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(54) **FOOTWEAR FOR FEET BEAUTIFICATION**

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(76) **Inventor: Katrina Hollis-Lorent, Los Angeles, CA (US)**

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Correspondence Address:
KNOBBE MARTENS OLSON & BEAR LLP
2040 MAIN STREET
FOURTEENTH FLOOR
IRVINE, CA 92614 (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

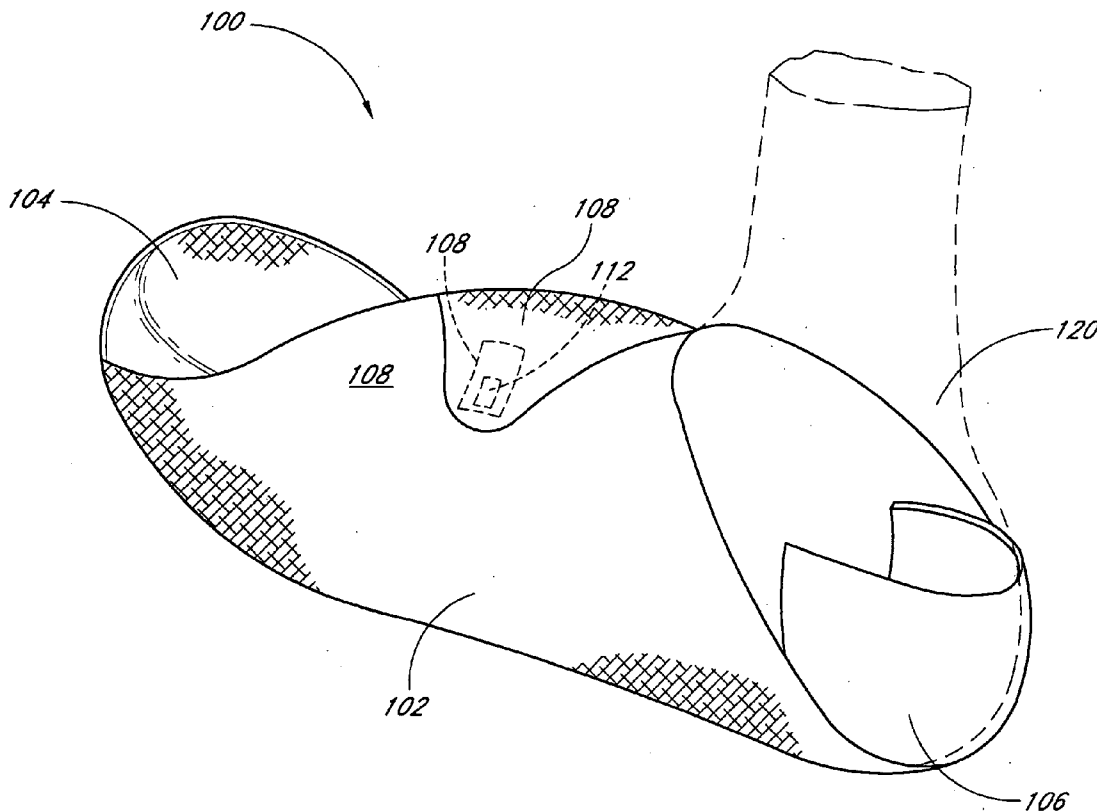
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(63) **Continuation of application No. 10/396,755, filed on Mar. 24, 2003.**

An apparatus comprises a disposable footwear article. The disposable footwear article is adapted to receive a foot. The disposable footwear article is made from a plastic material. The disposable footwear article has a toe portion, a heel portion, and an upper foot covering portion. The disposable footwear article is configured to hold a topical agent in close contact with the skin of the foot. The topical agent is a foot lotion configured to enhance the cosmetic appearance of the skin of the foot.



