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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR VOLUMIZING HAIR**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

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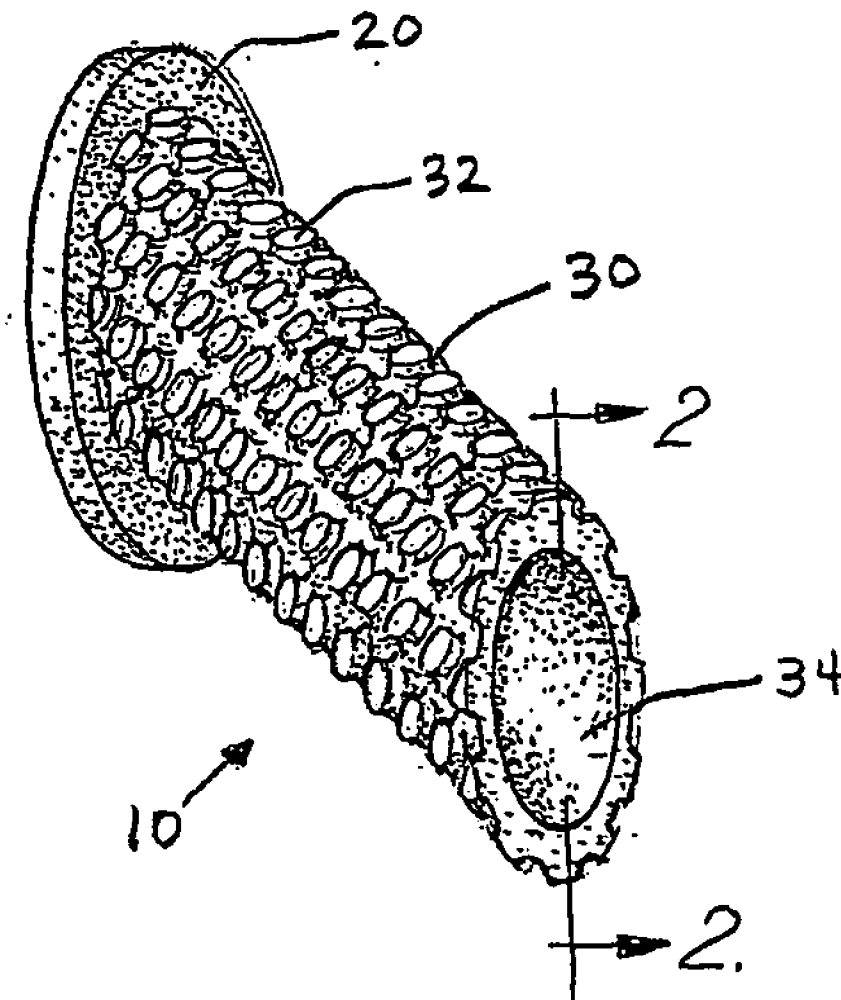
(57) **ABSTRACT**

