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(54) **FIELD EFFECT TRANSISTORS HAVING GATE ELECTRODE SILICIDE LAYERS WITH REDUCED SURFACE DAMAGE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Methods of forming integrated circuit devices include forming a field effect transistor having a gate electrode, a sacrificial spacer on a sidewall of the gate electrode and silicided source/drain regions. The sacrificial spacer is used as an implantation mask when forming highly doped portions of the source/drain regions. The sacrificial spacer is then removed from the sidewall of the gate electrode. A stress-inducing electrically insulating layer, which is configured to induce a net tensile stress (for NMOS transistors) or compressive stress (for PMOS transistors) in a channel region of the field effect transistor, is then formed on the sidewall of the gate electrode.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 11/874,118, filed on Oct. 17, 2007, now Pat. No. 7,923,365.

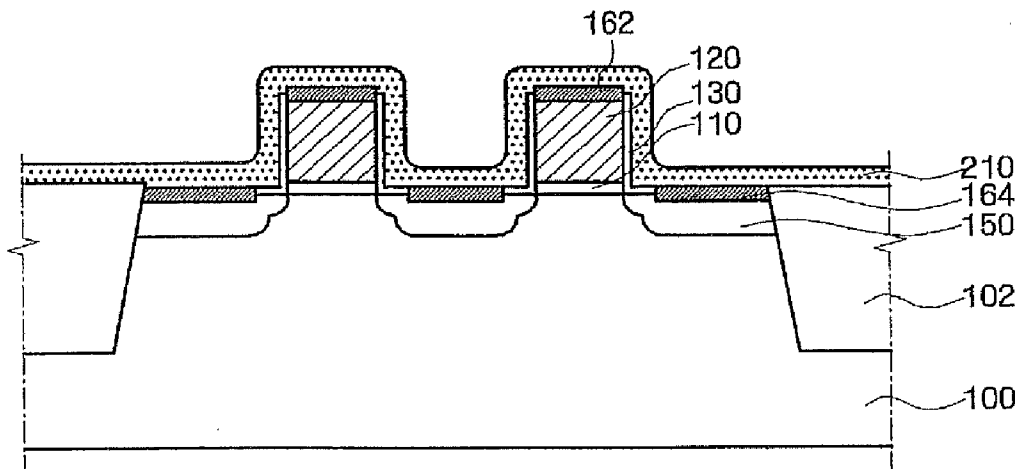


FIG. 1

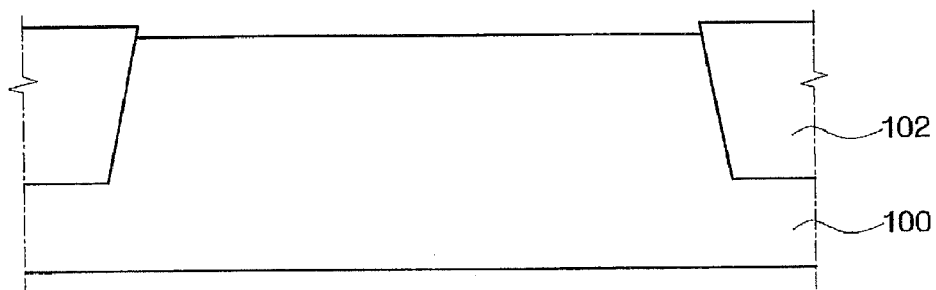


FIG. 2

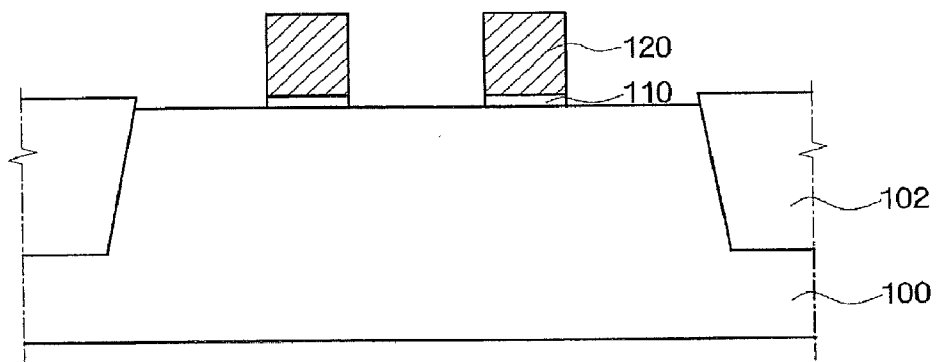


FIG. 3

