Sept. 3, 1968 E. H. SCHOFIELD 3,399,470

INDOOR OVERSHOE

Filed April 26, 1967

Fig. 1.

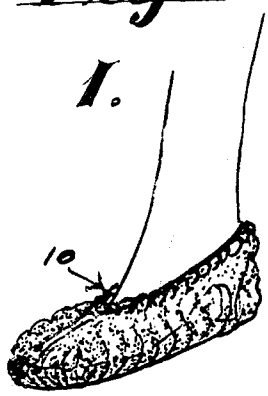


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

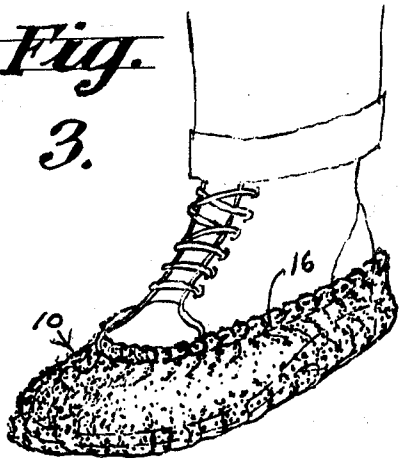


Fig. 4

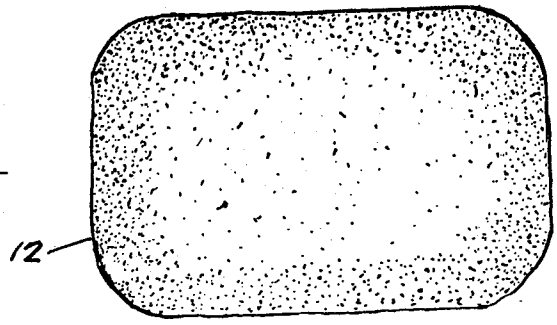
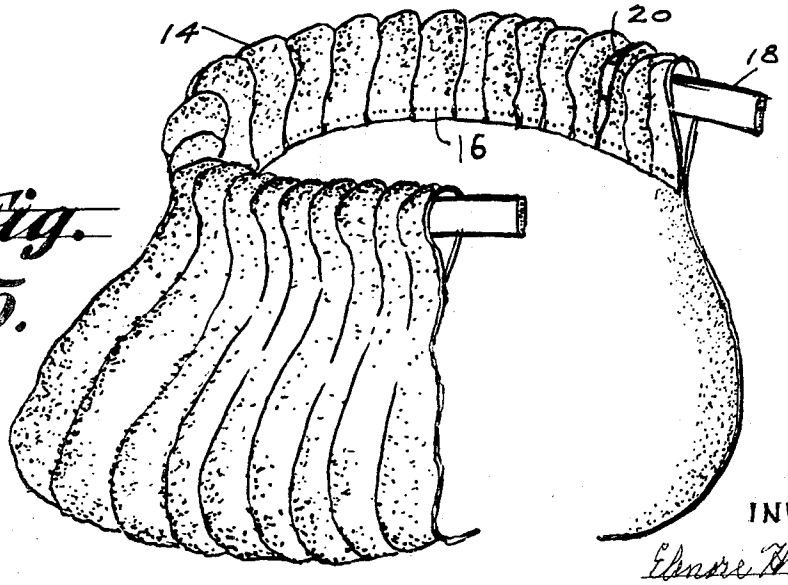


Fig. 5.



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INDOOR OVERSHOE

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An indoor overshoe is provided wherein the entire overshoe, both sole and upper, consists merely of a single piece of woven fabric, which is durable, freely flexible, water absorbent, porous, washable, and which has substantial body, and a high ratio of surface area to mass, such as terry cloth; and a length of retaining elastic confined in an upper marginal hem. There is no defined line of division between sole and upper.

This invention relates to a novelty in footwear which may be aptly called an indoor overshoe, and which is designed to be put on over normal footwear when entering a house, to protect the floors, the rugs or other floor coverings, and upholstered furniture, from being soiled or damaged by mud, oil, and grease, or polluted by other contaminants. The overshoe may also be used for other purposes, for example, to protect automobile floors and upholstery.