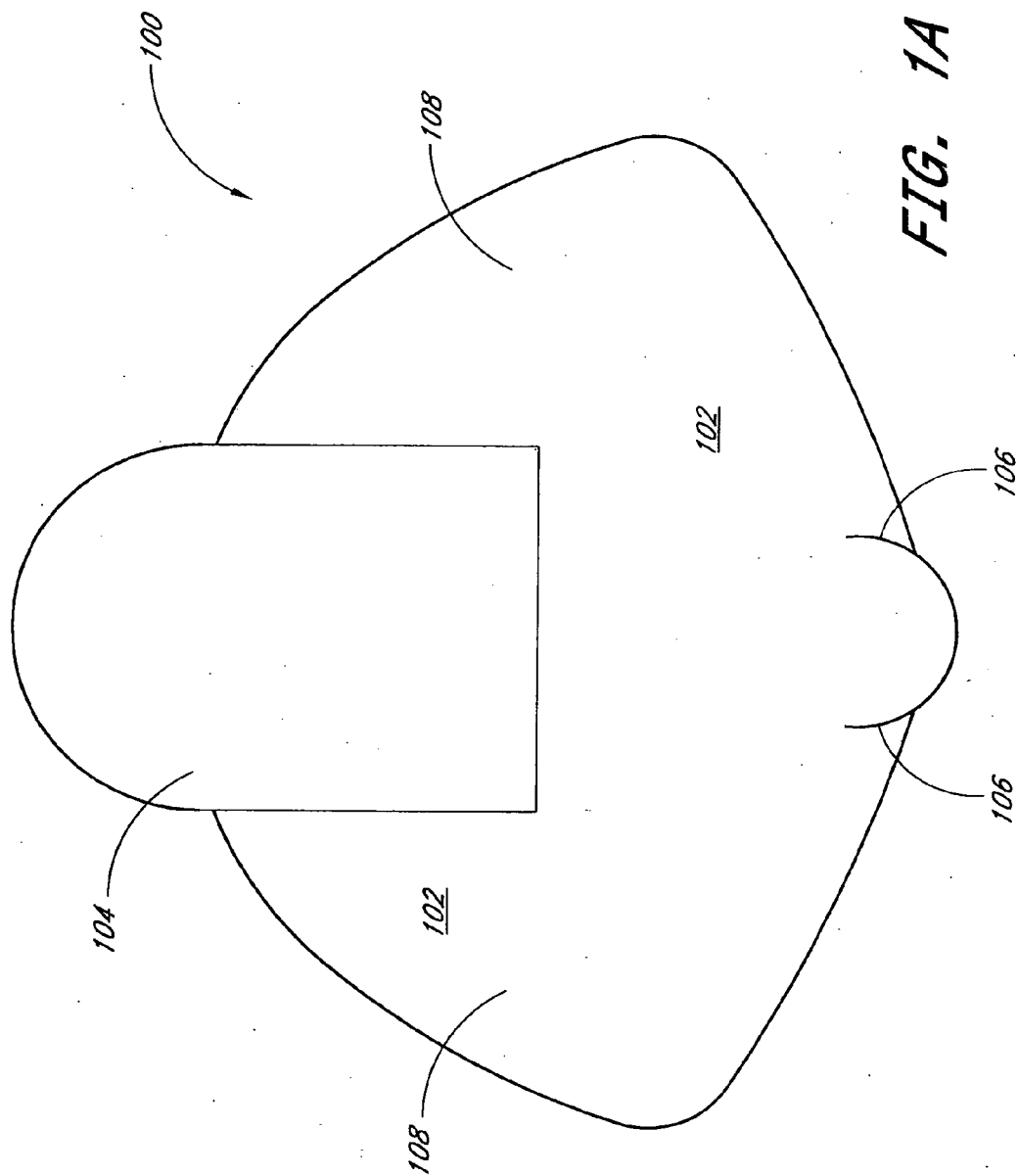


FIG. 1A

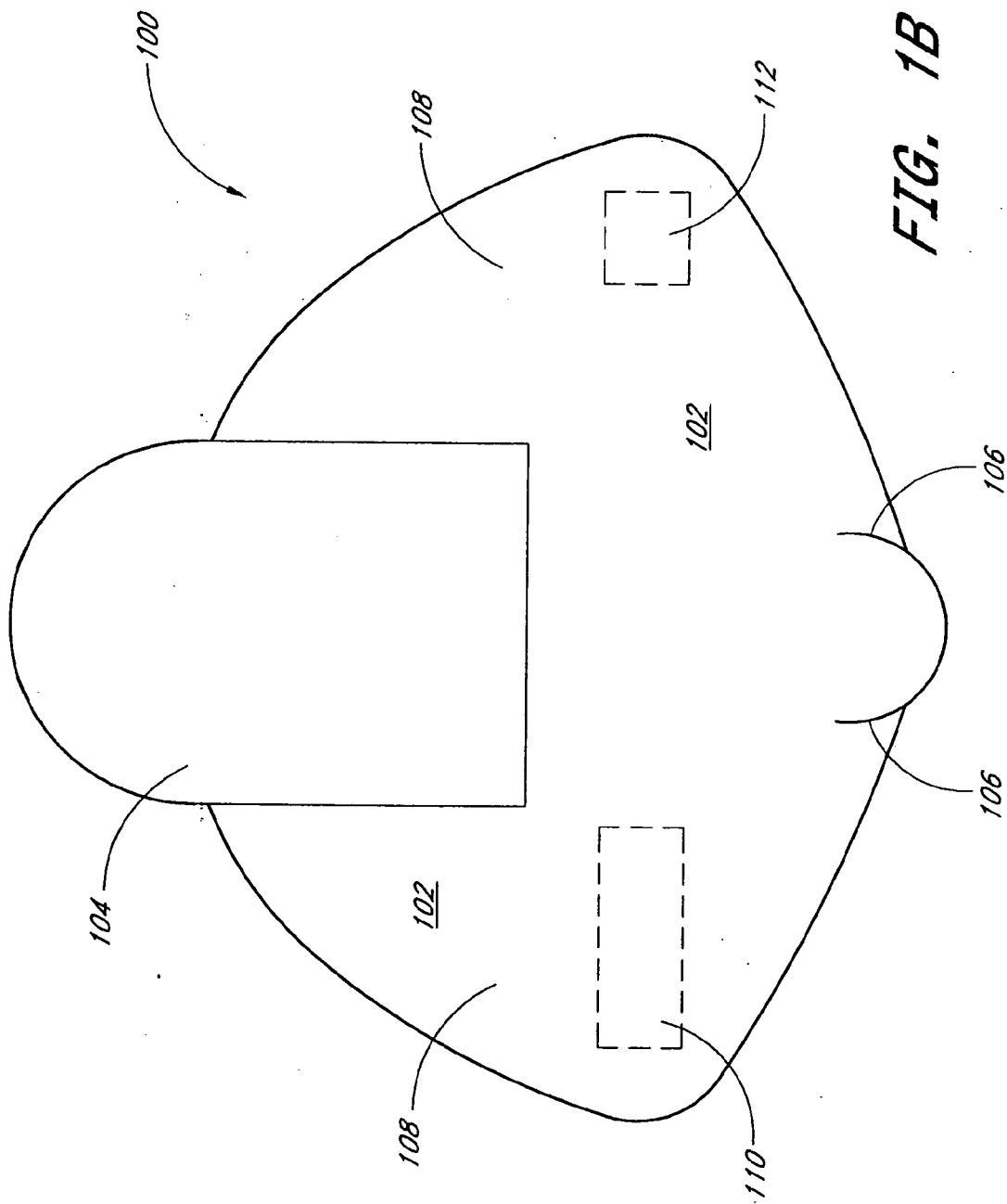


FIG. 1B

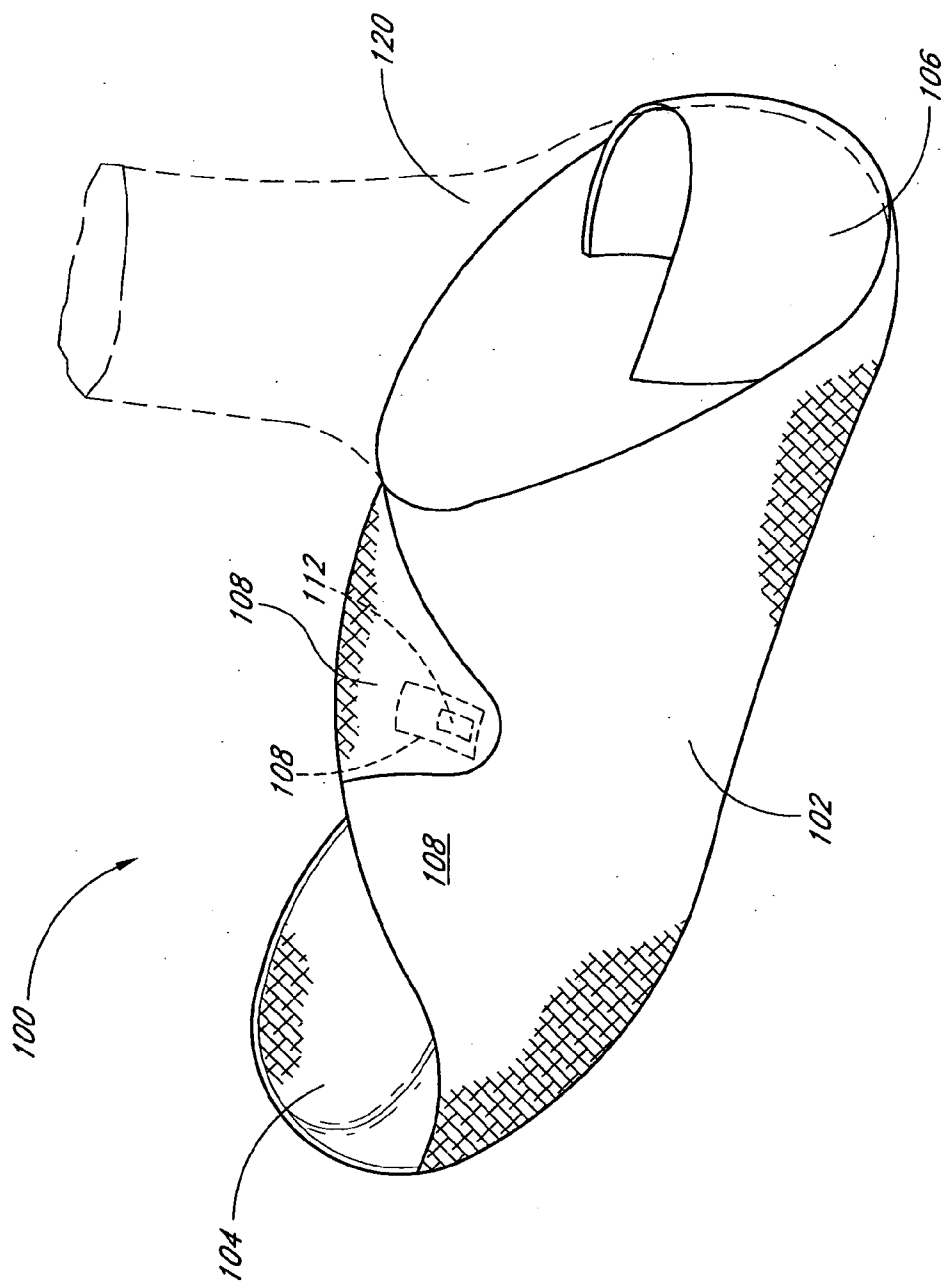


FIG. 2

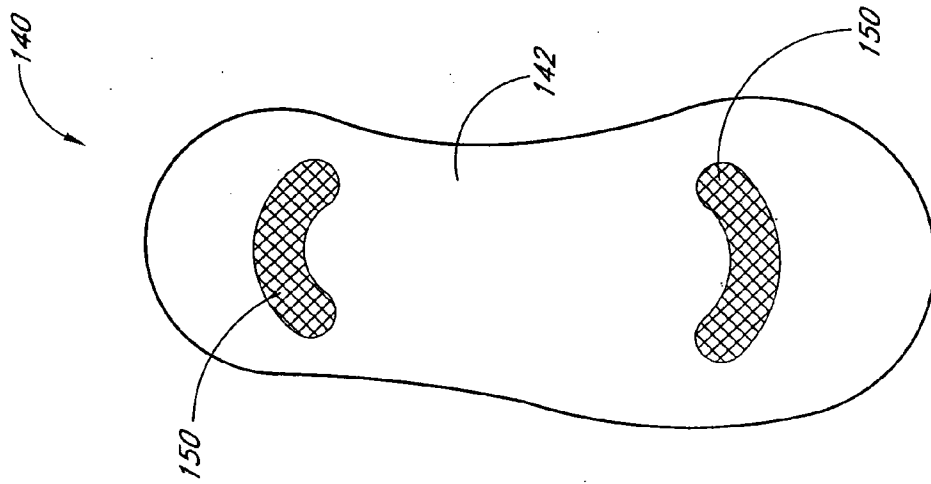


FIG. 4

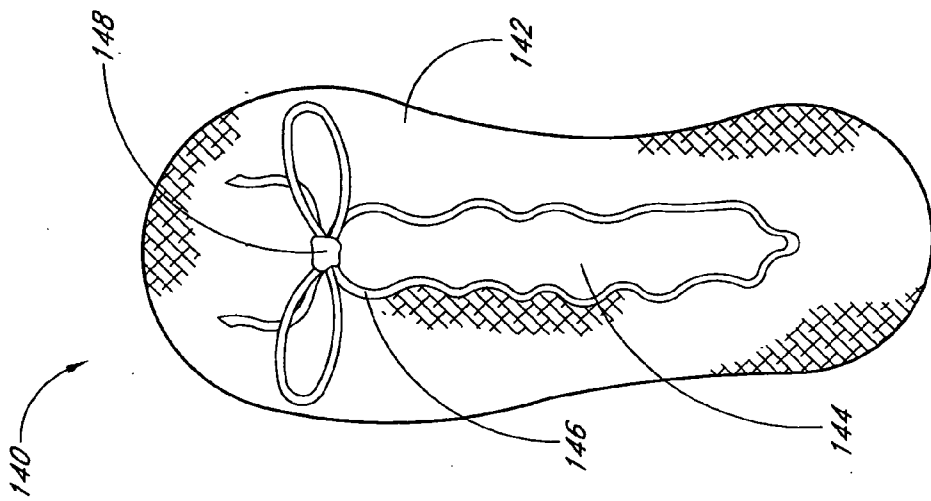


FIG. 3

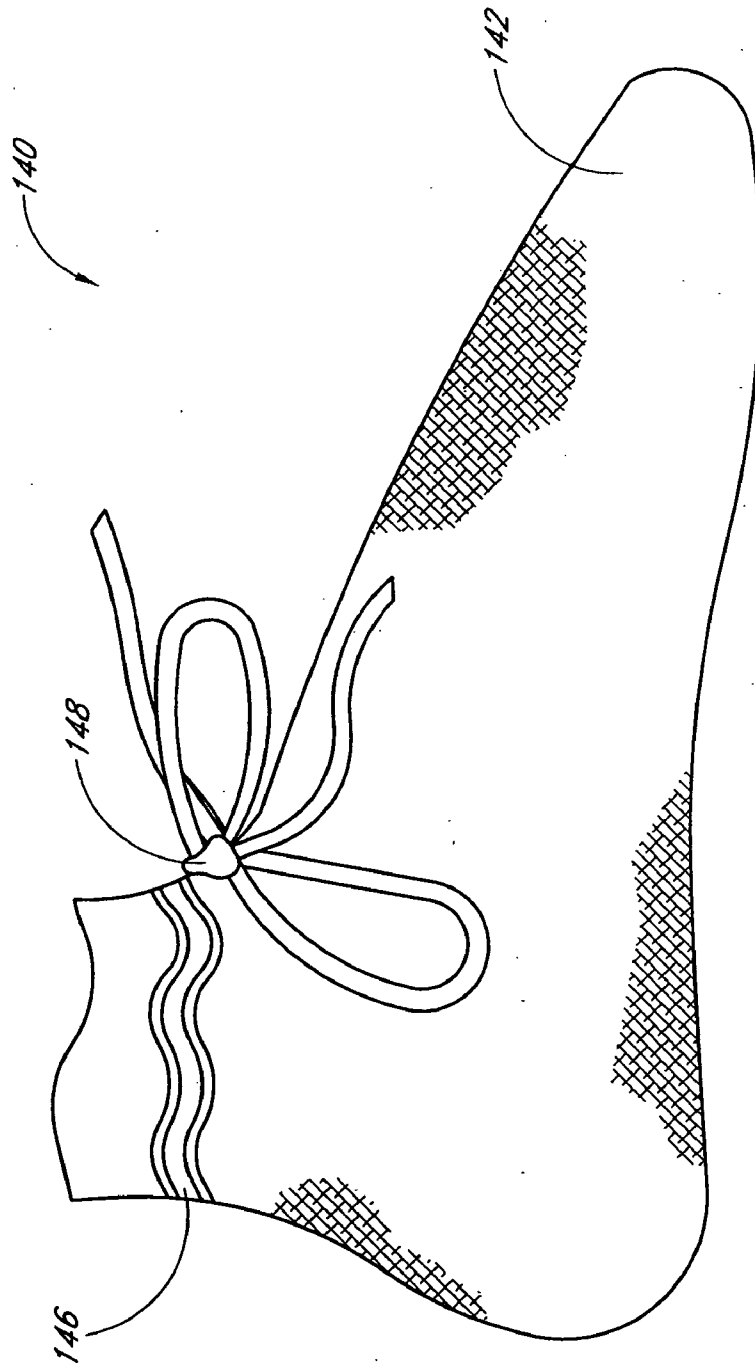


FIG. 5

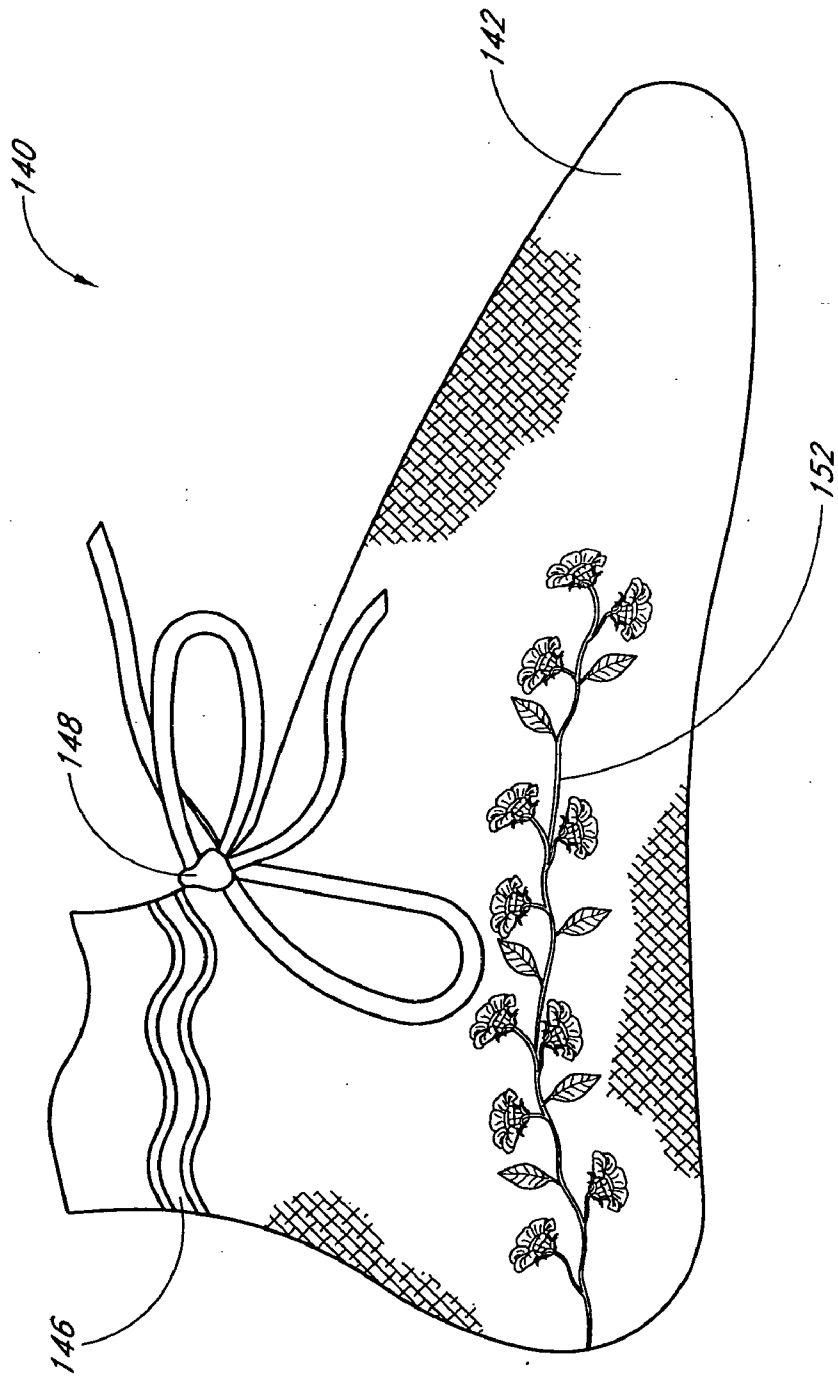


FIG. 6

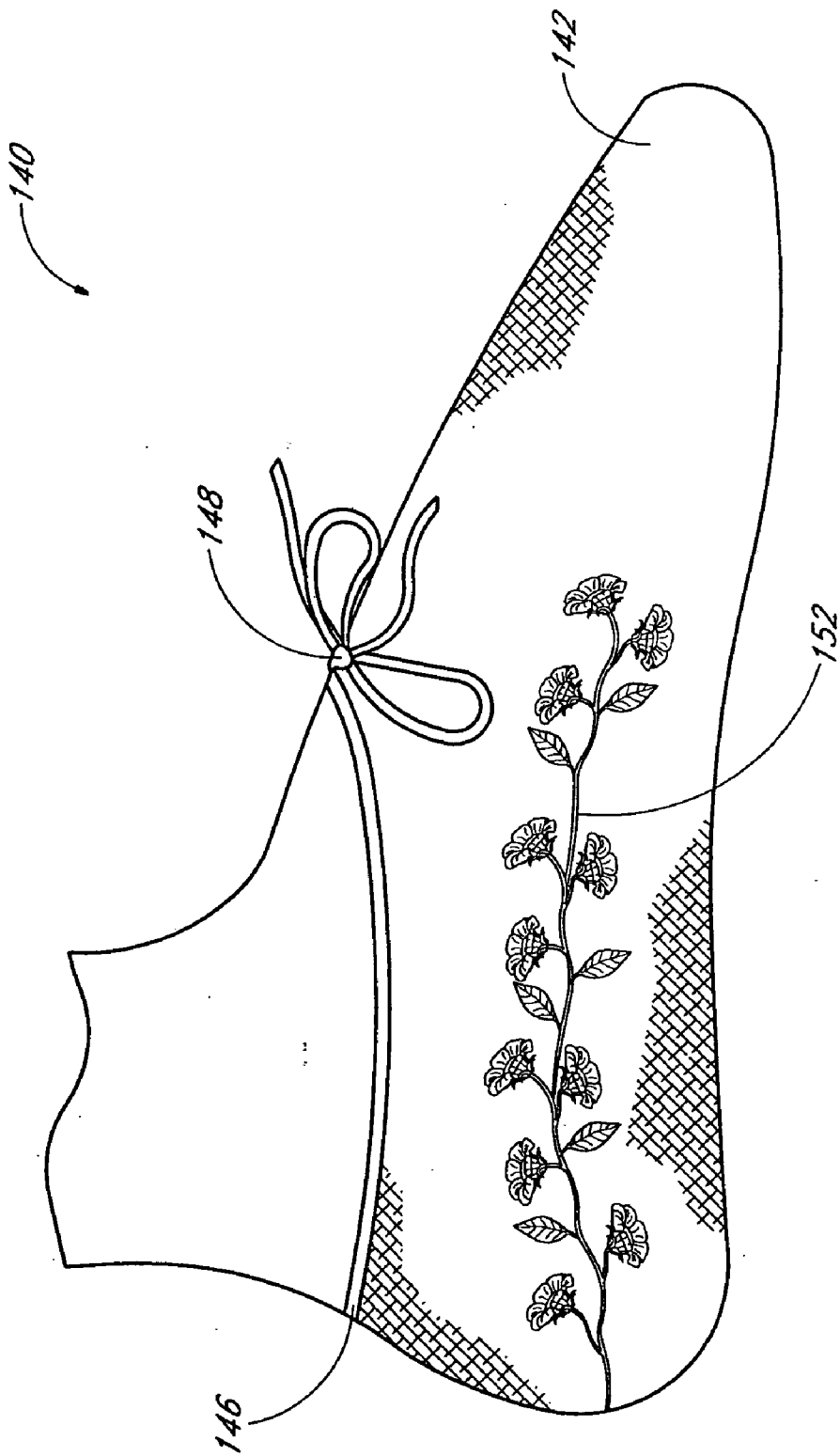


FIG. 7

FOOTWEAR FOR FEET BEAUTIFICATION

PRIORITY APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation of application Ser. No. 10/396,755 (filed 24 Mar. 2003), the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to footwear, and relates particularly to footwear configured to promote feet beautification.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Shoe inserts have been proposed for various applications, but many of the inserts suffer from drawbacks. For example, many conventional shoe inserts are directed principally to medicinal uses or odor reduction, and are not directed to foot beautification. In addition, many shoe inserts are difficult to size appropriately and do not provide the user with footwear having an attractive outward appearance. Further, many shoe inserts only contact the sole and heel of the foot and inadequately cover the upper portions of the foot.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] In accordance with the foregoing, it is desired to develop an article of footwear capable of beautifying the feet and promoting healthy skin on the feet. As used herein "beautifying" refers to the process of making the skin more visually attractive, soft to the touch, and/or providing the skin with a more healthy appearance. Embodiments of the footwear are, for example, comfortable, convenient to