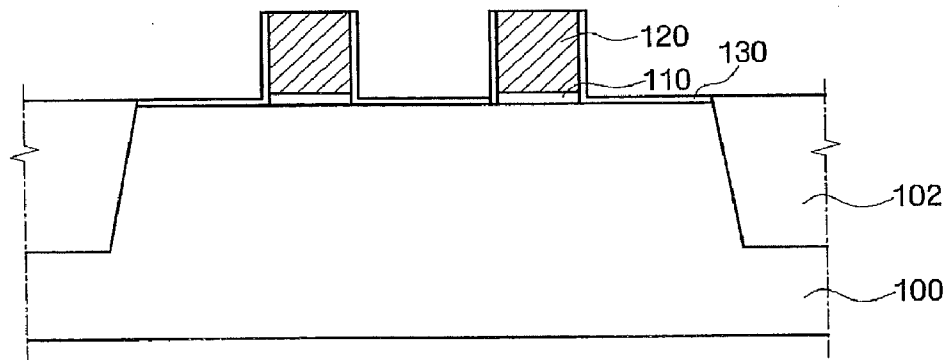


FIG. 4

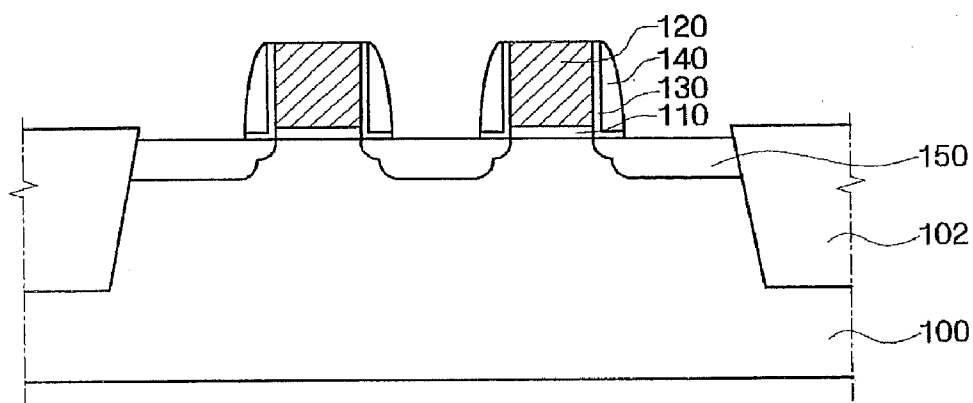


FIG. 5

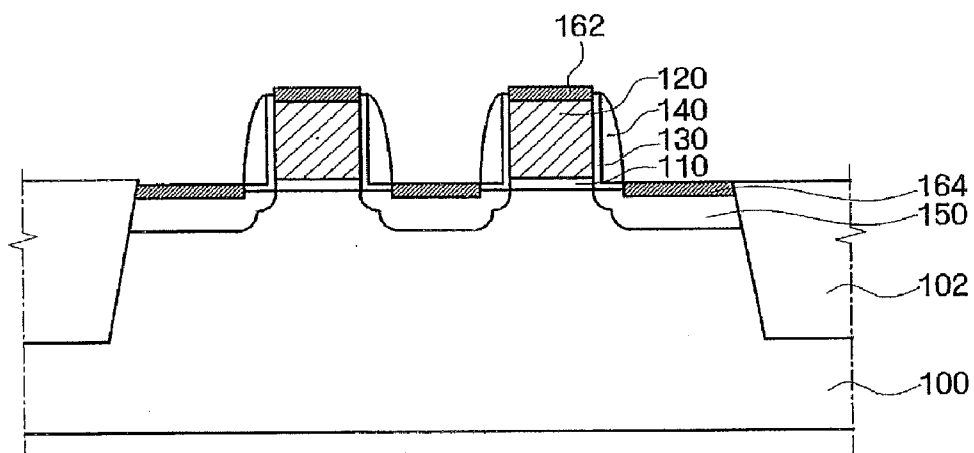


FIG. 6

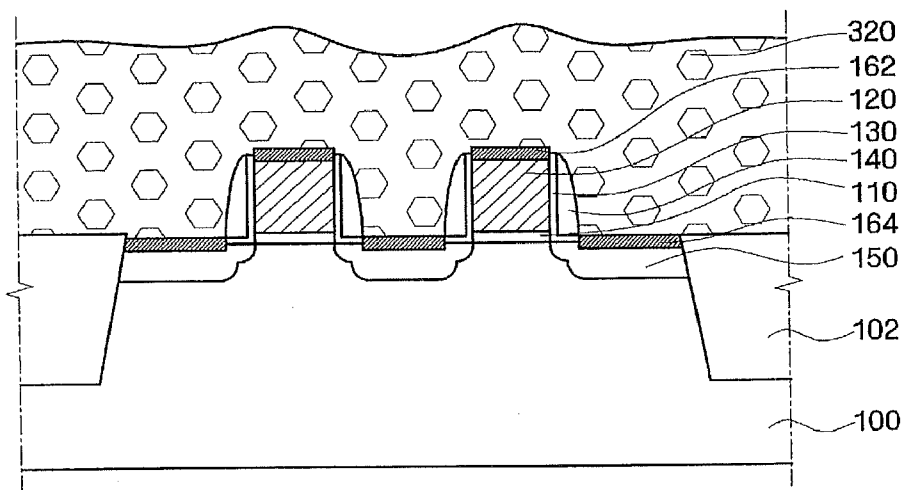


FIG. 7

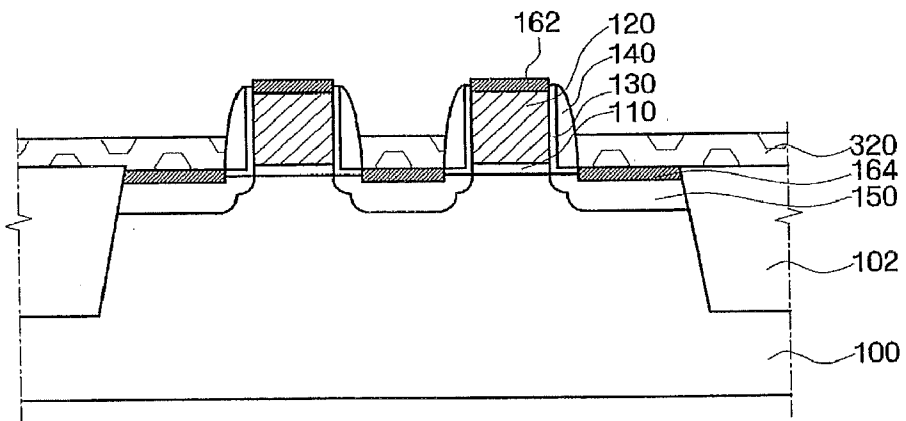


FIG. 8

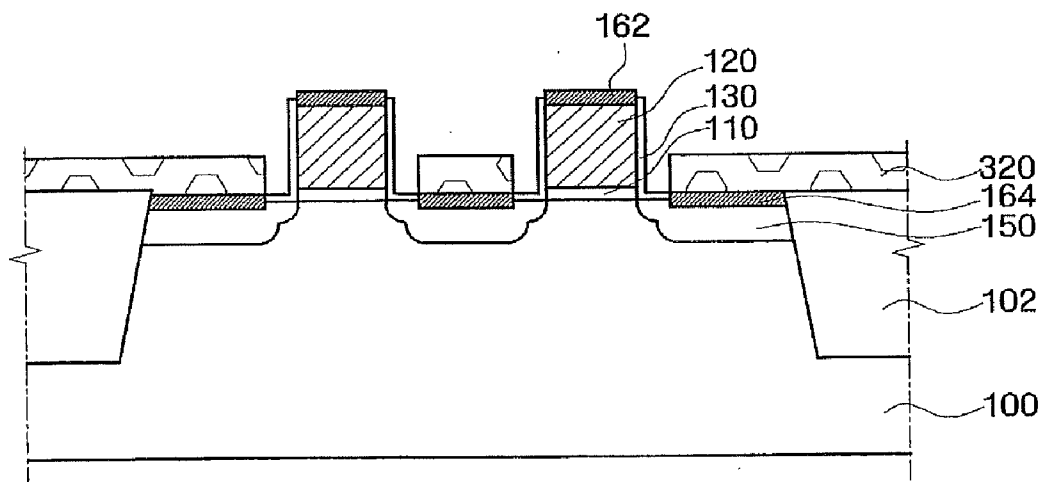


FIG. 9

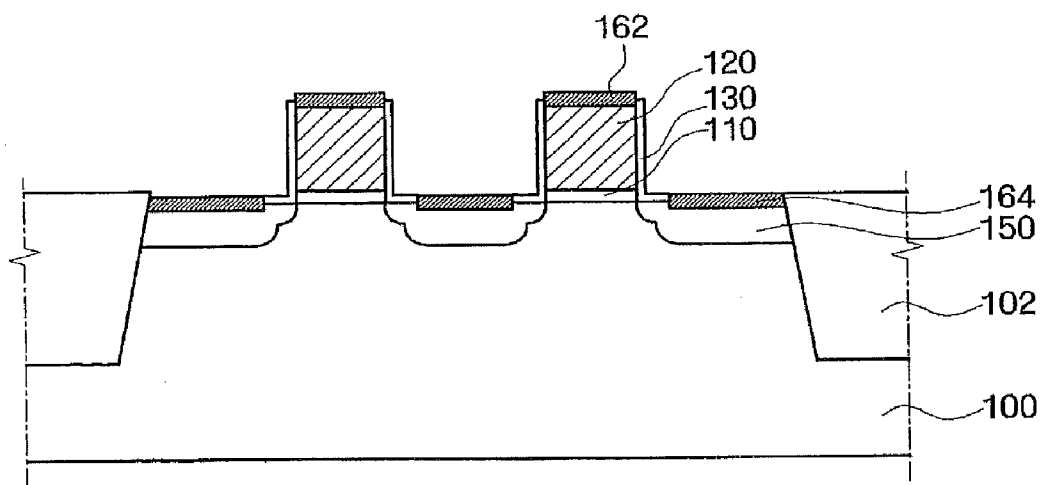
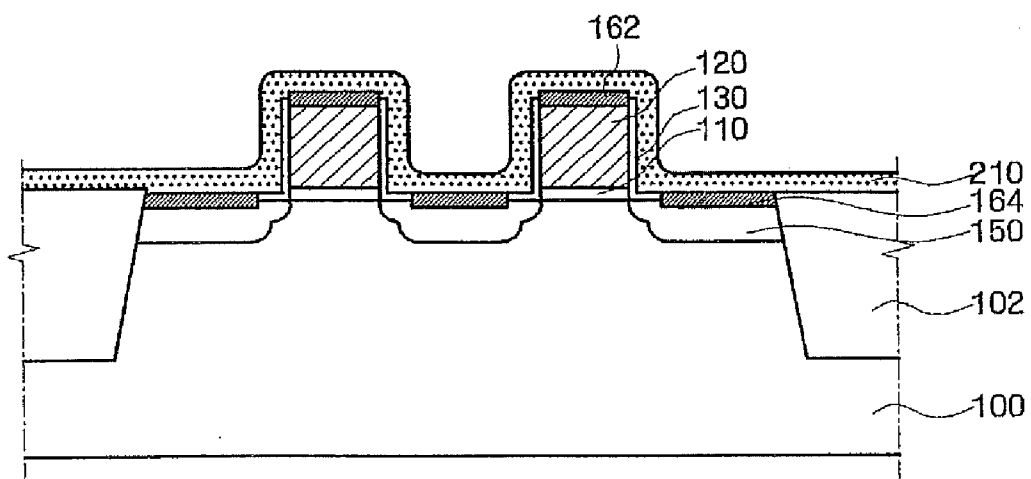