In some oriental countries, notably Japan, the shoes are required to be removed upon entering a house. No such refined and salutary practice is followed in western countries. The result is that in rural areas people are likely to track into the house mud, oil, grease, barnyard manure, and other contaminants. In urban communities, dirt, chewing gum, dog dung and other forms of filth are tracked in. In many homes infants crawl on the floors, putting into their mouths any objects that they find there. The practice of wearing indoor overshoes, at least until the mud dries on the shoe upper or gets rubbed off inside the overshoe, cannot fail to provide a considerable measure of protection against such objects sometimes consisting of chunks of germ-laden mud, and at other times consisting of other substances but being covered with germs or filth.

How long the overshoes are to be worn indoors is largely a matter of personal taste and preference. After ten or fifteen minutes the overshoes can generally be removed. In that time any mud on the shoe uppers will either have been rubbed off by the overshoe, or dried and set by the overshoe.

The novel overshoe of the present invention combines many desirable features, and provides a total structure which is uniquely advantageous.

The overshoe can be manufactured, merchandised, and put in the hands of the ultimate user conveniently and economically. The overshoe is composed of only a few simple, light, inexpensive parts. It can be fabricated with a minimum of simple operations, and therefore with a minimum of labor cost. A single size of overshoe can be worn over the boots or shoes of all users, including the footwear of very young children, women's high heeled shoes, and the footwear of large men.

An overshoe which is universally self-adapting as to size can be merchandised by the manufacturer and the storekeeper without a large inventory involving a multiplicity of sizes, and can be sold without fitting. This latter feature saves the time of the salesman and of the purchaser. The salesman requires no special training or skill. All of these considerations contribute to the placing of the overshoe in the hands of the user at a very low cost.

In the hands of the user the overshoe is highly serviceable. Here, again, the universal adaptability as to size is important since any member of the family, or a guest in the home, does not have to select overshoes by size, but can use the first two overshoes that come to hand. The destruction, wearing out, or loss of one overshoe does not mean that a mate is rendered worthless.

It is not essential, however, that the overshoe be universally adaptable as to size. If two or three sizes of overshoe are made to cover the entire range of shoe and boot sizes, substantial advantages can be realized.

It is a feature that the putting on and taking off of the indoor overshoes is much simpler and more convenient than the taking off and putting on of conventional shoes as done in Japan. The operations of putting on and removing the overshoes are so simple that even a young child can take care of his own needs, thus relieving the mother. The overshoe, though made large enough to be worn by a large man, is so light that a child is not inconvenienced or fatigued by the weight of it.

It is a feature that a non-raveling, woven fabric is used for the sole and upper, the advantage being that a tear or a worn spot can be mended, without a whole line of stitches unraveling and thereby destroying the unity of the overshoe components, as would be the case with a stretchable, knitted fabric.

It is a feature that the fabric of which the overshoe is made is of a sufficiently open-work structure to admit freely of breathing, the feature being important for two reasons:

(1) The overshoes may be worn for a considerable period, especially if the wearer is absent-minded or overcautious;

(2) The overshoes will generally be removed after ten to fifteen minutes, and placed in an open-work receptacle through which air can pass readily. In such a receptacle, the air can also circulate freely through the pores of the overshoe fabric, for drying out the fabric with reasonable proptness, and thereby avoiding the development of a smelly, rancid or mildewed condition.

It is a feature that the overshoe is ideally adapted for washing and drying in conventional equipment. Not only is the overshoe washable but, since it is free of welting and has no rigid protruding sole, the overshoe can be readily turned inside out to place the dirty surface on the outside for washing. Since every part of the overshoe is flexed and worked in the washer, the solid dirt falls away. This dirt is not collected and confined within the overshoe but falls to the bottom of the machine and passes out of the machine when the water is drained. Washing is made more practical by the fact that the sole is made no thicker than the upper, and therefore dries at least as fast as the upper does. The overshoe includes no material which can be damaged by the heat of the dryer.

Other objects and advantages will hereinafter appear.

