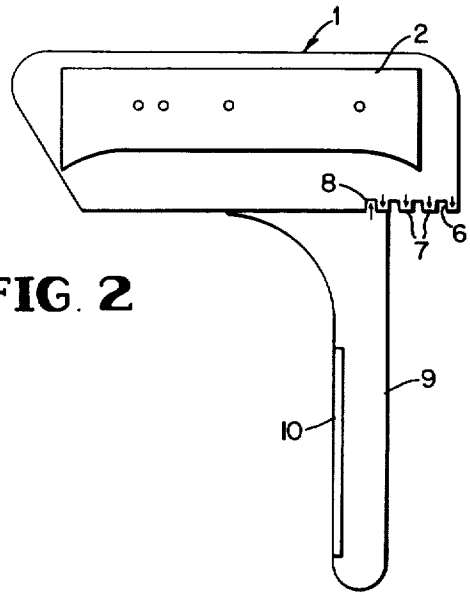



FIG. 2

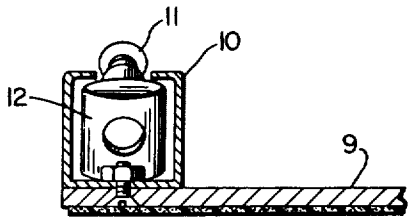
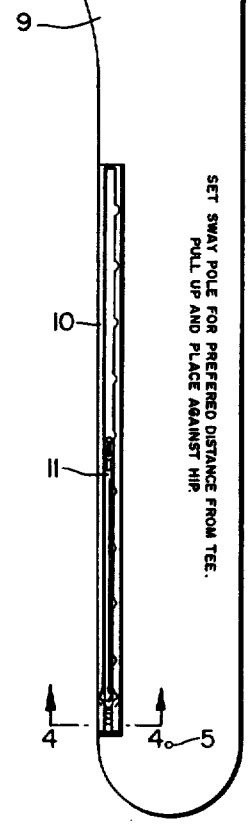



FIG. 4



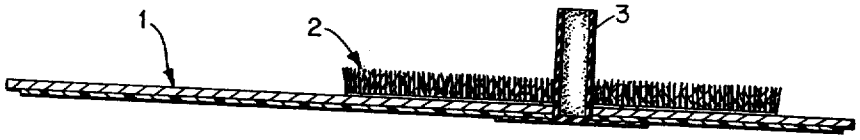



FIG. 3

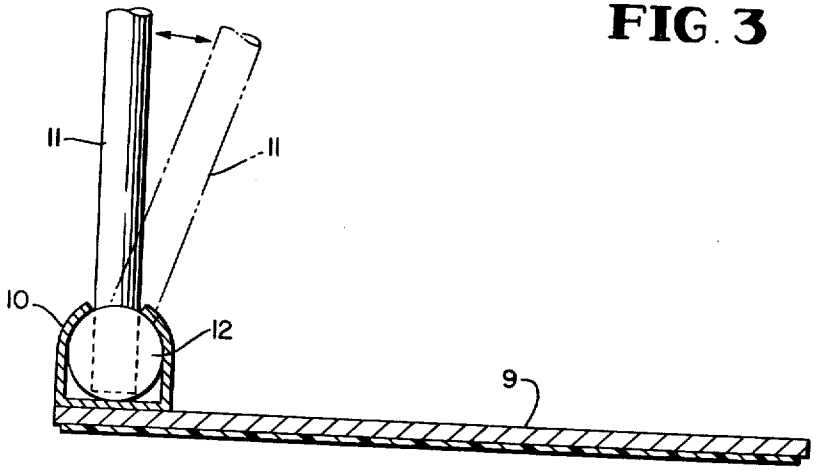



FIG. 6

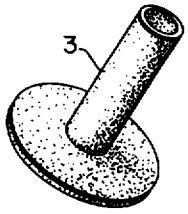



FIG. 7




FIG. 5

# GOLF PRACTICE DEVICE

## INTRODUCTION

This invention relates to practice devices used to improve a golf swing.

It is generally recognized that there are basic rules which must be followed by a golfer in addressing and hitting a golf ball. Primarily, the golf club must be swung in a manner such that the face of the clubhead contacts the golf ball with the club face surface perpendicular to the line of flight of the ball at the moment of impact. Additionally, each swing must be so controlled as to be reproduceable thereby allowing repetitive accuracy and ability to control the flight of the golf ball with the golf club.

One major factor which facilitates the swing of the golf club enabling the club face to contact the ball perpendicular to the intended line of flight involves insuring that the stance assumed by the golfer in addressing the golf ball is the same each time the golf club is swung. Normally the golfer assumes a "squared" stance, which means that for a right-handed golfer the inside of the left heel will be in substantial alignment with the center of the ball to be driven. Other variables which must be taken into consideration include length of the club, type of club, height of golfer, and terrain, to name only a few.