use, and capable of being manufactured inexpensively. In addition, certain embodiments of the footwear described herein provide advantageous cosmetic and therapeutic effects to most or all of the surface of the foot, such as by allowing creams, ointments, lotions and/or other medicaments to be held in close contact with the skin. Other embodiments of the present invention are configured to have an attractive outwardly appearance such as can be created using visually appealing color schemes, ornamental designs and decorations. Still other embodiments are configured to provide the user with comfortable footwear that can be worn to bed whilst performing a foot beautification treatment.

[0005] According to one embodiment of the present invention, an apparatus comprises a disposable footwear article. The disposable footwear article is adapted to receive a foot. The disposable footwear article is made from a plastic material. The disposable footwear article has a toe portion, a heel portion, and an upper foot covering portion. The disposable footwear article is configured to hold a topical agent in close contact with the skin of the foot. The topical agent is a foot lotion configured to enhance the cosmetic appearance of the skin of the foot.

[0006] According to another embodiment of the present invention, a foot beautification kit comprises a disposable, plastic footwear article having a toe portion, a heel portion, and an upper foot covering portion. The footwear article is configured to receive a foot and to hold a topical agent in close contact with the skin of the foot. The footwear article further comprises a foot lotion configured to enhance the cosmetic appearance of the skin of the foot. The footwear