In the drawing forming part of this specification,

FIGURE 1 is a view in elevation showing a practical and advantageous form of overshoe embodying features of the invention, applied over a woman's high heeled shoe;

FIGURE 2 is a view similar to FIGURE 1, showing the same overshoe applied over the shoe of a young child;

FIGURE 3 is a view similar to FIGURE 1, showing the same overshoe applied over a logger's size twelve boot;

FIGURE 4 is a plan view of the generally rectangular blank from which the overshoe is chiefly made; and

FIGURE 5 is a fragmentary view of the same overshoe showing particularly the hem and the elastic band construction.

The overshoe **10** of FIGURES 1 to 3 and 5 is made

from a unitary, desirably integral, blank **12** of terry cloth (FIGURE 4), the blank being of generally rectangular form, but having its corners rounded. The length to width ratio of the blank is desirably of the order of three to two, and the preferred size is of the order of eighteen by twelve inches.

An outer margin **14** of the blank **12** which is substantially three-quarters inch wide, and which extends completely around the blank, is turned in and stitched down by a line of stitching **16**, to provide a continuously open, marginal hem through which a length of narrow, highly elastic ribbon **18** is threaded. The hem is provided with a slit or opening **20** for entry and exit of the leading end of the ribbon **18**. The ribbon **18** is cut to the length required, is then pinned at its trailing end to the fabric, and is secured at its leading end to a safety pin. The ribbon is then drawn by the safety pin into, completely through, and out of the hem. The hem fabric is bunched or gathered on the ribbon, and the leading and trailing ends of the ribbon are then brought together and united by stitching or stapling to provide a closed band of predetermined, limited length of the order of twelve and one-half inches. This completes the manufacture of the overshoe.

As previously noted, the resulting overshoe is universally self-adapting as to size. One and the same overshoe may be worn, for example, over the shoe of a small child as shown in FIGURE 2, or over a high heeled woman's shoe as shown in FIGURE 1, or over a logger's size twelve boot, as shown in FIGURE 3.

In each instance the overshoe may be said to comprise a sole portion and an upper portion, but there is really no line of demarcation or differentiation between the sole and the upper, and there should be none. How much of the overshoe constitutes the sole and how much the upper depends entirely upon the size of the shoe upon which it is worn. There is a small area lying beneath the sole of the child's shoe which always serves as sole, and there is a relatively restricted area surrounding a portion of the upper of a logger's boot which always serves as upper, but in between there lies a wide transitional or dual service zone, unitary with the two restricted portions referred to, and indistinguishable from them, which is in varying degree a part of the sole, and in varying degree a part of the upper. This is a salient feature of the novel overshoe. It is primarily responsible for the fact that one size of overshoe can be used with many different sizes of shoes and boots.

It will be observed in FIGURE 2 that when the overshoe is worn by a young child the overshoe will generally completely enclose most of the child's shoe. In this situation, the elastic band is under minimum tension, and the fabric at the mouth of the overshoe is bunched to the maximum degree. The bunching of the material has two advantages: (1) it helps to reduce the overshoe mouth to the size of the shoe of the wearer for retaining the overshoe in place, and (2) it serves effectively to close the mouth of the overshoe so that any dirt on the shoe of the wearer will be confined within the overshoe.

When the overshoe is worn over a logger's boot or over a ski boot, or over any large man's shoe, as in FIGURE 3, the elastic band is under considerable tension, the elastic pressure is substantial, and the fabric at the mouth of the overshoe is but slightly bunched. In this situation there is not much free space within the overshoe, but mud or other foreign matter within the overshoe is securely confined.

When the overshoe is worn over a high heeled woman's shoe either of the two conditions described, or a compromise between them, will prevail.

It has been said that the body of the overshoe is desirably made from a single, integral piece of terry cloth. The one-piece construction is made practicable by the fact that there is no need for a line of demarcation between upper and sole. The one-piece construction permits

of the most economical manufacturing procedure as regards labor expense. The one-piece construction is not, however, an indispensable feature, since the blank could be fabricated of two or more pieces within the scope of the invention, if desired.

It is not essential that terry cloth be employed, but terry cloth embodies many desirable properties, some of which are essential.

It is essential, for example, that the fabric **12** be a woven fabric, having warp and woof threads, as contrasted with knitted fabric, so that the breaking of a single thread will not promptly result in the irreparable unraveling of a complete line of a stitching.