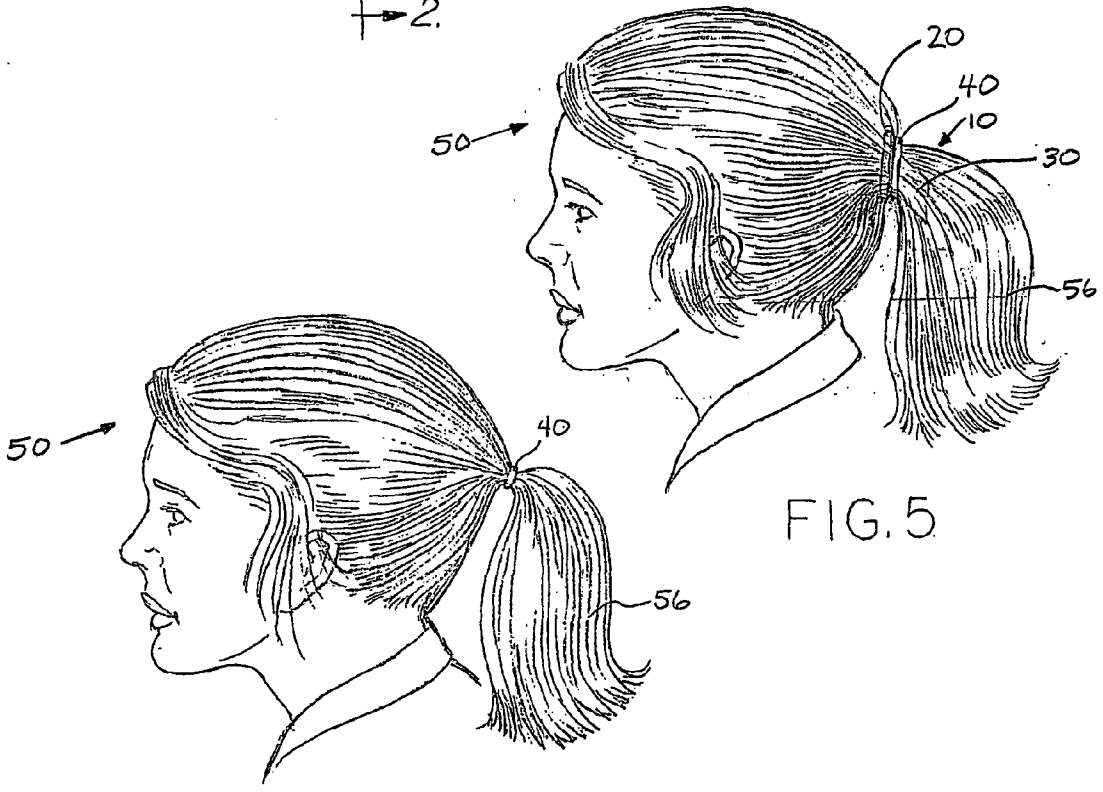
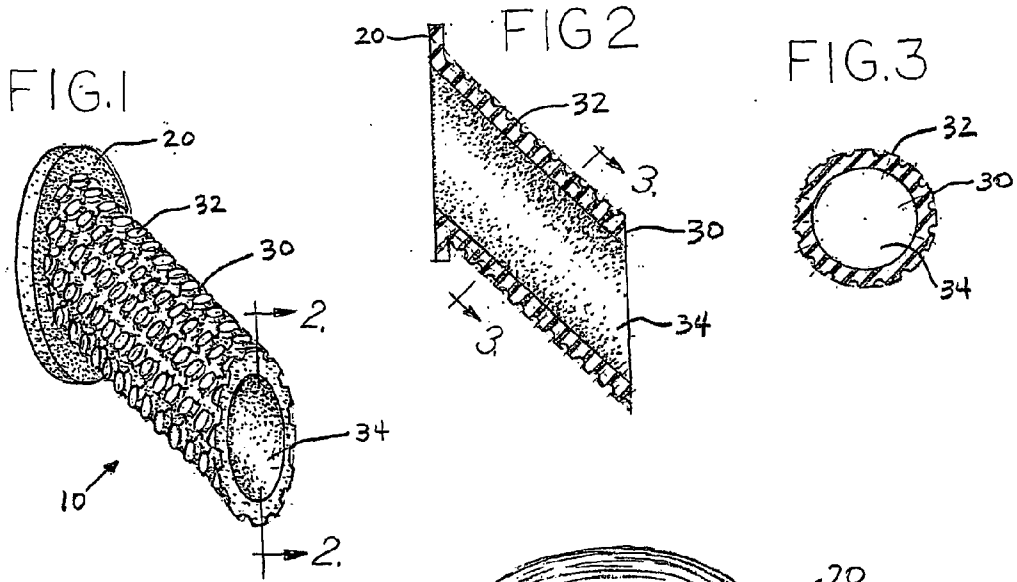
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An accessory for volumizing the hair of a user which includes first and second joined accessory portions. The hair of the user of the accessory is separated into two bundles, with the placement of the hair accessory therebetween. The bundles of hair are arranged about the hair accessory to form a single large bundle and then secured.