article further comprises instructions for using the footwear article to beautify at least one foot by placing a lotion on the foot, and then placing the foot in the footwear article.

[0007] According to another embodiment of the present invention, a method of enhancing the appearance of a human body comprises disposing a topical agent over a foot. The topical agent is a foot lotion configured to enhance the cosmetic appearance of the skin of the foot. The method further comprises inserting the foot into a disposable footwear article. The method further comprises using the disposable footwear article to hold the topical agent in close contact with the foot for a treatment period.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] Embodiments of the present invention are described below with reference to the following figures, which are intended to be illustrative and not limiting.

[0009] **FIG. 1A** is a top view of a first example embodiment of inner footwear.

[0010] **FIG. 1B** is a top view of a second example embodiment of inner footwear.

[0011] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view of the inner footwear of **FIG. 1** as worn on a user's foot.

[0012] **FIG. 3** is a top view of an example of an outer bootie configured to be worn over the inner footwear of **FIG. 1**.

[0013] **FIG. 4** is a bottom view of the bootie of **FIG. 3**.

[0014] **FIG. 5** is a side view of the bootie of **FIG. 3** as worn on a user's foot.

[0015] **FIG. 6** is a side view of an example of an ornamentally decorated bootie configured to be worn over the inner footwear of **FIG. 1**.