It is essential that the fabric **12** be of a sufficiently open-work or porous character to permit the fabric to breathe freely. As previously pointed out, this permits the moisture absorbed by the overshoe to evaporate quickly and thoroughly. The high surface to volume ratio of terry cloth greatly facilitates and accelerates drying.

It is highly desirable that the fabric employed be of a reasonably skid-proof character, capable of affording good traction on polished floors.

It is important that the fabric be sufficiently tough and hard wearing to be durable in use.

It is important that the fabric provide a soft-cushioning effect, both for the comfort of the wearer, for quietness, and for the protection of polished, bare wooden floors.

It is essential that the fabric employed be sufficiently flexible to bunch and form pleats, and to accommodate to shoes of various sizes, but that it not be altered in character by the fact that the overshoe has been worn over a shoe or shoes of a particular kind or size.

It is very important that the fabric be water absorbent. This enables the overshoe to absorb the water contained in mud on the conventional shoe, thereby to shorten the time that the overshoe must be worn.

It is also very important that the overshoe be washable and dryable in conventional laundry equipment. In this connection it is a point of great advantage that the overshoe can be conveniently turned inside out for washing. It is the inside of the overshoe that may become caked with dirt, and it is desirable that the dirt be able to fall away from the overshoe in the washing machine, not merely to be loosened and then retained in the overshoe. The fact that the sole is not thicker than the upper contributes importantly to the cleaning and drying of the overshoe, both because the sole passes water through it as freely as the upper, and the sole dries as quickly as the upper (even more quickly than the top margin of the upper, where the material is of double thickness and is bunched).

Since the subject of this invention is confined to an overshoe, as distinguished from a shoe liner, conformity to the shoe is unimportant. The overshoe has little or nothing in common with sock liners for shoes. In a shoe liner exact conformity to the foot is required in order to avoid localized pressure and chafing by the shoe. Wrinkles or pleats would be intolerable. The fabric of the present overshoe, on the other hand, does not have to be stretchable to any important degree, because the elastic band in the hem at the top of the overshoe, in conjunction with the flexibility of the overshoe body, provides the required adaptability as to size. Shape and fit do not matter.

The overshoe has been described as usable by members of a household and possibly their guests. It is susceptible of other uses. A salesman, electrician, carpenter, plumber or other workman calling in various homes, and having with him a pair of the overshoes for his own use in sloppy weather, will find his thoughtfulness much appreciated.

I have described what I believe to be the best embodiments of my invention. I do not wish, however, to be confined to the embodiments shown, but what I desire to cover by Letters Patent is set forth in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. An indoor overshoe for keeping rugs and floors free from mud, grease, filth and other contaminants, and for drying the shoes of the wearer, consisting, in combination, of an integral sole and upper forming member composed of a freely flexible, flat piece of hard-wearing, porous, water absorbent, washable, woven fabric of substantial body, with the upper including a continuous and substantially uniform, peripheral marginal hem, together with an elastic band confined in the marginal hem of the upper and of much less normal length than the unbunched length of the hem, said overshoe including a wide transitional or dual capacity zone which is especially wide at the front and rear ends, and which serves impartially as a portion of the sole or as a portion of the upper, or as portions of both sole and upper, depending upon the size of shoe to which the overshoe is applied; the construction and arrangement being such that the overshoe is seamless, and is of uniformly single ply thickness throughout, except in the marginal hem area, which area is uniformly of two ply thickness, is widely self-adapting as to size, and in its entirety may be readily turned inside out, when desired, for cleaning in a conventional washing machine.

2. An indoor overshoe as set forth in claim 1 in which the entire overshoe, with the exception of the elastic band, is composed essentially of terry cloth.

3. An indoor ovrshoe as set forth in claim 1 in which the sole and upper are integral, being composed of a blank of woven fabric generally rectangular in shape, but having rounded corners, with length and width measurements of the order of eighteen and twelve inches, respectively, and having a continuous marginal portion whose width is of the order of three-quarters inch, turned in and stitched to provide the elastic band receiving hem.

4. An indoor overshoe as set forth in claim 3 in which the overshoe is substantially universally self-adapting as to size, the elastic band having an effective length of the order of twelve and one-half inches.

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PATRICK D. LAWSON, *Primary Examiner.*