A pair of spaced upstanding downwardly tapering sleeve portions interconnected by an integral inverted U-shaped bow spring portion including a pair of depending legs whose lower ends are joined to adjacent side portions of the upper ends of the sleeve portions. The sleeve portions are adapted to have all but the upper end portions of a pair of chopsticks downwardly inserted therethrough with the upper end portions of the chopsticks wedgingly received in the sleeve portions. Further, the bow spring serves to yieldingly bias the lower ends of the sleeve portions upwardly and away from each other, whereby the chopsticks supported from the holder may be readily supported by inexperienced persons merely by finger contact with the remote surfaces of the chopsticks below their points of support from the tapered sleeve portions of the holder.

1 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures
HOLDERS FOR CHOPSTICKS

Many Occidentals enjoy dining out occasionally at restaurants which serve foods native to various foreign countries. While Occidentals eating in restaurants serving foods other than Chinese food have little difficulty in utilizing the eating utensils which are provided for use by the patrons of such restaurants, when Occidentals eat at Chinese restaurants which provide only chopsticks as eating utensils, many Occidentals are unable to completely enjoy their meal due to their inability to properly manipulate the chopsticks provided. Further, some Chinese restaurants, while providing conventional eating utensils, have chopsticks available for those persons who wish to attempt to utilize chopsticks when eating, and in many instances those persons who have not previously used chopsticks and elect to use chopsticks are reluctant to “give up” and switch to conventional eating utensils when they encounter difficulty in handling the chopsticks.

In such instances, not only are the patrons using chopsticks deprived from fully enjoying their meal but the extra time consumed by these patrons who are unfamiliar with the use of chopsticks greatly increases the number of patrons which can be handled by the restaurant in a given time period.

It is accordingly the main object of this invention to provide a holder for chopsticks that will enable even the inexperienced person to handle chopsticks in a proficient manner.

Another object of this invention is to provide a holder for chopsticks that may be utilized in conjunction with tapered chopsticks of different sizes, thus enabling not only adult chopsticks but also chopsticks designed for use by children which are shorter and more slender to also be utilized in conjunction with the holder of the instant invention.

A still further object of this invention is to provide a holder for chopsticks designed to support a pair of chopsticks for swinging movement toward and away from each other at their tapered ends and yet which will strongly resist deflection of the tapered ends of the chopsticks being held laterally of the plane in which the chopsticks are swingable relative to each other.

A final object of this invention to be specifically enumerated herein is to provide a holder for chopsticks which will conform to conventional forms of manufacture, be of simple construction and easy to use so as to provide a device that will be economically feasible, long lasting and relatively trouble free in operation.

These together with other objects and advantages which will become apparent to one skilled in the art when reading the following detailed description and the accompanying drawings and claims, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a first form of holder for chopsticks constructed in accordance with the present invention and with a pair of conventional chopsticks supported thereon;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged horizontal sectional view taken substantially upon the plane indicated by the section line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a plan view of a blank of spring metal from which the chopsticks holder illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2 may be formed; and

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a second form of chopsticks holder constructed in accordance with the present invention and designed specifically to be utilized in conjunction with chopsticks which are circular in cross-sectional shape.

Referring now more specifically to the drawings, the numeral 10 generally designates a first form of chopstick holder which includes a pair of spaced upstanding sleeve portions 12 and 14 interconnected by means of an integral inverted U-shaped bow spring portion 16. A pair of chopsticks 18 are illustrated as supported from the holder 10 and it will be noted that the chopsticks 18 are generally rectangular in cross-sectional shape and tapered toward their lower ends.

The holder 10 is constructed from a blank 20 of spring metal including a narrow elongated body 22 which is of substantially constant width and thickness throughout its midportion between its opposite end portions from which a pair of integral enlarged portions 24 are supported. The blank 20 is constructed of stiff metal having resilient properties and each of the end portions 24 has a plurality of right angle bends 26 and 28 formed therein in order to define the sleeve portions 12 and 14. It will be noted that the fold lines 26 and 28 are contiguous toward the remote ends of the blank 20 whereby the resultant sleeves or sleeve portions 12 and 14 taper toward their lower ends when positioned as illustrated in FIG. 1 of the drawings.

