REMOVABLE UPHOLSTERY COVER FOR FURNITURE

INVENTOR. AYARD C. SARAS

ATTORNEYS

FIG. - 1

FIG. - 2

FIG. - 3

FIG. - 4

FIG. - 5

INVENTOR.

NAYNARD C. SARVAS

BY

Fraser and Bogucki

ATTORNEYS
This invention relates generally to furniture, and more particularly relates to furniture having an upholstery cover which may be readily removed or replaced. This application is a division of my previously filed application, Ser. No. 145,359, filed October 16, 1961, entitled, "Removable Upholstery Cover for Furniture," and now Patent No. 3,188,137.

Most furniture in use today has the type of construction in which an upholstered seat, a back rest, and sometimes cushions and arm rests are supported on a frame and covered by fixed upholstery covers. This fixed construction has required that the cover, either of light draw-around and secured to the frame by tacks or nails, and that separate pieces be joined together in particular ways. Such steps must be taken in order for the furniture to maintain its resiliency and softness, while at the same time the external fabric remains taut and neat in appearance through long periods of wear. This construction is so widespread that it is virtually accepted as necessary, and little thought is given to its disadvantages.

These disadvantages include the fact that a skilled upholsterer is needed for the original construction in order for the furniture to have a finished appearance, good physical strength and also the external smoothness which is evidenced by a skin-tight and well-aligned external fabric. In addition, the upholstery cover used today is almost invariably not washable, but must be dry cleaned and can only be removed for this purpose by a specialist such as an experienced upholsterer. Otherwise the furniture must be cleaned by special machinery and chemicals, without losing its appearance.

Since the advent of foam rubber, polyfoam and similar integral materials for the cushioning of upholstered furniture, the fabric or cover is no longer required to retain the cushion underneath the fabric as was the case with the kapok, horse mane, hog hair and cotton felt which have been used heretofore.

From the standpoint of use and flexibility, upholstered furniture also leaves much to be desired. It has become accepted, for example, that the furnishings in a room must be selected to be matching colors and textures, and that changes cannot be made, barring great expense, except at lengthy intervals. As a necessary concomitant of the fact that dry cleanable fabrics alone are used, unsightly marks of wear, burns, grease and spots require that the entire set of furniture be sent out for repairs or that the set be replaced. Clearly, where the furniture is subject to be used by a great many people or by children who are destructive, higher quality upholstered furniture proves economically impractical. Attempts have been made to substitute other types of furniture but these often suffer so much in appearance and in comfort in comparison to the upholstered types that they must be regarded as strictly utilitarian items.

Freedom from the necessity to use the permanent upholstery type of construction would greatly benefit those who must furnish hotels, motels, apartments and the like in a number of other respects. The possibility to change upholstery fabric at will to provide different quality, texture or color fabrics is extremely desirable, particularly if this can be accomplished at low cost. Great advantages can be obtained in merchandising furniture if the upholstery cover or fabric can be periodically removed and exchanged or washed, much in the manner of bed linen. Furthermore, the possibility of replacing part or all of the upholstery cover of a given piece of furniture can be very advantageous, particularly if this can be accomplished without the use of skilled labor and without removing the furniture from use for extended periods of time.

These basic problems are not solved by the use of slip covers over the original upholstery cover of the furniture. In order to present an initially neat appearance, slip covers are usually made to measure by skilled labor at considerable expense. Hardly ever, however, do slip covers maintain a smooth and aligned appearance over a period of use, particularly at the back and arm rests of an item of furniture. Many slip covers are just loosely attached to the upholstered furniture and are tied together by tic cords, slide fasteners or zippers and the like. However, in this manner the fabric is tied to itself and cannot be secured to the furniture, and therefore cannot be kept straight.

It is accordingly an object of the present invention to provide a novel type of furniture construction and upholstery cover in which the disadvantages of permanent upholstered furniture are overcome.

Another object of the invention is to provide an improved type of furniture in which the upholstery fabric may readily be installed, without utilizing skilled labor, to give a finished appearance but may nevertheless be easily removed for cleaning or replacement.

A further object of the invention is to provide an improved type of furniture construction in which replaceable, washable fabrics may be employed.

Still another object of the invention is to provide an upholstered furniture construction in which structural elements as well as the fabric may be removed, replaced or interchanged.

