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(54) **WOMAN'S BRA**

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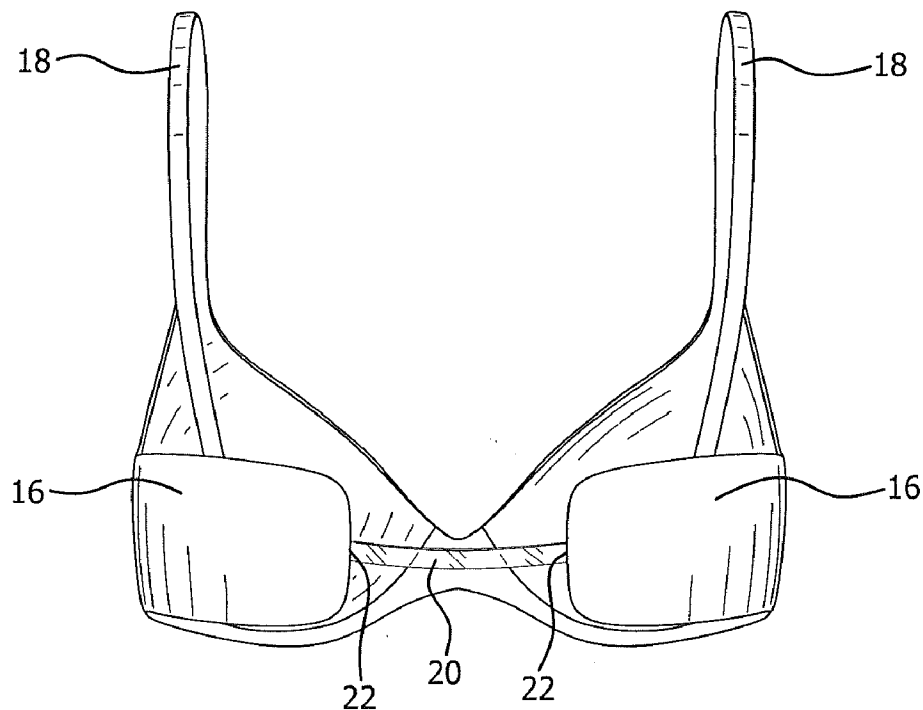
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ABSTRACT

A woman's bra includes a back strap connected to the side panels of the bra. The back strap is either transparent or nude color or of a flesh color so that it would not be readily visible across the low cut back of a garment. The fastening structure which is used for permitting the garment to be worn by and removed from the woman is at a location other than the central portion of the back strap.