[0016] **FIG. 7** is a side view of an example of an ornamentally decorated slipper configured to be worn over the inner footwear of **FIG. 1**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0017] As described above, it is desired to develop an article of footwear capable of beautifying the feet, and of promoting healthy skin on the feet. The foot beautification system described herein addresses these and other needs. As described in greater detail below, an exemplary embodiment of a foot beautification system comprises an inner footwear and an outer bootie or slipper. The inner footwear is configured to allow creams, ointments, lotions and/or other medicaments to be retained in close contact with the skin, while the outer bootie or slipper is configured to assist in securing the inner footwear over the foot during an activity such as sleeping or lounging. In certain embodiments, the outer bootie or slipper is also configured to provide a visually attractive outwardly appearance. Thus, for example, the outer bootie or slipper can have attractive design cues that are feminine or masculine as desired.

[0018] Inner footwear. **FIGS. 1A and 1B** illustrate exemplary embodiments of inner footwear **100** configured to promote foot beautification. The inner footwear **100** comprises a base region **102**, a front pouch **104**, heel walls or

sidewalls **106**, and top flaps **108** outfitted with optional fasteners **110**, **112**. As discussed below, the top flaps **108** illustrated in **FIG. 1A** wrap-around the top of the foot and are held in place by a cling effect, and advantageously no fastener is needed. In other embodiments, fasteners can be used. Optional fasteners are illustrated in **FIG. 1B**.