An additional factor which must be considered in insuring that the club face contacts the golf ball perpendicular to the intended flight path of the golf ball, requires that a particular path be followed by the clubhead in both the backswing and the downstroke.

It is generally the case that some individuals have more athletic ability than others, that is, they are more able to coordinate mental thought processes with muscle control. Coordination generally can be developed and improved with constant coaching. However, something as critical as a golf swing must be as accurate and as reproduceable as possible. The best manner of insuring such accuracy and reproduceability is generally through constant practice. Periodic review and correction by a professional golfer or instructor is usually required to insure that the individual practice the swing in the correct way for a sufficient period of time to be able to swing correctly and accurately in the absence of coaching.

If the golfer's stance is improper, or if his body motions are uncoordinated, the swing path will vary so that the golf club head will strike the ball improperly. The effect usually is that the face of the golf club is canted or angularly disposed with respect to the intended line of flight of the golf ball. This result usually occurs when the golfer swings so that his swing path is from the inside, thus causing the ball to hook to the left away from the golfer. On the other hand, if the swing path followed by the club head is from the outside in, the ball will have a tendency to slice to the right. Accordingly, to drive the ball accurately along the intended line of flight, it is necessary that the golf club head be properly positioned with respect to the ball at the moment of impact.

To assist the golfer in developing the requisite body movements into a habit which becomes automatic whenever he addresses the ball and executes a swing, it is desirable that the golfer have some type of a guide which will enable him to reproduce his swing so that his bodily movements are substantially identical. The instant invention aids in solving the foregoing problems and substantially reduces the need for professional coaching.



Various practice devices have been proposed within the past for helping the golfer perfect his swing. Many of them involve large and complicated mechanisms and none of them have afforded the combined advantages of simplicity, portability and ease of use as that achieved by the instant invention.

Therefore, it is an object of this invention to provide a practice device which compels the golfer to assume a proper stance in addressing and hitting the ball.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a practice device for golfers which may be used indoors or outdoors. An additional object of the present invention is to provide a practice device for golfers which incorporates a means for evaluating whether or not the golf club is swung in a prescribed path thereby resulting in a proper contact with the ball.

A further object of this invention is to provide a golf practice device which may be easily disassembled, transported, and readily stored in a minimum of space.

Another object of the instant invention is to provide a golf practice device in which the clubhead path indicating means need not be readjusted or reset after each practice stroke.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Broadly, the golf practice device of the instant invention comprises a substantially rectangular planar base having a perpendicular leg extending therefrom and having mounted thereon a shock absorbing turf-like mat made of material resembling the grass surface normally encountered in golf courses. Protruding through the upper surface of the artificial turf-like mat are a plurality of means to support a golf ball, e.g., golf tees. There are generally a number of these tees arranged linearly parallel to the longitudinal axis of the substantially rectangular planar base. Perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the rectangular base is an extension of the base which provides a means to contain a vertically adjustable indicating member which is vertically adjustable and provides linear and arcuate motion in a retaining means perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the substantially rectangular planar and base.

The invention accordingly comprises the features of construction combinations of elements and arrangements of parts which will be exemplified in the constructions hereinafter set forth, and the scope of the invention will be indicated in the claims. For a fuller understanding of the nature and objects of the invention reference should be had to the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings in which:

## DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a top view of the principal embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a top view of the principle embodiment illustrating the means of alignment and registry;

FIG. 3 is an end view of the principle embodiment taken along the lines 3—3 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is an end view of a perpendicular extension taken along the lines 4—4 of FIG. 1 showing a vertically adjustable indicating member and a means to retain said member wherein said member is folded aside to promote portability;

FIG. 5 is a lateral view of the perpendicular extension of FIG. 1 illustrating the vertically adjustable indicating member; and

FIG. 6 shows an alternate embodiment of a vertically adjustable indicating member and a means to retain said member; and;

FIG. 7 shows an example of a ball supporting means.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The golf practice device of the present invention offers a unique and novel practice aid for the golfer. It provides an easily understandable indication of errors and inaccuracies in a golfer's swing and provides a means of correcting said errors.

The preferred embodiment of the invention is shown in FIG. 1, wherein 1 indicates the substantially rectangular planar base having a perpendicular leg 9 extending therefrom and having mounted on said base a turf-like mat 2 of slightly lesser dimensions and resembling natural grass. The turf-like mat contains apertures 3 corresponding to similar apertures located in the substantially rectangular planar base and coaxial therewith.

The artificial turf-like surface may have an inner edge cut in an arc 4 which parallels the curved path followed by the golf clubhead during the backswing and downstroke prior to impact with the ball. It has been found that this aids in controlling the backswing of the golfer so that the golf club head follows essentially the same path that it is intended to follow in the downstroke. The golfer therefore retains much more control over the golf club than is otherwise possible.