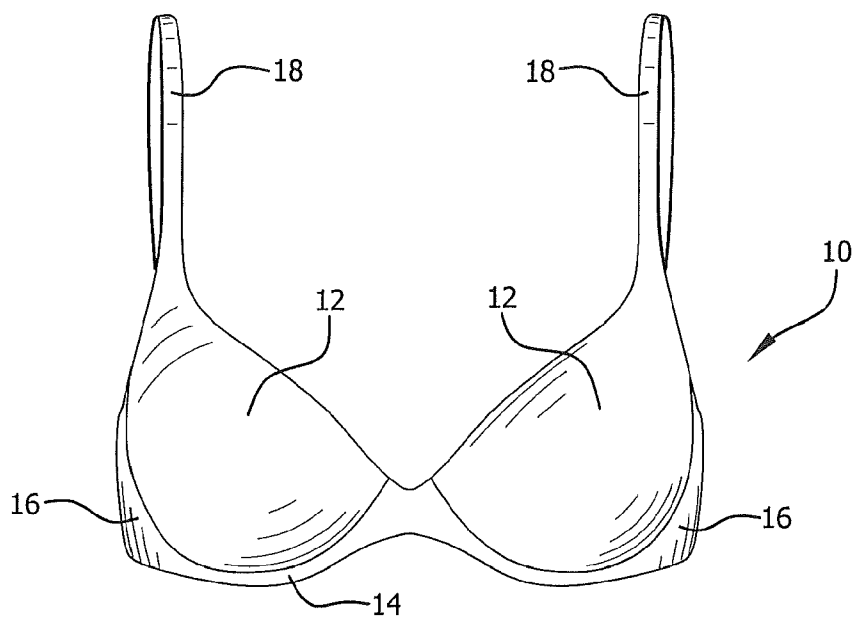


FIG. 1

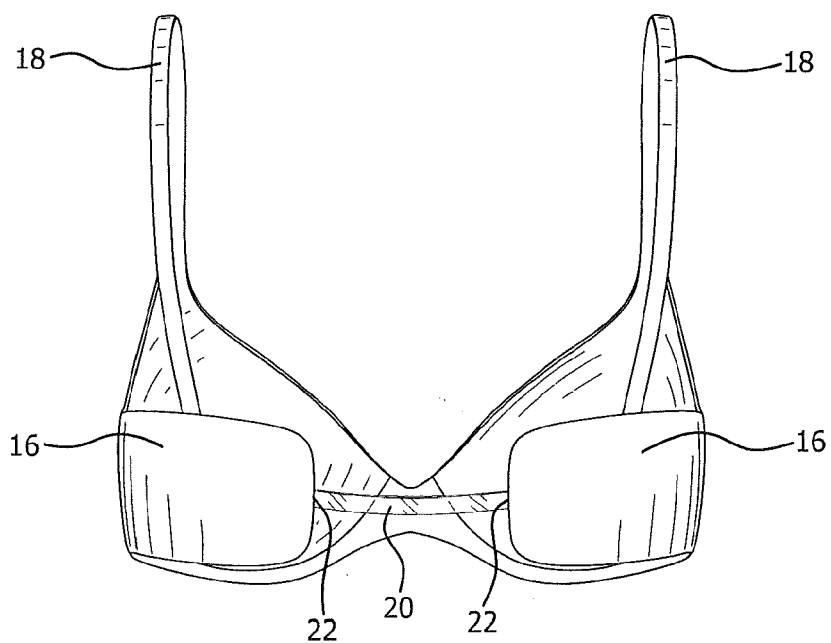


FIG. 2

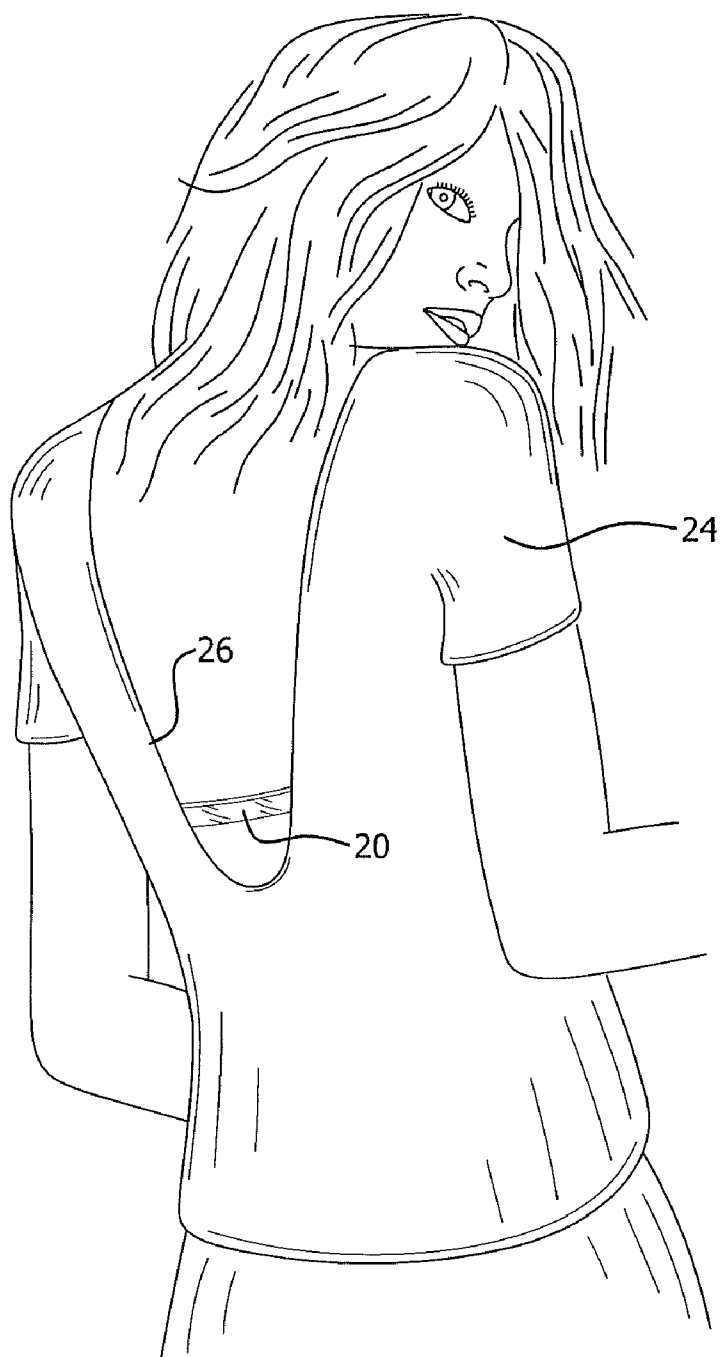


FIG. 3

WOMAN'S BRA

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0001] A brassiere which is commonly known as a bra is an undergarment that covers, supports and elevates a woman's breasts. A bra usually consists of a cup for each breast, a center panel, a band running around the torso under the bust, shoulder straps, side panels connected to the torso band and a back strap interconnecting the side panels. Bras are typically made of a fabric such as cotton, nylon, spandex and lace. The cups may be supported by underwires made of metal and sometimes coated with plastic. The bra is usually fastened with a hook fastener typically located at the central portion of the back strap.

[0002] A problem occurs when the bra is worn under a dress or blouse/shirt which is low cut in the back. In that regard, the back strap extends across the low cut area and is exposed and visually unattractive. It would be desirable if a bra could be provided which avoids the problem of a visible back strap, that could be worn with a garment having a low cut back.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0003] An object of this invention is to provide a woman's bra which can be worn with a garment having a low cut back, but wherein a back strap is not readily visible.

[0004] A further object of this invention is to provide such a bra which can be readily incorporated with otherwise conventional bra construction.

[0005] In accordance with the preferred practice of this invention the back strap or at least the central portion thereof would be made of a transparent or nude or flesh colored material so that it could extend across the low cut back of a garment and not be readily visible.

[0006] In a preferred practice of this invention the back strap is detachably secured by fastening structure at one end to an adjacent side panel so that the fastening structure can be readily manipulated to permit the bra to be worn by or removed from the woman.

THE DRAWINGS

[0007] FIG. 1 is a front elevational view of a bra in accordance with this invention;

[0008] FIG. 2 is a rear elevational view of the bra shown in FIG. 1; and

[0009] FIG. 3 is a perspective view showing the bra of FIGS. 1-2 worn by a woman wearing a garment with a low cut back.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] FIG. 1 illustrates a bra 10 in accordance with this invention. The front view of bra 10 which is shown in FIG. 1 could be of any conventional construction and appearance. In general, the front portion of bra 10 includes a pair of cup sections 12, 12. A band 14 would be located around the torso under the bust. The band 14 merges into side panel 16, 16. Shoulder straps 18, 18 extend from the front portion to the back of the bra as shown in FIG. 2.