[0019] In one exemplary embodiment, the components of the inner footwear **100** comprise a low cost plastic material that is substantially impermeable or semi-impermeable to cosmetic or therapeutic compounds which may be placed on the feet, thereby providing a structure for keeping the feet in close contact with such materials. Examples of such cosmetic or therapeutic compounds include creams, ointments, lotions and other topical medicaments, which are described in greater detail below. In one exemplary embodiment, the various components of the inner footwear **100** are affixed to each other in the arrangement shown by sewing, although in other embodiments other arrangements and other affixation techniques (such as use of an epoxy or a molding process) can be used.

[0020] The inner footwear **100** is, for example, dimensioned such that a user can comfortably place his or her foot therein, as illustrated in **FIG. 2**. Specifically, the inner footwear **100** can be worn by placing one's toes into the front pouch **104** and one's instep over the base region **102**, such that one's heel **120** is at least partially surrounded by the heel walls, flaps, or sidewalls **106**. In the illustrated embodiment, the front pouch **104** is sized to cover about three-quarters of the top of the foot. In other embodiments the front pouch **104** can be sized to cover more or less of the top of the foot. For example, the front pouch **104** can be sized to cover the user's toes and a small portion of the top of the foot. In one embodiment, the top flaps **108** comprise a polyvinylidene chloride ("PVDC"), Polyvinyl chloride ("PVC"), or other cling film that easily adheres to the top portion of the foot and other portions of the footwear **100** due to static cling, thereby allowing the fasteners to be omitted. The top flaps **108** are wrapped over the top of one's foot and held in place by the cling effect.