The opposing edges 30 of the marginal portions of the end portions 24 which oppose each other after the sleeve portions 12 and 14 have been formed by bending the end portions 24 along the fold lines 26 and 28 may be either secured to each other or merely disposed in abutting relation. In any event, the material of which the blank 20 is formed is sufficiently stiff to prevent deflection of those portions of the blank which define the sleeve portions 12 and 14 after the latter have been formed and the chopsticks 18 may be mounted in the holder 10 by first inserting one of the chopsticks in one of the sleeve portions 12 and 14 and thereafter bowing the body to a configuration similar to that illustrated in FIG. 1 of the drawings and then inserting the other chopstick 18 in the other sleeve portion. After the chopsticks 18 have been engaged with the holder 10, the chopsticks 18 may be released whereby the resiliency of the bow spring portion 16 of the holder 20 will swing the lower ends of the chopsticks 18 apart until the upper ends of the chopsticks 18 contact each other and prevent further straightening of the bow spring portion 16 and thus movement of the tapered ends of the chopsticks 18 apart.

Of course, the wedge fit of the tapered chopsticks 18 in the sleeve portions 12 and 14 prevents the biasing action of the bow spring portion 16 from urging the chopsticks 18 further downwardly through the sleeve portions 12 and 14.

In addition, although the chopsticks 18 wedgingly seat in the sleeve portions 12 and 14, the holder 10 may also be utilized with shorter and slimmer chopsticks such as those designed for use by children and such slimmer chopsticks will merely move further downwardly relative to the sleeve portions 12 and 14 before seating in the latter whereby the tapered ends of the children's chopsticks will be spaced further from the holder thereby requiring less force to be applied by a child in urging the lower tapered ends of a pair of children's chopsticks together to grip a piece of food therebetwise.

With attention now invited more specifically to FIG. 4 of the drawings, there will be seen a modified form of chopsticks holder generally designated by the reference numeral 34 and which is adapted for use in conjunction with a pair of chopsticks 36 which are substantially circular in cross-sectional shape. The chopsticks 36 are also downwardly tapered and the holder 34 is constructed of a length of spring wire whose opposite ends are wound into adjacent abutted convolutions in order to form a pair of tapering sleeve portions 36 and 38 corresponding to the sleeve portions 12 and 14. The sleeve portions 36 and 38 are joined by an integral midportion of the length of spring wire from which the sleeve portions 36 and 38 are formed and which is bent into a generally U-shaped configuration defining a bow spring 40 corresponding to the bow spring 16.

Other than the holder 34 being constructed of a length of resilient spring wire, the holder 34 is structurally and operationally equivalent to the holder 10.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed as new is as follows:
1. In combination, a pair of upstanding spaced-apart sleeve portions generally rectangular in cross section and interconnected by means of a bow spring, said bow spring being generally inverted U-shaped in configuration defining a pair of upstanding legs interconnected at their upper ends by means of an upwardly convex arcuate portion, the lower ends of said legs being secured to the upper extremities of the adjacent sides of said sleeve portions, said sleeve portions being internally downwardly tapered, a pair of upstanding downwardly tapering chopsticks, said chopsticks being generally rectangular in cross-sectional shape and downwardly seatingly received in and extending through said sleeve portions with the upper ends of said chopsticks projecting upwardly above the uppermost portions of said sleeve portions and said bow spring and the lower extremities of said bow spring dividing said sleeve portions, said bow spring comprising a strip of spring sheet metal and said sleeve portions comprise enlarged integral sheet metal end portions at the opposite ends of said bow spring each including opposite side portions projecting outwardly from the opposite side edges of the corresponding end of said sheet metal strip, each of said enlarged end portions having a pair of opposite side right angles bends formed therein along bend lines extending along and slightly convergent toward the corresponding end of the sheet metal strip, whereby said sleeve portions are formed.

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