[0011] FIG. 2 also shows a back strap 20 interconnecting the side panels 16, 16. In a preferred practice of this invention one end of back strap 20 is connected by detachable fasteners 22 to its respective side panel 16. The manipulation of the detachable fasteners permits the back strap to be detached at that end from side panel 16 so that the bra 10 can be readily

worn by and removed from the woman. The location of the detachable fasteners 22 differs from conventional bras where in conventional bras the central portion of the back strap would be divided into two adjacent parts and the fastening structure such as hooks would be located to connect the adjacent parts at the center of the back strap. If desired, in accordance with this invention, detachable fasteners 22 could also be provided at the opposite end of back strap 20 for detachable connection to its respective side panel 16. Alternatively, one end of the back strap could be permanently secured, such as by stitching, to its side panel. An advantage of having detachable fastening structure 22 at both ends of back strap 20 is that it permits the entire back strap to be detached for replacement by a different back strap, as later described.

[0012] A key feature of this invention is that back strap 20 is transparent or nude or is flesh colored so that when it extends across the open area of the low cut garment at the back, the back strap is not readily visible. FIG. 3, for example, illustrates a woman wearing a garment 24 having a low cut 26 at the back. FIG. 3 also illustrates where the back strap 20 would be located extending across the open low cut 26. While FIG. 3 shows the back strap 20, its visibility would be minimized because it is of a color which is either transparent, nude or flesh colored. As used herein, "nude" is intended to mean essentially transparent but with a very slight orange tint. The terms "flesh color" and "flesh colored" are intended to mean a color which matches the color of the skin of the wearer. Where the invention is practiced by the use of a flesh colored back strap, such flesh color could be selected from a set of different colors which would match the color of the skin of different intended users. Thus, the flesh color could be considered a color which could be of a tone ranging from extremely dark to extremely light. The advantage of having the back strap 20 detachably secured to the side panels 16 is that it permits the user to replace one back strap with another for a better match of the user's skin color. Thus, for example, at times when the user's skin color might be more tan than at other times, an appropriately selected flesh colored strap would be selected.

[0013] Another important feature of the invention is that the fastening structure which is used for permitting the bra to be worn by and removed from the woman is at a location other than the central portion of the back strap which would span across the open low cut back 26 of the garment 24. As illustrated in FIG. 2 such location of the fastening structure 22 is at one or both ends of band 20 where it is detachably connected to its adjacent side panel 16. The invention could be practiced by locating the fastening structure at other portions of bra 10, such as at the front portion. The main consideration in the location of the fastening structure is that it should not be visible at the low cut back 26 of the garment 24.

[0014] If the fastening structure is located at the front of the bra, the back strap 20 could be permanently secured (such as by stitching) to the side panels 16. If desired, however, even where the fastening structure is at the front, the back strap 20 could be detachably secured to the side panels 16 to provide the option of replacing one back strap with another. Any known fastening structure could be used such as hooks, Velcro, clips, etc.

[0015] By locating the fastening structure at a location other than the central portion of the back strap, the back strap 20 is of a unitary uninterrupted structure between its ends so that it is free of any detachable fastening structure (such as

hooks) in the central portion of the back strap that might otherwise be visible when worn with a garment having a low cut back.

[0016] As noted, in the practice of this invention the back strap **20** is transparent or nude or flesh colored. The remainder of the bra could be of any color including being of the same color as the back strap itself. More likely, however, the invention would be practiced with bras of conventional colors which are not transparent or nude or flesh colored and thus differ from the color of the back strap.

[0017] In the practice of this invention using a flesh colored back strap the color of band **20** could be of distinct colors to match the skin color for different ethnic wearers. The use of a transparent back strap provides a greater assurance of minimizing the visibility of the back strap. A nude back strap would also be of reduced visibility. When a flesh colored back strap is used, the invention could be practiced where there is not a perfect match with the skin color or tone of the woman, but where there is enough of a match so as to minimize the visibility of the back strap or at least have its visibility not so significant as to detract from the use of a garment having a low cut back.