[0021] If fasteners are used, the top flaps **108** are then wrapped over the top of one's foot, where the fasteners **110**, **112**, illustrated in **FIG. 1B**, are secured together.

[0022] An ordinarily skilled artisan will recognize that the inner footwear can be manufactured in a variety of sizes, including larger sizes particularly dimensioned for male users, and smaller sizes particularly dimensioned for female users. Optionally, the inner footwear **100** is configured to be "one size fits all" so that the inner footwear will fit a large range of foot sizes. In addition, inner footwear of various sizes can be made to comfortably accommodate men and women with varying foot sizes.

[0023] For embodiments where a fastener is used, the fasteners **110**, **112** can optionally comprise hook-and-loop type fasteners, which can be quickly and easily opened and closed. One example of a hook-and-loop type fastening system uses Velcro® brand fasteners. In other embodiments, other types of fasteners can be used, such as buttons, snaps or ties. For example, the fasteners **110**, **112** allow the top flaps to be secured over the top of the user's foot with a variable tightness, thus allowing the user to adjust the fasteners **110**, **112** as desired to enhance comfort. For example, as illustrated in **FIG. 2**, an optional elongate strip

of loop-type fastener **110** is disposed on one of the top flaps, while a small patch of hook-type fastener **112** is disposed on the other top flap, thus allowing the user to adjust the tightness of the top flaps **108** over the foot as desired to enhance comfort.

[0024] Outer footwear. As described above, an exemplary embodiment of the foot beautification system described herein comprises an outer bootie or slipper configured to be positioned over the inner footwear **100**, thereby further serving to secure the inner footwear **100** over the user's foot. One example of such an outer bootie is illustrated in **FIGS. 3 through 5**. Specifically, **FIG. 3** illustrates a top view of an exemplary embodiment of an outer bootie **140**, while **FIGS. 4 and 5** are bottom and side views, respectively. In such embodiments, the outer bootie **140** comprises a body **142** having an adjustable ankle opening **144**. In the exemplary embodiment illustrated in **FIGS. 3 and 5**, the ankle opening **144** is adjustable using drawstring **146** which can be tied in a bow **148**. For example, the outer bootie **140** can comprise one or more slip-resistant grips **150**, illustrated in **FIG. 4**, disposed on the underside of the body **142**. The body of the outer bootie **140** can comprise a soft fabric, such as mohair, cotton or a durable silk such as raw silk. In other embodiments, other materials can be used, such as wool, polyester or nylon.

[0025] The ankle opening **144** can have an adjustable size. Specifically, the ankle opening **144** can be made expandable to allow the user to place his or her foot through the ankle opening **144**. At the same time, the ankle opening **144** can be made capable of being cinched up around the user's ankle, or just above or below the user's ankle, thus securing the outer bootie **140** in place, and preventing it from flopping off of the user's foot. One exemplary mechanism for accomplishing this configuration is using a drawstring **146**, which is capable of being tied into a bow **148**, as illustrated in **FIGS. 3 and 5**. In a modified embodiment, the drawstring can be replaced with a decorative ribbon. In other embodiments the ankle opening **144** can be fitted with an elastic strip or any other structure for providing a flexible, expandable opening.

[0026] The slip-resistant grips **150**, which can be secured to the body **142** using stitching, an epoxy, or any other attachment mechanism, are, for example, comprised of a material having high friction on common flooring surfaces. In one exemplary embodiment, the slip-resistant grips comprise rubber strips that are glued to the outer bootie body **142**. For example, the slip-resistant grips can be secured to the portions of the body likely to have the user's weight applied thereto, such as under the balls of the feet and the heel, as illustrated in **FIG. 4**.

[0027] In a modified embodiment, illustrated in **FIG. 6**, the outer bootie **140** further comprises ornamental decorations **152** applied thereto. The ornamental decorations **152** can comprise an elegant printed pattern on the body **142**, or can comprise material attached to the body **142**, such as a feminine ribbon decoration. In such embodiments, the outer bootie **140**, including the ankle opening **144**, may have a color scheme selected to match the color scheme of the ornamental decorations **152**. In other embodiments, the outer bootie **140** can have masculine colors and design cues so as to appeal more to men.

[0028] In still other embodiments, such as illustrated in **FIG. 7**, an outer slipper **154** can be configured to be worn

around a lower portion of the ankle. As described above, a drawstring or other adjustable ankle opening **144** can be used in such embodiments to cinch the ankle opening **144** around the user's foot, although the ankle opening for the outer slipper illustrated in **FIG. 7** will be larger than that illustrated in **FIG. 6**. An outer slipper having a lower cut, such as illustrated in **FIG. 7**, allows more of the user's skin to be exposed to the air, which facilitates the "breathing" of the skin, and which the user may find more comfortable in warm weather. As discussed above with respect to the bootie **140**, the outer slipper **154** can comprise one or more slip-resistant grips disposed on the underside of the slipper **154**. The body of the outer slipper **154** can comprise a soft fabric, such as mohair, cotton or a durable silk such as raw silk. In other embodiments, other materials can be used, such as wool, polyester or nylon.

[0029] Methods of use. As described above, the various structures described above are adapted for use with a footwear system capable of beautifying the feet and promoting healthy and visually appealing skin on the feet. Specifically, a user can place a topical cosmetic agent on his or her feet, and then place his or her feet into the inner footwear **100**. The inner footwear **100** is configured to keep the agent in close contact with the user's feet, thus enhancing the cosmetic effect. In addition, the inner footwear **100** reduces contamination of other articles of clothing, bed linens, or the floor with the cosmetic agent.