In accordance with the present invention there is provided an upholstered article of furniture comprising a frame and cushioning material supported on the frame and forming a seat and, if desired, a back rest or arm rest. The cushioning material preferably consists of latex foam rubber, polyfoam or the like material which is of integral single-piece construction and will not fall apart when the fabric is removed. A single upholstery cover may be provided for the principal part of the furniture so as to extend over the cushioning material, with marginal portions disposed adjacent the frame. Elastic means such as looped bands are secured along the edges of the marginal portions, and means are disposed on the frame for engaging the elastic means. In this manner the upholstery cover is secured to the frame and is stretched and maintained tight over the cushioning material. As a result the upholstery cover may readily be removed for cleaning or replacement.

Furniture in accordance with the invention has exceptional versatility in construction and use. Replaceable fabric arm covers, elastically coupled to the frame, may be disposed so as to give a tight and permanent appearance without being sewn to the back and seat cover. Arm rests of entirely different external styles as well as internal constructions may be readily used, in many instances interchangeably with the same basic furniture unit. Cushions may be used as a part of the design or as optional items. The furniture may take the form of chairs or convertible beds, as well as sofas or couches. A significant feature is that constructions in accordance with the invention are amenable to all types of furniture design, including traditional, modern, contemporary and many others.
These and other objects of the present invention will become more apparent from the following description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which like elements are designated by the same reference characters, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a view in perspective of a sofa or couch in accordance with the present invention, parts being broken away to illustrate its construction, and one of the arm rest covers being shown removed;

FIG. 2 is a section on line 2—2 of FIG. 1 showing a sectional side elevation of the couch;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view on enlarged scale taken on line 3—3 of FIG. 1 to illustrate the means for securing the elastic to the frame;

FIG. 4 is a view in perspective illustrating another embodiment of an elastic member secured to the upholstery cover;

FIG. 5 is a view in perspective illustrating a further embodiment of an elastic member secured to the upholstery fabric;

FIG. 6 is a view in perspective showing a modified arm rest of a couch;

FIG. 7 is a view in perspective illustrating another modified arm rest and table for a couch;

FIG. 8 is a sectional view in side elevation illustrating a different arm rest construction in accordance with the invention;

FIG. 9 is a sectional view in side elevation of still another embodiment of an arm rest embodying the invention;

FIG. 10 is a view in perspective on an enlarged scale showing the manner of attachment of the fabric to the frame of the arm rest of FIG. 9;

FIG. 11 is a view in perspective of a davenport convertible into a bed and embodying the present invention;

FIG. 12 is a side elevational view, partly in section, of the davenport of FIG. 11;

FIG. 13 is a side elevational view, partly in section, similar to that of FIG. 12 and illustrating an intermediate position of the davenport before being converted into a bed;

FIG. 14 is a side elevational view illustrating the davenport of FIG. 11 converted into a bed;

FIG. 15 is a top plan of a portion of the davenport shown in the position of FIG. 13; and

FIG. 16 is a top plan view of a portion of the davenport shown in the position of FIG. 12.

Referring now to the drawings and particularly to FIGS. 1–3, there is illustrated a sofa or couch embodying the present invention. The sofa includes a frame generally indicated at 10 which may consist of wood, as is conventional, and which has a lower portion 11 forming an open rectangle. The frame 10 further includes an intermediate portion 12 supporting the cushioning material 14 forming the seat and an upstanding rear portion 15 for supporting the cushioning material 16 forming the back rest of the sofa. The arm rest may be formed by a framework including a vertical front portion 17, a horizontal portion 18 forming the arm rest, an inclined portion 20 designed to be flush with the back rest 16 and an upper horizontal portion 21 extending into the top of the back rest. The cross bars 19 are used for anchoring and forming purposes, and are positioned to provide surfaces which lie at or adjacent the plane of the seating surface (or at the base surface if cushions are used). Many modifications of this structure are feasible, and will suggest themselves to those skilled in the art. For example, the back cushion may consist of a rectangular foam piece which sits upon a frame portion extending up about the height of the seat, and which rests primarily against a single piece board back. It will be appreciated that the arm rest of the embodiment of the invention illustrated in FIGS. 1–3 is not extensively cushioned but may include padding material.

Since the jointers and assembly of the frame 10 are conventional, there is no need to explain further details here. The frame is, however, configured to receive the marginal portions of the covers in particularly advantageous fashion. The frame is constructed to provide marginal anchoring points along the sides and at the lower front and back edges, as well as along the juncture between the seat and back rest. In the exemplification of FIG. 1, these marginal anchor points extend along the underside of the back, along the rear side of the back rest, along the front sides of the back rest to the seat, along the cross bars at the arm rests, and along the sides of the seat to the front underside of the seat. This arrangement is particularly advantageous, because elastic pull may be exerted on a cover in all directions.