FIG. 10



FIELD EFFECT TRANSISTORS HAVING GATE ELECTRODE SILICIDE LAYERS WITH REDUCED SURFACE DAMAGE

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a divisional application of and claims priority to co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/874,118, filed Oct. 17, 2007, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference as if set forth in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to methods of forming integrated circuit devices and, more particularly, to methods of forming field effect transistors and transistors formed thereby.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Generally, a metal oxide semiconductor field effect transistor (MOSFET) includes a gate electrode, which is formed on a semiconductor substrate and insulated by a thin gate insulating film, and source/drain regions formed on both sides of the gate electrode. When an appropriate bias voltage is applied to the gate electrode of the MOSFET, a channel region is formed under the gate insulating film. That is, the channel region may be formed by appropriately controlling the bias voltage applied to the gate electrode of the MOSFET.

[0004] As the integration density of semiconductor memory devices increases, memory cells are increasingly becoming smaller and faster to meet market needs. Accordingly, various methods of fabricating semiconductor devices with better performance while overcoming the limitations created by the increased integration density and speed are being studied. In particular, studies are being conducted on methods of increasing mobility of electrons or holes to implement a high-performance semiconductor device.

[0005] One of the methods of increasing mobility of electrons or holes is to apply physical stress to a channel region and thus modify the structure of an energy band of the channel region. For example, if tensile stress is applied to a channel region of an N-type transistor, the performance of the N-type transistor is enhanced. Also, the performance of a P-type transistor can be enhanced by applying compressive stress to its channel region.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Methods of forming integrated circuit devices according to embodiments of the present invention include forming a field effect transistor having a gate electrode, a sacrificial spacer on a sidewall of the gate electrode and silicided source/drain regions. The sacrificial spacer is used as an implantation mask when forming highly doped portions of the source/drain regions. The sacrificial spacer is then removed from the sidewall of the gate electrode. A stress-inducing electrically insulating layer, which is configured to induce a net tensile stress (for NMOS transistors) or compressive stress (for PMOS transistors) in a channel region of the field effect transistor, is then formed on the sidewall of the gate electrode. This stress-inducing electrically insulating layer operates to increase a mobility of charge carriers in the channel region.

[0007] According to some of these embodiments of the invention, the silicided source/drain regions include a source

region having a first metal silicide layer thereon that is self-aligned to the sacrificial spacer. Moreover, the removing of the sacrificial spacer includes forming a mask layer on the field effect transistor and partially etching back the mask layer to expose the sacrificial spacer. The exposed sacrificial spacer is then selectively etched using the mask layer to protect the first metal silicide layer from etching damage. The mask layer may be a photoresist layer and the sacrificial spacer may include a nitride insulating material.

[0008] The field effect transistor may also include a second metal silicide layer on the gate electrode and the partially etching may include partially etching back the mask layer to expose the sacrificial spacer and the second metal silicide layer. According to these embodiments of the invention, the selectively etching includes exposing the second metal silicide layer to a wet and/or dry etchant. The partially etched-back mask layer may also be removed and the step of forming a stress-inducing electrically insulating layer includes depositing a stress-inducing electrically insulating layer on the second metal silicide layer.

[0009] Methods of forming integrated circuit devices according to additional embodiments of the invention may also include forming a field effect transistor having a gate electrode, a sacrificial spacer on a sidewall of the gate electrode and LDD source/drain regions, on a semiconductor substrate. Then, during subsequent processing, the sacrificial spacer is replaced with a stress-inducing electrically insulating layer that is configured to induce a net tensile or compressive stress in a channel region of the field effect transistor. According to these embodiments of the invention, the LDD source/drain regions may have silicided layers thereon and replacing the sacrificial spacer may include selectively etching the sacrificial spacer using a mask layer to protect the silicided layers from etching damage.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] The above and other features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent by describing in detail-preferred embodiments thereof with reference to the attached drawings in which:

[0011] FIGS. 1 through 10 are cross-sectional views of intermediate structures that illustrate methods of fabricating semiconductor integrated circuit devices according to embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The present invention will now be described more fully with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which exemplary embodiments of the invention are shown. The invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as being limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art. Like reference numerals in the drawings denote like elements, and thus their description will be omitted.