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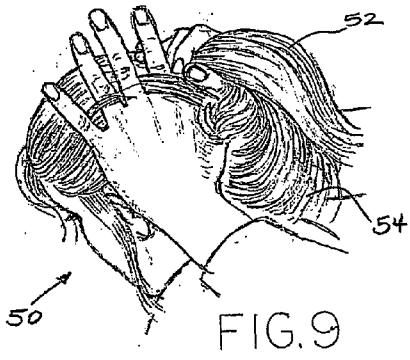
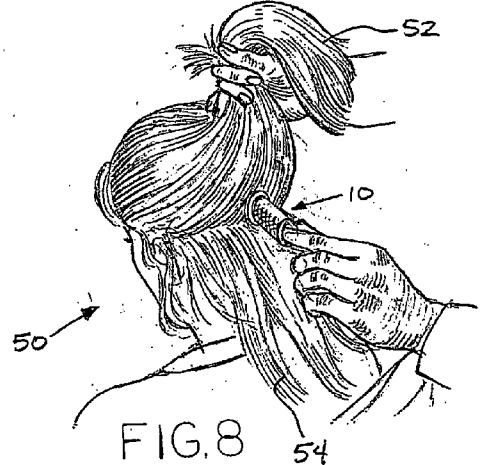
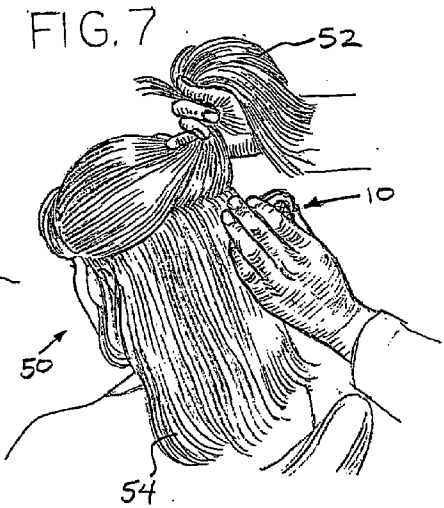
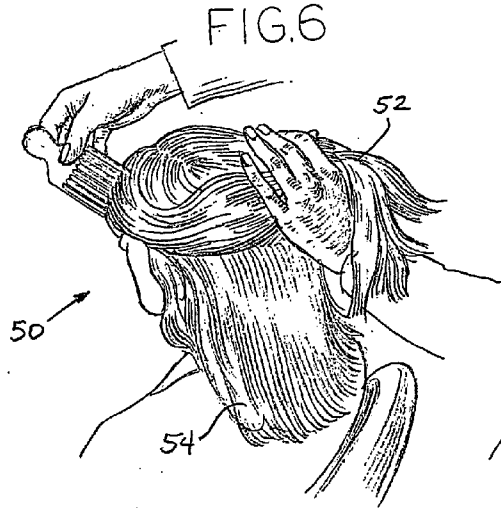


FIG.8

FIG.9

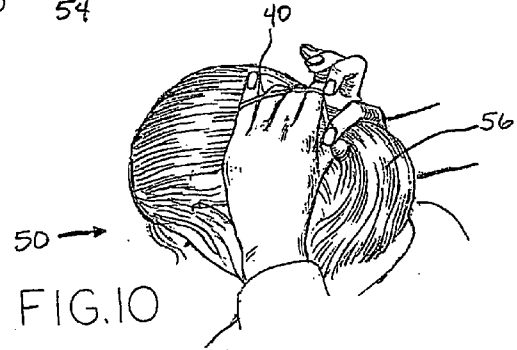


FIG.10

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR VOLUMIZING HAIR**

**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application is a continuation of Provisional Application No. 60/628,041 filed Nov. 15, 2004, and claims the benefit thereof.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for volumizing hair, providing an accessory with two portions and a method for placing hair securely about the two portions to create a volumizing effect.