The cushioning material such as the seat 14 and the back rest 16 may consist for example of latex foam rubber, polyfoam or the like. Preferably the cushioning consists of a material which is unitary, that is, which will support itself and need not be held together by fabric such as is the case with kapok, animal hair, cotton felting and the like.

In accordance with the present invention the seat and back rest of the furniture are covered by a single piece of upholstery cover generally indicated at 25. The fabric of the cover may consist of a conventional dry cleanable material, inasmuch as most current cover materials suitable for upholstery use are made of this nature. Alternatively, it is readily feasible to utilize a fabric that can be washed. While such fabrics are not now in general use they can be readily manufactured of a material, such as cotton, synthetic fibers and other materials constructed to have a heavy thread or weave to stand the wear and tear to which the fabric is subjected in use as an upholstery cover.

The upholstery cover 25 consists of a lower vertical front portion, a horizontal seat portion, a generally vertical or inclined back portion, a horizontal top and a vertical back panel. Further, in accordance with the present invention the marginal portions of the cover 25 are elastically coupled to the frame 10. To this end the marginal portions such as the lower front margin 26, the rear margin 27 and the two side margins 28 and 30 are provided, for example, with a plurality of elastic loops 31 which may consist of rubber bands or similar elastic material. As illustrated in FIG. 3 the rubber loops 31 may be sewed at 32 to a folded-over marginal portion 30 of the cover. The spacings between the elastic loops 31 are chosen relative to the stiffness of the cover material to provide uniform and wrinkle-free tensioning of the cover 25 in the direction toward the margin. Alternatively, the fabric or cover 25 may be provided with eyelets 33 through which the rubber loop 31 extends as clearly illustrated in FIG. 4. It is also feasible to sew or otherwise attach as by seam welding a rubber or elastic strip or band 34 to the fabric 25. As shown in FIG. 5 the rubber band or elastic strip 34 may again be provided with eyelets 35 through which elastic loops may extend.

These elastic loops 31 are secured directly to the frame 10 by suitable bent-over nails or hooks shown at 37. Preferably, as illustrated in FIG. 3 the vertical frame 10 and the upper vertical panel 17 is provided with a semi-spherical depression 40 in which the hook or nail 37 is disposed. This construction is preferably used where the covering material is to be flush with the point at which the covering is secured, or where the use of the furniture may come into close proximity with the hooks 37. Thus the front panel 17 and the upper vertical panel 20 may be provided with the protected or hidden hooks 37 of FIG. 3. In other places such as the front and back underside portions of the lower frame 11 unprotected bent-over nails or hooks may be used, as shown.

Similarly covers 45 may be used over each arm rest of the sofa. The cover 45 primarily consists in one form.
of a single piece of fabric formed of a number of individual panels which may be sewn together. Thus the cover 45 includes a continuous strip of the width of the arm rest and extends from a front marginal portion 47 upwards, horizontally over the arm rest, upwards across the top and over the back to form a similar rear marginal portion, not shown. An outer panel 48 covers the outer sides of the arm rest while a short panel is extended along the inner side of the arm rest, this panel terminating in a flap 50. Various marginal portions, such as the front underside edge 47, the flap 50 and the edge 51 at the under side of each side panel are again provided with elastic loops 31 which are secured to suitable hooks 37 on the frame. Note that the flap 50 fits between the cross bars 19 in the side arm, being held by the anchored elastic loops 31 to either of the cross bars 19, as desired. The upholstery cover 25 is attached to the frame 10 in the following manner, if the starting point is assumed to be the front underside. At first the loops 31 on the lower marginal front portion 26 are secured to the front underside of the frame 11. Subsequently the loops on the side portions 28 and 30 are secured to the frame along the lower vertical portion and along the horizontal seat portion at the cross bars 19. Then the loops provided along the line of juncture of the seat and the back rest portion of the fabric are secured to hooks 37 along a vertical frame portion 52 (see FIG. 2) at this juncture line. Thereupon the side portions 28 and 30 of the fabric are secured to the frame along the back rest and are finally coupled with the rear marginal portion 27 to the rear underside of the frame 11. It should be noted that the fabric is pulled tightly over the back rest and the rear of the back rest as well as in the side directions. As a result the fabric is pulled slightly off the seat portion as illustrated in FIG. 2, thereby to improve its appearance and to keep the fabric from being in touch with the seat cushion at all times. With other types of frame construction the elastic loops at the juncture line of the seat and back may be anchored to frame points which are above the level of the seat fabric. Any tendency to slide under here because of static electricity or other reasons is thereby eliminated.