[0013] The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the invention. As used herein, the singular forms "a", "an" and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. It will be further understood that the terms "comprises" and/

or “comprising,” when used in this specification, specify the presence of stated components, steps, operations, and/or elements, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other components, steps, operations, and/or elements thereof. In addition, the term “and/or” includes any and all combinations of one or more of the associated listed items.

[0014] Hereinafter, a method of fabricating a semiconductor integrated circuit device according to an embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to FIGS. 1 through 10. Referring to FIG. 1, a device isolation region **102** defining an active region is formed on a semiconductor substrate **100**. The semiconductor substrate **100** may be a silicon substrate, silicon on insulator (SOI) substrate, a gallium arsenide substrate, a silicon germanium substrate, a ceramic substrate, a quartz substrate or a display glass substrate, for example. In addition, the semiconductor substrate **100** may be a P-type substrate or an N-type substrate. In many cases, a P-type substrate is used as the semiconductor substrate **100**. Although not shown, a P-type epitaxial layer may be grown on the semiconductor substrate **100**. Although not shown, the semiconductor substrate **100** may include a P-type well doped with p-type impurities or an N-type well doped with n-type impurities. The device isolation region **102**, which defines the active region and an inactive region, may be shallow trench isolation (STI) region or a field oxide (FOX) region.

[0015] Referring to FIG. 2, a gate insulating film **110** and a gate electrode **120** are formed on the active region of the semiconductor substrate **100**. Specifically, an insulating film for a gate insulating film and a conductive film for a gate electrode are sequentially deposited on the semiconductor substrate **100** and then patterned to form the gate insulating film **110** and the gate electrode **120**. The gate insulating film **110** may be formed of SiO_x, SiON, TiO_x, TaO_x, or the like. The gate insulating film **110** may be formed by chemical vapor deposition (CVD) or sputtering, for example. The gate electrode **120** is a conductor and may have a structure in which one or more of polysilicon, metal, metal silicide and metal nitride films doped with n-type or p-type impurities are stacked. The gate electrode **120** may also include a metal such as W, Co, Ni, Ti, Ta or the like.

[0016] Referring to FIG. 3, a first spacer **130** is formed on side surfaces of the gate insulating film **110** and the gate electrode **120**. The first spacer **130** may be formed by performing an oxidation process on the semiconductor substrate **100**. The oxide film may extend along the side surfaces of the gate insulating film **110** and the gate electrode **120** and a top surface of the semiconductor substrate **100**, as illustrated. The oxide film formed on the side surfaces of the gate insulating film **110** and the gate electrode **120** is the first spacer **130** and protects the side surface of the gate electrode **120**. While the oxidation process for forming the first spacer **130** is performed, defects in the semiconductor substrate **100** can be reduced. Consequently, the reliability of a semiconductor device to be formed can be enhanced.

[0017] Referring to FIG. 4, a second spacer **140** is formed on a side surface of the first spacer **130**, and a source/drain region **150** aligned with the gate electrode **120** is formed. Here, the source/drain region **150** may have a double diffused drain (DDD) structure or a lightly doped drain (LDD) structure. For example, in order to form the source/drain region **150** having the LDD structure, light ion-implantation is performed using the gate electrode **120** as a mask. Then, an insulating film (not shown) is conformally formed on a front

surface of the semiconductor substrate **100**. The insulating film may be, for example, a nitride film. The insulating film may be conformally formed on the front surface of the semiconductor substrate **100** by, for example, CVD. Next, the insulating film is anisotropically etched to form the second spacer **140** on the side surface of the first spacer **130**. Then, high-concentration impurities are injected into the semiconductor substrate **100** using the second spacer **140** as a mask, thereby completing the self-aligned source/drain region **150**. In the case of an N-type metal oxide semiconductor (MOS) transistor, arsenic (As) or phosphorus (P) ions can be ion-implanted using several tens of keV of energy in order to form the source/drain region **150**. In the case of a P-type MOS transistor, B, BF₂ or BF₃, or In is heavily ion-implanted using several tens of keV of energy in order to form the source/drain region **150**.