[0018] In an alternative practice of the invention, a garment having a low cut back could be worn without a visible back strap by completely omitting the back strap. This could be done by securing the side panels directly to the inner surface of the outer garment by any suitable interconnecting fastening structure on the outer surface of the side panels and the inner surface of the garment. One suitable form of fastening structure would be Velcro, although hooks/loops, clips, etc. could also be used. In this practice of the invention, the free ends of the side panels thus terminate spaced from each other without any interconnecting back strap. The fastening structure on the outer surface of the free ends of the side panels would be detachably connected to the complementary fastening structure on the inner surface of the garment near the low cut back to selectively secure the bra to the garment without any bra back strap being in the low cut back. The low cut back provides ready access to the fastening structure on the side panels and to the complementary fastening structure on the garment to facilitate attaching the bra to or detaching the bra from the garment.

[0019] As is apparent this invention provides various techniques whereby a woman can wear a garment which is low cut in the back and minimize a visually unattractive bra back strap being visible in that low cut back area.

What is claimed is:

1. In a woman's bra having a front portion with a pair of cup sections, a side panel extending from said front portion for extending around each side of the wearer, and a back strap connected at each end of said back strap to a respective one of said side panels, the improvement being in that said back strap is of a color selected from the group consisting of a transparent color and a nude color and a flesh color whereby said back strap is not readily visible when said bra is worn by a woman wearing a garment with a low cut back, and said back strap being of a unitary uninterrupted structure between the ends of said back strap and free of any detachable fastening structure in the central portion of said back strap.

2. The bra of claim 1 wherein at least one end of said back strap is detachably secured to its said side panel to facilitate said bra being worn by and removed from the wearer.

3. The bra of claim 2 wherein each end of said back strap is detachably secured to its side panel.

4. The bra of claim 2 wherein said back strap is transparent or nude.

5. The bra of claim 1 wherein said back strap is of a color which differs from at least a portion of the remainder of said bra.

6. The bra of claim 1 wherein said back strap is transparent or nude.

7. The bra of claim 1 wherein said back strap is flesh colored.

8. The bra of claim 1 wherein said front portion includes detachable fastening structure to detachably connect one part of said front portion to an adjacent part of said front portion to facilitate said bra being selectively worn by and removed from the wearer.

9. The bra of claim 1 wherein said back strap is permanently secured to said side panels.

10. The combination of a bra and an outer garment to be worn over the bra, said outer garment having a low cut back, said outer garment having an inner surface, said bra having a front portion with a pair of cup sections, a side panel extending outwardly from each side of said front portion for extending around the side and to the back of the wearer, each of said side panels terminating in a free end without any back strap interconnecting said free ends, said side panels having an outer surface, fastening structure on said outer surface of said free ends of said side panels, and complementary fastening structure on said inner surface of said garment near said low cut back for detachable connection to said fastening structure of said side panels to secure said bra to said garment without any bra back strap being in said low cut back.

11. In a method of wearing a bra by a woman wearing a garment which is low cut in the back wherein the bra includes a front portion connected to side panels which are interconnected by a back strap, the improvement being in placing the bra on the woman with a central portion of the back strap exposed at the low cut back of the garment, manipulating detachable fastening structure to secure the bra on the woman wherein the fastening structure is at a location other than the central portion of the back strap, and minimizing the visibility of the back strap in the low cut back of the garment by having the back strap of transparent or nude or flesh color.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the fastening structure connects one end of the back strap to a side panel.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein a back strap is selected which is transparent or nude.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein a back strap is selected which is flesh colored matching the tone of the skin color of the wearer.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein each of the ends of the back strap is detachably secured to its respective side panel.

16. The method of claim 15 including completely detaching the back strap from the side panels, and attaching a different back strap to the side panels.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the back strap is selected from a set of at least two back straps differing in color from each other.

18. The method of claim 11 wherein a back strap is selected which is flesh colored of a tone matching the skin color of the wearer.

19. The method of claim 11 wherein a back strap is selected which is transparent or nude.

20. The method of claim **10** including manipulating the fastening structure which is located at the front portion of the bra to selectively permit the bra to be worn by and removed from the woman.

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