The arm rest cover 45 is now attached in a similar manner. First, the loops along the flap 50 may be anchored to a cross bar 19. Then the entire cover 45 may be pulled over the arm rest covers the front underside edge 47 and the principal underside edge 51 are secured to the frame. Even if the arm rest cover 45 is not secured at the back underside, it is fully tautened and held and does not slip under hard use. When the principal cover is thus securely it will present a neat appearance because the fabric is skin tight over the cushioning material and the frame except that it is pulled slightly off the seat cushion 14. It will be appreciated that the fabric covers 25 and 45 may be removed as readily as they are were put on and do not require skilled labor to put them on or off. The anchoring points for the principal cover 25 are completely hidden by the side arm covers 45, and the anchoring points for these covers 45 in turn are out of sight and possible contact.

The invention has been illustrated in conjunction with a straight line design, for which it is particularly suited. It is also fully amenable to use with other furniture styles, however. Thus, because the fabric covers are tautened in all directions, detachable cover furniture in accordance with the invention may be provided in traditional styles, and in modern curved line designs as well. Furniture in accordance with the invention is thus characterized by the readily detachability of the covering fabric, but also by the put and finished appearance of well made fixed upholstery covers. The fabric is firmly anchored to fixed frame points, but in such a way that anchoring points are hidden, while separate adjoining fabric pieces are so firmly held that they need not be sewn together.

Furniture in accordance with the invention is also characterized by great versatility. Of primary importance, of course, is the fact that covers may be removed for dry cleaning or washing, or for interchange of styles or colors, or because of damage. It is also now possible, however, to change arm styles as well, as is explained more fully below.

A modified but interchangeable construction of an arm rest is illustrated in FIG. 6 to which reference is now made. Here the arm rest generally indicated at 55 is made of wood or similar structural material and is not covered by fabric. The arm rest has a lower portion 56 which fits snugly over the cover 25 and the seat and back rest cushioning material. The arm rest has a horizontal raised part 57 which serves as the arm rest proper. The entire arm rest 55 can be removed by moving it to the right in FIG. 6 and can be put back again by reversing the operation. Snaps or elastic loops (not shown) may be used to fix the arm rest 55 in position. It will be appreciated that the arm rest 55 covers up the elastic loops 31 and hooks 37 in the same manner as the previous example.

Another construction of an arm rest is shown in FIG. 7. Here the arm rest 60 forms a small side table which may be provided with a lower surface 61 to support books or other articles. Again the arm rest may be made to slide sideways over the sofa so as to cover up the elastic loops 31 and hooks 37. Alternately, however, this arm rest 60 construction may also be fitted over the arm in furniture such as shown in FIG. 1. Whether or not the fabric is changed, there will be a virtually complete change in the appearance of the arm rest.

An upholstered arm rest construction is also readily feasible as shown in FIG. 8. Here the side arm cover 45 (viewed partly in section) extends about an arm rest which is formed of an initially loose polyfoam arm rest cushion 64 resting on a frame cross bar 65. The side arm cover 45 is secured to the underside of the cross bar 65 and along the bottom side margin 67 by elastic loops and hooks, to the underside of the frame 11. The side margins of the principal cover 25 are also secured to the underside of the cross bar 65. Since the entire height of the arm rest is formed by the integral arm rest cushion 65 a very soft support is obtained which permits the user to rest comfortably against the arm rest 65. This construction may be seen to provide another alternative for the arrangements of FIGS. 6 and 7.

Another upholstered arm rest is illustrated in FIGS. 9 and 10. Here a frame portion 70 supports a relatively smaller arm rest cushion 71 over which the fabric or cover 72 is stretched. The fabric is secured to the bottom frame 11 as shown at 73. This is preferably accomplished by means of a Velcro tape or fastener. Velcro tape is sold in the trade under this name and comprises two mating portions 74 and 75 shown in FIG. 10. One of the tapes, say tape 74, is secured to the cover 72 and consists of a pile of material having thread-like loops having an appearance of velvet. The mating tape 75 is secured to frame 11 and also has thread-like loops which, however, have been cut open. Hence the loops of tape 74 engage the open loops of tape 75 to form a tight but detachable bond. The tapes 74, 75 can be disengaged by pulling them apart like a zipper. The cover 72 is similarly secured to frame 70 as shown at 76. The arm rest of FIG. 9 is less soft and of somewhat simplified construction.

Referring now to FIGS. 11–16 there is illustrated a davenport, couch or chaise lounge which is made and constructed in accordance with the invention. The davenport has a large seat 80 which may be covered by a single upholstery cover 81 extending over the seat cushioning material 82 supported by a frame 83. The marginal portions 84 and 85 of the cover 81 may be secured to the frame 83 by elastic loops 31 and hooks 37 in the manner previously explained. Two arm rests 86 may be provided
for the davenport and may be constructed in the manner previously explained in connection with FIGS. 1-3 or 6-9. However, the arm rests 86 may also be omitted, if desired.