[0018] Referring to FIG. 5, silicide layers **162** and **164** are formed on the source/drain region **150** and a top surface of the gate electrode **120** in a silicide process. In order to form the silicide layers **162** and **164**, a metal layer (not shown) is formed on the front surface of the semiconductor substrate **100**. The metal layer may be formed of Ti, Pt, Pd, Co, Ni, or W by sputtering. Next, an annealing process for thermally treating the semiconductor substrate **100** under certain processing conditions is performed as part of the silicide process. Then, a silicide reaction occurs wherever the metal layer contacts silicon. Consequently, the silicide layers **162** and **164** are formed. Unreacted portions of the metal layer are removed through an etching or cleaning process.

[0019] Referring to FIG. 6, a mask layer **320** is formed to completely cover the second spacer **140** and the silicide layers **162** and **164**. The mask layer **320** may be formed of a material, such as photoresist, which can protect the semiconductor substrate **100** when the second spacer **140** is removed in a subsequent process.

[0020] Referring to FIG. 7, the mask layer **320** is partially removed in order to expose an upper portion of the second spacer **140**. The mask layer **320** may be partially removed in an etch-back process in order to expose the upper portion of the second spacer **140**. Here, the mask layer **320** is partially removed so that the semiconductor substrate **100** is not exposed.

[0021] Referring to FIG. 8, the second spacer **140** is removed. The second spacer **140** may be removed by dry etching such as reactive ion etching (RIE). In this case, the second spacer **140** may be dry-etched using an etch gas which has a higher etch rate than that of the mask layer **320**. Then, only the second spacer **140** can be etched while the mask layer **320** remains unetched. Alternatively, the second spacer **140** may be removed by wet etching. In this case, the second spacer **140** may be wet-etched using an etching solution, which has a higher etch rate than that of the mask layer **320**.

[0022] After the mask layer **320** is formed on the semiconductor substrate **100**, even if the second spacer **140** is removed, the semiconductor substrate **100** is not damaged. That is, the semiconductor substrate **100** and the silicide layer **164** formed on the source/drain region **150** of the semiconductor substrate **100** can be protected while the second spacer **140** is removed. Therefore, the surface damage of the silicide layer **164** on the source/drain region **150** is less than that of the silicide layer **162** on the top surface of the gate electrode **120**. Here, the surface damage includes physical damage to surface, increased resistance, generation of leakage current, and increased hot carrier, which are caused by physical and

chemical impacts due to the etching process. If the second spacer **140** is removed, the distance between a stress layer and a channel region is reduced. Therefore, when the stress layer that is to be formed in a subsequent process applies stress, the stress can be more effectively delivered to the channel region.

[0023] Referring to FIG. 9, the mask layer **320** is removed. The mask layer **320** may be, for example, wet-etched. Since the mask layer **320** is formed of a material such as photoresist, it can be easily removed. Therefore, the semiconductor substrate **100** is not greatly damaged when the mask layer **320** is removed.

[0024] Referring to FIG. 10, a stress layer **210** is formed to cover the gate electrode **120** and the semiconductor substrate **100**. The stress layer **210** may be formed of a nitride film such as SiN. The stress layer **210** may be a tensile stress layer or a compressive stress layer. The tensile stress layer may be formed by, for example, low pressure CVD (LPCVD). In addition, the compressive stress layer may be formed by, for example, plasma enhanced CVD (PECVD). The tensile stress layer or the compressive stress layer may be formed in appropriate consideration of deposition conditions such as pressure and temperature.

[0025] An N-type transistor or a P-type transistor may be formed on the semiconductor substrate **100**. If the N-type transistor is formed on the semiconductor substrate **100**, the stress layer **210** may be the tensile stress layer. If the P-type transistor is formed on the semiconductor substrate **100**, the stress layer **210** may be the compressive stress layer.

[0026] If the stress layer **210** is formed on a transistor, it applies stress to the channel region, thereby improving characteristics of the semiconductor device. That is, if the tensile stress layer is formed on the N-type transistor, the mobility of electrons is increased. If the compressive stress layer is formed on the P-type transistor, the mobility of holes is increased. Consequently, the characteristics of the semiconductor device can be improved.