[0030] Examples of topical agents that can be used with the footwear system described herein include, but are not limited to, water, glycerin, mineral oil, cetaryl alcohol, pertolatum, stearic acid, lecithin, myreth 3-myristate, and DMDM hydantoin. One of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that any number of other cosmetic or therapeutic topical agents can also be used with the footwear system described herein, depending on the particular user's preferences.

[0031] After the user's foot is positioned in the inner footwear **100**, and the top flaps **108** are secured over the top of the user's foot, the user can then place his or her foot into the outer bootie **140** or slipper **154**. As described above, the outer bootie **140** or slipper **154** is configured to secure the inner footwear **100** in place, and to provide an aesthetically pleasing foot covering. The outer bootie **140** or slipper **154**, with its slip-resistant grips **150**, also facilitates the user's mobility when the inner footwear **100** is disposed over the user's foot. In another embodiment, the outer bootie **140** or slipper **154** can be used as sleepwear, thereby allowing the user to treat his or her feet with a cosmetic or therapeutic compound while sleeping without causing his or her bed linens to become contaminated with the compound.

[0032] When the user has completed his or her foot beautification treatment, the outer bootie **140** or slipper **154** can be removed from the foot by opening the ankle opening **144**, and the user can withdraw his or her foot from the inner footwear **100**. For example, in one embodiment, the inner footwear **100** can be disposable, thus eliminating any need for the user to clean and reuse the inner footwear **100**. As described above, the inner footwear **100** can be made from inexpensive materials, thereby rendering a disposable design economically feasible. Because the outer bootie **140** or slipper **154** can be made from durable, washable materials, and because the outer bootie **140** or slipper **154** does not

directly contact the cosmetic or therapeutic compounds, the outer bootie/slipper **140** is reusable in an exemplary embodiment.

[0033] In certain embodiments, one or more of the footwear components described above (for example, the outer bootie or the outer slipper, and the inner footwear) can be packaged and sold in a kit. In such embodiments, the kit can further include complementary items such as an instruction sheet providing instructions for using the footwear systems described herein, or additional lotions for use on the feet. The instruction sheet can be a paper sheet containing guidelines for using the footwear systems described herein, or can comprise an audio or video informational presentation about such systems, that could, for example, illustrate their use. Such an audio or video system could be delivered, for example, on a compact disc, a videocassette, a digital video disc, or any other information storage medium. In other embodiments, the various components of the footwear systems described herein can be packaged and sold separately.

[0034] As described herein, the feet beautification systems described herein provide an effective way for users to promote soft, healthy and attractive skin on their feet. In particular, the systems described herein can easily be used to pamper and rejuvenate foot skin. This can be done using topical agents such as lotions, creams and ointments, without risking contamination of surfaces such as bed linens, clothing and floors with such agents. Specifically, by providing a contained system for applying such agents, the user is free to perform other activities, such as lounging or sleeping, simultaneous with the application of such agents. In embodiments wherein the outer bootie or slipper includes ornamental decorations, the user is further provided with attractive outer footwear.

[0035] It should be understood that certain variations and modifications of this invention would suggest themselves to one of ordinary skill in the art. The scope of the present invention is not to be limited by the illustrations or the foregoing descriptions thereof.

I claim:

1. An apparatus comprising a disposable footwear article that:

is adapted to receive a foot;

is made from a plastic material;

has a toe portion, a heel portion, and an upper foot covering portion; and

is configured to hold a topical agent in close contact with the skin of the foot, wherein the topical agent is a foot lotion configured to enhance the cosmetic appearance of the skin of the foot.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising outer footwear configured to be placed over the disposable footwear article.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising an instruction sheet for using the disposable footwear article to beautify the foot by placing the foot lotion on the foot, and then placing the foot in the disposable footwear article.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the disposable footwear article is made from an expandable material configured to accommodate the size of the foot to which it is applied.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the disposable footwear article is sized for a selected gender.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the topical agent comprises a compound selected from the group consisting of water, glycerin, mineral oil, cetaryl alcohol, petrolatum stearic acid, lecithin, myreth 3-myristate, and DMDM hydantoin.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the disposable footwear article is comprised at least in part of a cling film material.

8. A foot beautification kit comprising:

a disposable, plastic footwear article having a toe portion, a heel portion, and an upper foot covering portion, wherein the footwear article is configured to receive a foot and to hold a topical agent in close contact with the skin of the foot;

a foot lotion configured to enhance the cosmetic appearance of the skin of the foot; and

instructions for using the footwear article to beautify at least one foot by placing a lotion on the foot, and then placing the foot in the footwear article.

9. The foot beautification kit of claim 8, further comprising outer footwear configured to be placed over the plastic footwear article.

10. The foot beautification kit of claim 8, wherein the plastic footwear article is made from an expandable material configured to accommodate the size of the foot to which it is applied.

11. The foot beautification kit of claim 8, wherein the plastic footwear article is size for a selected gender.

12. The foot beautification kit of claim 8, wherein the lotion comprises a compound selected from the group con-

sisting of water, glycerin, mineral oil, cetaryl alcohol, petrolatum stearic acid, lecithin, myreth 3-myristate, and DMDM hydantoin.

13. The foot beautification kit of claim 8, wherein the plastic footwear article is comprised at least in part of a cling film material.

14. A method of enhancing the appearance of a human body comprising:

disposing a topical agent over a foot, wherein the topical agent is a foot lotion configured to enhance the cosmetic appearance of the skin of the foot;

inserting the foot into a disposable footwear article; and using the disposable footwear article to hold the topical agent in close contact with the foot for a treatment period.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising placing an outer footwear article over the disposable footwear article.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the disposable footwear article is made from an expandable material configured to accommodate the size of the foot to which it is applied.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the disposable footwear article is sized for a selected gender.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the topical agent comprises a compound selected from the group consisting of water, glycerin, mineral oil, cetaryl alcohol, petrolatum stearic acid, lecithin, myreth 3-myristate, and DMDM hydantoin.

19. The method of claim 14, wherein at least a portion of the disposable footwear article is made of a cling film material.

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