The back rest generally indicated at 87 is movable with respect to the seat 80 to form a bed when extended. The back rest 87 is held by two strong decorative tapes 88 which are secured at 90 to the back rest and at 91 to the seat. The tapes 88 may be sewn to the seat and back rest or secured in any other convenient manner. Each tape 88 extends around an edge of the back rest 87, and each is arranged to have a predetermined length. The back rest shown in FIG. 12 forms a davenport. When it is desired to convert the furniture into a bed, the back rest is first rotated through 90° as shown in FIG. 13, where it rests flush with the front edge of the seat 80. Another rotation of the back rest 87 through 180° causes it to assume the position of FIG. 14 and the bed is ready for use.

It will be observed that the tape 88 holds the back rest in the positions of FIGS. 12 and 14. However, when a person leans against the back rest, it may have a tendency to slide backwards. To prevent this a support 92 may be provided in the arm rests 86. The support 92 may take the form of a rod or leg that can be folded into a recess in the arm rest as illustrated, for example, in FIG. 15, and can be extended as best seen in FIG. 16 to support the back rest. Also legs 93 may be retracted into the back rest and may be pulled out to support the back rest as shown in FIG. 14 when the davenport is converted into a bed.

There has thus been disclosed an upholstered article of furniture which is provided with an upholstery cover which can be readily removed and replaced without requiring skilled labor. Thus it is possible to remove the cover for washing or dry cleaning, or the cover may be replaced by another cover to change the color scheme or to replace a worn-out or damaged cover. The upholstered furniture may be provided with an arm rest having a cover that can be similarly removed or replaced. Alternatively, the arm rest may be uncovered and designed to hide the elastic coupling between the cover and the frame. By virtue of the elastic coupling between the cover and the frame the cover will always be skin-tight over the cushions and frame and will preserve its neat appearance.

The upholstered furniture of the invention may also take the form of a davenport or the like that can be converted into a bed. Again the cover can be readily removed for cleaning or replacement thereof.

The upholstered furniture of the invention preferably utilizes a cushioning material of unitary construction such as latex foam rubber or polyfoam. By this means it is possible for the cushion to retain its shape without a cover so that the cover can be pulled over the cushion without the necessity of providing special means to hold the cushioning material together giving it its proper shape.

While a number of alternatives have been suggested above, it will be appreciated that the invention is not limited thereto. Accordingly, the invention should be considered to include all modifications and variations falling within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An upholstered article of furniture having a readily removable and replaceable upholstery cover that remains tight and well-aligned comprising a frame having a seat portion, and a back rest portion, with the seat portion having a lower front portion, the sides of the frame providing marginal anchor surfaces, cushioning material coupled to the seat and back rest portions of the frame, a single upholstery cover, consisting of a single sheet, for the article of furniture and extending over the back of the back rest portion, the front of the back rest portion, the seat portion, and the lower front portion of the seat portion, and having margins extending adjacent the marginal anchor surfaces of the frame, elastic means detachably securing the upholstery cover to the frame along the sides thereof and at the bottom of the lower front portion and at the bottom of the back rest portion, and uncovered detachable arm rest means adapted to slide over the side edges of the frame so as to cover the elastic means thereof.

2. The invention as set forth in claim 1 above, wherein the elastic means extends along the underside of the lower front portion and the underside of the back rest portion and wherein the sides of the frame are covered by said arm rest means throughout the seat and back rest portions.

References Cited by the Examiner

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,698,968 1/1929 Rubenstein 297—218
2,086,640 7/1937 Reynolds 297—218
2,135,657 11/1938 Church 297—396
2,170,224 8/1939 Tarr 297—218
2,259,534 10/1941 Reynolds et al. 297—452
2,531,047 11/1950 Holsinger 297—218
2,588,058 3/1952 Thompson 5—51
2,605,820 8/1952 Powellke 297—416
2,644,508 7/1953 Weill 297—218
2,654,099 10/1953 Ake 5—51
2,678,088 5/1954 Jamison 297—416
2,728,382 12/1955 Baresnski 297—218
2,844,828 7/1958 Stark 5—45
2,866,982 1/1959 Purves 5—45

FOREIGN PATENTS

1,265,265 5/1961 France
582,740 11/1946 Great Britain
825,376 12/1959 Great Britain

FRANK B. SHERRY, Primary Examiner.
FRANCIS K. ZUGEL, Examiner.