[0027] In the method of fabricating the semiconductor integrated circuit device according to the present invention, the second spacer **140** is removed, thereby reducing the distance between the stress layer **210** and the channel region. Therefore, the stress layer **210** can more effectively apply stress to the channel region.

[0028] In addition, when the second spacer **140** is removed, the mask layer **320** blocks the top surface of the semiconductor substrate **100** and thus protects the silicide layer **164** on the source/drain region **150**. Therefore, an increase in the resistance of the silicide layer **164** on the source/drain region **150** and an increase in leakage current caused by the damage to the silicide layer **164** can be prevented and the reliability of the semiconductor integrated circuit device can be enhanced.

[0029] The semiconductor integrated circuit device according to the present embodiment will now be further described with reference to FIG. 10. Referring to FIG. 10, the semiconductor integrated circuit device includes the gate insulating film **110**, the gate electrode **120**, the source/drain region **150**, the silicide layers **162** and **164**, the first spacer **130**, and the stress layer **210**. The gate insulating film **110** is formed on the semiconductor substrate **100**, and the gate electrode **120** is formed on the gate insulating film **110**. The source/drain region **150** is aligned with the gate electrode **120**, and the silicide layers **162** and **164** are formed on the source/drain region and the top surface of the gate electrode **120**. The first

spacer **130** extends from and along a side surface of the gate electrode **120** to a portion of the top surface of the semiconductor substrate **100** on which the silicide layers **162** and **164** are not formed. The stress layer **210** covers the gate electrode **120** and the semiconductor substrate **100**.

[0030] Here, the surface of the silicide layer **164** on the source/drain region **150** is less damaged than that of the silicide layer **162** on a top surface of the gate electrode **120**. In addition, the silicide layer **164** on the source/drain region **150** is separated a predetermined distance away from the gate electrode **120**.

[0031] The first spacer **130** extending from the side surface of the gate electrode **120** is formed in a region of the semiconductor substrate **100** between the gate electrode **120** and the silicide layer **164**. The first spacer **130** may be an oxide film. Here, the first spacer **130** may have a thickness similar to or less than that of the gate insulating film **110**. The stress layer **210** may be a tensile stress layer or a compressive stress layer. In particular, if the N-type transistor is formed on the semiconductor substrate **100**, the stress layer **210** may be the tensile stress layer. If the P-type transistor is formed on the semiconductor substrate **100**, the stress layer **210** may be the compressive stress layer.

[0032] According to the semiconductor integrated circuit device of the present embodiment, since no spacer is formed on a low-concentration region of the source/drain region **150**, the distance between the stress layer **210** and the channel region is reduced. Therefore, the stress layer **210** can more effectively apply stress to the channel region.

[0033] Furthermore, according to the semiconductor integrated circuit device of the present embodiment, the damage to the silicide layer **164** on the source/drain region **150** can be minimized during the processing processes. Therefore, the surface of the silicide layer **164** formed on the source/drain region **150** is less damaged than that of the silicide layer **162** formed on the gate electrode **120**. Since an increase in leakage current and silicide resistance due to the damage to the silicide layer **164** on the source/drain region **150** is prevented, the semiconductor integrated circuit device with enhanced reliability can be provided.

[0034] While the present invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to exemplary embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the following claims. The exemplary embodiments should be considered in descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation.

What is claimed is:

1. A semiconductor integrated circuit device comprising: a gate insulating film formed on a semiconductor substrate; a gate electrode formed on the gate insulating film; a source/drain region aligned with the gate electrode; and silicide layers formed on the source/drain region and a top surface of the gate electrode, respectively, wherein the surface damage of the silicide layer formed on the source/drain region is less than that of the silicide layer formed on the top surface of the gate electrode.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein the silicide layer on the source/drain region is separated a predetermined distance away from the gate electrode, and a portion of a surface of the semiconductor substrate on which the silicide layer is not

formed is more damaged than a surface of the silicide layer on the source/drain region.

3. The device of claim 2, further comprising a first spacer extending from a side surface of the gate electrode to a portion of a top surface of the semiconductor substrate on which the silicide layer is not formed.

4. The device of claim 3, wherein the first spacer is an oxide film.

5. The device of claim 1, further comprising a stress layer covering the gate electrode and the semiconductor substrate.

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