[0004] 2. Description of the Background of the Invention

[0005] Hair accessories to create varied effects in hair have existed for centuries. It is widespread practice in the styling of hair to secure hair by accessories such as clips, elastic bands, and the like, to form a large bundle or bundles of hair, such as a ponytail or pigtails.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 5,845,655 describes a hair bundling core and a method of use, where a trio of hairpins is used to secure the core to the head of a user. Further proposed is a bundle of hair inserted into a coaxial hole formed by the inner wall of the core and secured, so that the core encloses the bundle.

[0007] According to other hair styling accessories, such as disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,845,657 and 6,276,368, a bundle of hair must also be pulled through a cylinder to form a certain style in the hair of a user. As such, inherent in such devices is that a portion of the user's hair is reserved for securement of the various hair accessories and is not available for use in effecting a volumized style.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0008] It is an object of the present invention to provide an accessory for volumizing hair with two portions, preferably joined at an oblique angle to each other. One portion is provided to secure the accessory against the head of a user, while the second portion is adapted to accommodate the hair of the user.

[0009] In a separate, independent feature of the invention, a method is proposed to create a volumizing effect in the hair of a user. This is accomplished by first separating the hair into a top bundle and bottom bundle on a user's head. Next, the first portion of the hair accessory is placed against the head of the user between the top and bottom bundles of hair, while pressure is placed on the accessory to maintain its position against the head. Finally, the top and bottom bundles of hair are arranged about the two portions of the hair volumizing accessory to form a single large bundle, while a band, or similar securement, is placed over both the single large bundle of hair and hair accessory, fixing the hair accessory within the individual's hair.

[0010] Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following description of the illustrated embodiment, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illus-

trate, by way of example, the principles of the invention, exemplifying the best mode of carrying out the invention.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0011] FIG. 1 is an isometric view of an accessory for volumizing the hair of a user, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0012] FIG. 2 is a longitudinal-sectional view taken along line 2-2 of FIG. 1;

[0013] FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 3-3 of FIG. 2;

[0014] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a user's head showing a hairstyle without use of the hair accessory;

[0015] FIG. 5 is the same perspective view of a user's head as in FIG. 4, but showing the hair accessory in use;

[0016] FIG. 6 is a back perspective view of a user's head which illustrates the method step of separating hair into top and bottom bundles;

[0017] FIG. 7 is a back perspective view of a user's head which illustrates the method step of placing the hair accessory against the head;

[0018] FIG. 8 is a back perspective view of a user's head which further illustrates the method step of placing the hair accessory against the head;

[0019] FIG. 9 is a back perspective view of a user's head which illustrates the method step of arranging the top and bottom bundles of hair about the hair accessory; and

[0020] FIG. 10 is a back perspective view of a user's head which illustrates the method step of fixing the hair accessory within the hair by a band.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

[0021] A hair accessory 10 for use in creating a volumizing effect in the hair of a user is described with reference to FIGS. 1, 2, and 3. As shown in FIG. 1, the accessory 10 has a first accessory portion or base 20 joined to the second accessory portion or stem 30 at a preferred oblique angle. As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, this angle will cause the hair accessory 10 to have a downwardly pointing direction so as to correspond to the natural angle of hair assembled into a single large bundle, such as a ponytail. The first accessory portion 20 and second accessory portion 30 may be joined at different angles at the point of manufacture to accommodate varied styles of hair. The first accessory portion 30 is also circular or disk-shaped in one embodiment, but may be rectangular, oval, or other shapes without detracting from its function.

[0022] The second accessory portion 30 may include protrusions 32 covering its outer surface. These protrusions 32 aid in gripping the hair when the accessory 10 is in use. In one embodiment of the accessory 10, the second accessory portion 30 is cylindrical and hollow, defining a tubular opening or inner space 34. Such hollowing reduces the overall weight of the accessory 10, making it easier to secure the accessory 10 to a user's head.