The holes in the base 5 provide a means to attach the substantially rectangular base to the ground when the device is being used outdoors. They may comprise various types of pins, studs or other attaching means. A means of alignment and registry 6, 7 and 8 is provided and exemplified by the squared tooth arrangement which allows insertion at numerous positions of the perpendicular leg 9 to the substantially rectangular base 1. The point of adjustment is determined by the stance of the golfer which in turn depends on the length and type of club, height of the golfer, etc. For example, a wider stance would be required for a wood than for an iron since a wood has a longer shaft and the device can be so adjusted to compensate therefor.

The square-teeth arrangement 6, 7 and 8 providing for the alignment and registry allows the device to be separated readily into two easily portable pieces which can be stored in a small area or transported with ease. The perpendicular extension 9 houses a retaining means 10 having mounted therein a vertically adjustable indicating member 11 providing linear and arcuate motion which can be extended in a vertical direction to correspond in height to the golfer's hip and can be adjusted in a linear direction to be placed at the side of the right foot of the golfer extending upwardly parallel to the golfer's right leg, for example, a tubular telescoping member in a guide or track mounted to provide arcuate motion. Any improper motion of the hip, that is improper breaking or swaying at the hips, will be indicated by arcuate movement of the vertically adjustable indicating member in the retaining means. The member will be moved to the side and remain there to enable the golfer to take note and correct the error in motion, prior to a successive practice swing.

FIG. 5 illustrates a lateral view of the perpendicular extension 9 showing a retaining means 10 for the vertically adjustable indicating member 11 which retains said member by a means 12 which may be any suitable means of providing for linear, lateral and arcuate motion of the indicating member such as that provided by a ball joint, swivel joint or a socket joint in a track-type guide.

FIG. 4 is an end view along the line 4—4 of FIG. 1 illustrating the indicating member 11, and the retaining means therefor 10, which is attached to the base 9 by any suitable means, such as rivets, screws, adhesives, etc.

The base of the teaching device may be rigid or semi-rigid material such as plastic, rubber, wood, wood composite, etc. to provide a substantial degree of rigidity. Generally, the substantially rectangular portion is at least 1 foot in width and approximately at least 3 feet in length. The perpendicular extension will generally be at least 3 feet in length and any convenient width, for example 6 inches. The rectangular base of the instant invention is of sufficient size to allow printing the instructions directly on the base to facilitate use in the proper manner and aid in convenience.

The turf-like mat can be raised, co-planar, or recessed relative to the base and may be made of any suitable material which provides a relative degree of shock absorbancy, such as rubber, synthetic matting, foam or carpet but is preferably of a material which simulates an actual golf course, such as artificial turf.

The ball supporting means (FIG. 7) may be any suitable means, stationary or movable, semi-flexible or flexible attached to or placed on the turf-like mat. Said ball supporting means generally comprise tees which may be imbedded in the turf-like mat or inserted through the holes coaxially aligned in the rectangular base and the turf-like mat. Alternatively, the support means may be retained so as to provide an arcuate motion along the club path or line of flight of the ball to indicate direction of club swing.

A plurality of support means are aligned parallel to the longitudinal axis of the planar base comprising a principal support or tee for the ball which is to be driven; one about 6 to 18 inches, preferably about 12 inches to the right, i.e., "behind" the principal tee on the longitudinal axis, and two to the left of the principal tee, the first tee being from about 4 to about 8 inches, preferably about 6 inches. The second tee to the left being from about 7 to about 12 inches, preferably about 8 inches to the left of the principal tee. All four of the tees are colinear and parallel to the longitudinal axis of the planar base.

The perpendicular leg has attached therto a means to retain the vertically adjustable indicating member. For example, a partially enclosed track which may retain a sliding member such as a ball or cylinder which has the indicating member attached thereto. The indicating member may be any convenient shape such as tubular and is preferably a telescoping tubular member which can be compressed and folded aside to promote protability (FIG. 4). Similarly an audible signal device, such as a bell, buzzer, chime, etc., may be used to signal the golfer that he has contacted the vertical indicator and moved it from the vertical starting position.

It is apparent that preparing and labelling both sides of the substantially rectangular planar base makes the

invention reversible, i.e., it can be used by right and left handed golfers.