[0023] Hair accessory 10 is preferably manufactured of a shape-retaining, flexible rubber, allowing the protrusions 32 to grip hair while the hair accessory 10 is in use.

[0024] In FIG. 4, a user 50 is shown wearing a single large bundle of hair 56, such as a ponytail. The single large bundle 56 is secured by a band 40 or similar securement, keeping the hair in place. FIG. 5 shows the hair of the user 50 as it would look with the hair accessory 10 in place within the hair. The

single large bundle 56 is secured by band 40, which fits around both the hair and the second accessory portion 30, with the band 40 secured around the hair at the junction of the first accessory portion 20 and second accessory portion 30 of the hair accessory 10.

[0025] The procedure illustrated in FIGS. 6-10 shows the method steps for using the hair accessory to create a volumizing effect in the hair of a user, provided as follows:

[0026] 1. Separate the hair of a user 50 into a top bundle 52 and a bottom bundle 54 (see FIG. 6).

[0027] 2. While holding the top bundle 52 of hair, place the first accessory portion 20 against the head of the user 50 between the top bundle 52 and bottom bundle 54 of hair (see FIGS. 7 and 8).

[0028] 3. Arrange the top bundle 52 of hair over and around the first accessory portion 20 and second accessory portion 30 and the bottom bundle 54 of hair under and around the first accessory portion 20 and second accessory portion 30 (see FIG. 9).

[0029] 4. Secure the hair accessory 10 within the formed single large bundle 56 of hair with band 40, or a similar securement (see FIG. 10).

[0030] Using the hair accessory 10 in accordance with the above method steps, a user 50 is able to removably fix the hair accessory 10 within his or her hair, either with the aid of another individual, as shown in FIGS. 6-10, or by oneself.

[0031] The detailed description related herein is meant only to exemplify the invention to enable those skilled in the art to make and use it. It is not intended to be a limitation from other minor and obvious variations on the embodiments described, all of which variations are expressly included herein.

What is claimed is:

1. An accessory for volumizing the hair of a user, said accessory comprising:

a first accessory portion adapted to be placed against the head of the user; and

a second accessory portion joined to the first accessory portion and adapted to accommodate said hair placed about both the first and the second accessory portions.

2. The hair accessory of claim 1, wherein said second accessory portion is joined to said first accessory portion at an oblique angle.

3. The hair accessory of claim 2, wherein said first accessory portion is disk-shaped.

4. The hair accessory of claim 2, wherein said second accessory portion is cylindrical.

5. The hair accessory of claim 4, wherein said second accessory portion is hollow.

6. The hair accessory of claim 1, wherein said first accessory portion and said second accessory portion are of rubber.

7. The hair accessory of claim 1, wherein said second accessory portion includes protrusion means for gripping said hair.

8. A method of style for hair using an accessory for volumizing the hair of a user, said accessory comprising:

a first accessory portion adapted to be placed against the head of the user; and

a second accessory portion joined to the first accessory portion and adapted to accommodate said hair placed about both the first and the second accessory portions; said method comprising:

separating the hair of the user into a top bundle and a bottom bundle;

placing said first accessory portion against the head of the user, between the top and bottom bundles of hair;

arranging the top bundle of hair over and around said first and second accessory portions;

arranging the bottom bundle of hair under and around said first and second accessory portions; and

removably fixing said hair accessory within the hair of the user by securing the top and bottom bundles of hair about said second accessory portion.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said arranging of the top and bottom bundles of hair creates a ponytail in the hair of the user.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said securing of said top and bottom bundles of hair is by the placement of a band about the bundles and said second accessory portion.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said band is secured about said second accessory portion and the top and bottom bundles of hair, at the junction of said first accessory portion and said second accessory portion.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein said band is elastic.

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