As indicated in the drawings there are four apertures linearly arranged in the turf-like mat corresponding to four holes in the rectangular base or substrate wherein golf ball supporting means, e.g., golf tees, are forced through the base and protrude up through the apertures in the turf. It has been found that rubber tubular tees (FIG. 7) having an integral circular base similar to those found at a driving range are particularly well suited. The ball to be driven is placed on the main tee. The golfer adjusts the perpendicular extension 9 to accommodate the width of his stance such that the vertically adjustable indicator can be raised parallel to the side of his right leg stopping at his hip after sliding it to a position adjacent the middle of his right foot when he is maintaining a comfortable stance depending upon club type, club length, height of the golfer and personal preference. With the right foot pointing toward the arrows at the junction of the rectangular base and the perpendicular extension, and the left foot pointed toward the arrows at the lower left corner of the rectangular base with the inside of the left heel in a direct line with the principal tee the golfer addresses the ball.

With his weight evenly distributed between his right and left legs the golfer draws the club back in a straight line "tipping" or touching tee A. This initiates a low takeaway which will force the shoulders to turn properly, prevent the golfer from picking the golf club head up or prematurely "breaking" at the wrist. After raising the clubhead substantially while maintaining the left arm straight and shifting the weight to the right leg, the backswing has been completed and the downstroke is begun.

The inner curved surface of the turf-like mat encourages the club head to be brought down in a normal inside-out pattern and after coming through tee A and contacting the ball at the principal tee the golfer then must follow through to contact either tee B or tee C with the golf head as he follows through after having hit the ball. This insures the proper use of the legs in that the weight has shifted from the right leg to the left as the club is swung providing proper extension of the arms to the correct position and forcing the golfer to keep his head down and his right shoulder down as he follows through the principle tee to tee B or C. In view of the variation in length of arcs described in using a long club as opposed to a shorter club; tee B will be removed if tee C is struck on the follow through, when a wood is used; and similarly tee C will be removed if tee B will be struck on a follow through when an iron is used. If the golfer, during the course of his swing, breaks improperly at the hips and sways as opposed to pivoting when the weight shifts from the right leg to the left leg he will necessarily move the vertically adjustable indicator to the side which will be clearly shown since after it is moved to the side it maintains that position until placed again in a vertical position. This may be reinforced by an audible signal such as a bell or buzzer. Additionally, the amount of sway is noted by the distance which the tubular member is moved to the side.

It has been found that following the directions repeatedly results in appreciable improvement in the reproduceability of an accurate golf swing. Repeated correct use of the golf teaching device forces muscular coordination so that the golfer must execute a good golf prescribed As a result, the club head follows an accurate presecribed path leading to proper impact with the ball in the absence of any coaching. This relieves the golfer of mental stress, anguish and apprehension generally encountered in his attempts to remember all that he has been told regarding breaking at the wrist; keeping his head straight; shifting his weight as he follows through; drawing the club head back slowly; following through completely; and keeping his head down to watch the ball. All of the foregoing is accomplished by doing, not by saying, and the golfer, through little mental and physical coordination, is provided with an excellent golf swing. Additionally, expert golfers can use such a teaching device to correct errors which may develop during latter portions of their golfing career. This device acts as a constant check and reinforcement to indicate correctness and accuracy of a golf swing.

It is easily seen from the foregoing that the mechanics of a proper swing are taught by doing and not by coaching thereby insuring a proper swing in the absence of any necessity to remember a multitude of points independently. The golf teaching device of the instant invention embodies and combines all of the necessary elements to insure a good golf swing and forces the proper coordination thereby eliminating much of the mental confusion associated with learning to play golf.

What is claimed is:

**1.** A golf practice device for use in perfecting a golf swing comprising in combination: a base having affixed thereto a turf-like mat, wherein said base and said turf-like mat include a plurality of linearly disposed ball supporting means, and wherein said base has a leg extending substantially perpendicularly from one side of said base; having affixed thereto a vertically adjustable indicating member which provides linear and arcuate motion substantially along a longitudinal axis of the perpendicular extension.

**2.** The golf practice device of claim **1**, wherein the ball supporting means are tees disposed linearly substantially along the longitudinal axis of the base and protrude above the turf-like mat.

**3.** The golf practice device of claim **2**, wherein the turf-like mat resembles naturally occurring grass.

**4.** The golf practice device of claim **2**, wherein said base is planar and substantially rectangular.

**5.** The golf practice device of claim **1**, wherein the vertically adjustable indicating member is a telescoping tubular member and wherein the means to retain said vertically adjustable indicating member is a track affixed to the perpendicular leg substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of said leg; wherein said track permits linear and arcuate motion of said vertically adjustable indicating member.

**6.** The golf practice device of claim **5**, wherein the means to provide linear and arcuate motion of the vertically adjustable member in said track is a ball-and-socket type joint.

**7.** The golf practice device of claim **5** wherein said leg extending substantially perpendicularly from one side of said base is co-planar with said base.

**8.** The golf practice device of claim **1**, wherein said base includes a means of attachment to the ground to provide increased stability thereof when used out-of-doors.

**9.** The golf practice device of claim **8**, wherein said means of attachment comprises pegs cooperating with apertures in said base.

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