



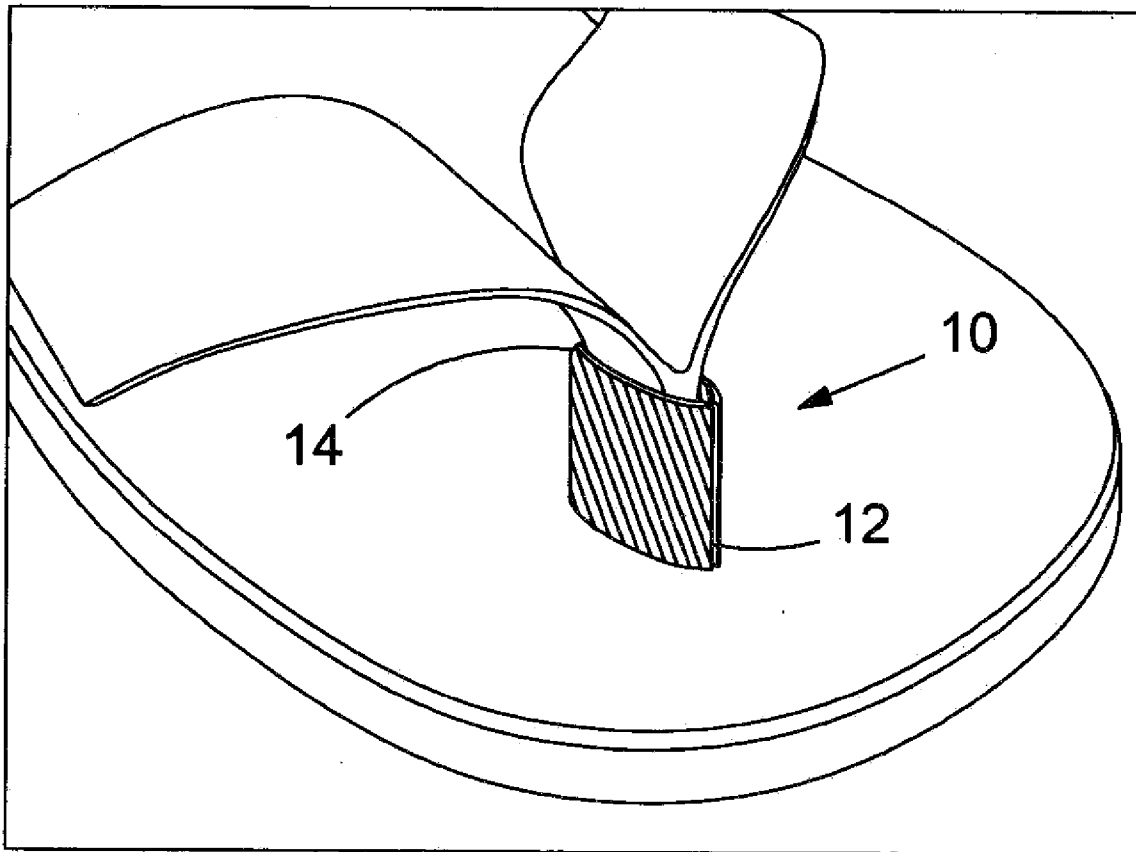
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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Bermudez(10) **Pub. No.: US 2014/0325874 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Nov. 6, 2014**(54) **TOE BUDDIES SANDAL TOE GUARD****Publication Classification**(71) Applicant: **Yolanda Irizar Bermudez**, Temecula,
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6, 2013.(51) **Int. Cl.***A43B 3/12* (2006.01)*A43C 19/00* (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.**CPC .. *A43B 3/12* (2013.01); *A43C 19/00* (2013.01)USPC **36/71**

(57)

ABSTRACT

A protective toe guard to be secured about toe straps of thongs or flip flop style sandals is provided. A Toe Buddie comprises an elliptically shaped tube, having a slotted opening at the outward point of the ellipse to fit over the toe strap of a sandal.



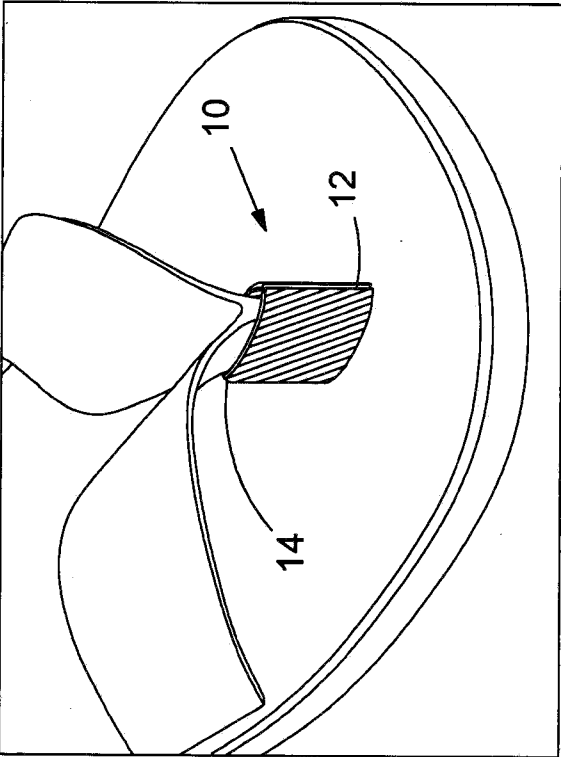


Fig. 1

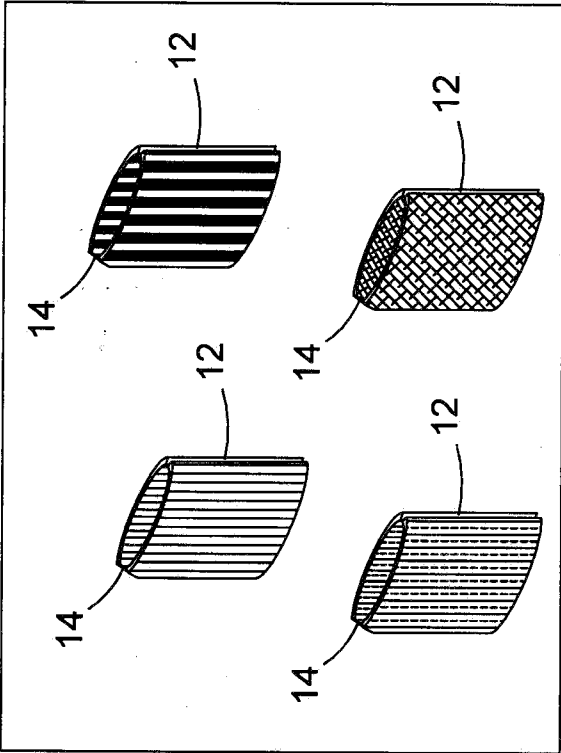


Fig. 2

TOE BUDDIES SANDAL TOE GUARD

Claim of Priority

[0001] This patent application claims priority under 35 USC 119(e)(1) from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/819,741 Filed May, 6, 2013, of common inventorship herewith entitled, "Toe Buddies."

Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention pertains to the field of shoe wear accessories, and more specifically to the field of sandals and flip flop accessories.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The prior art has put forth several designs for sandals and flip flop accessories. Among these are:

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 7,922,681 to Sande Berger and Leonard Jaffe describes a device which gives protection from frictional injury to web space between toes due to the wearing of thong type sandals or other similar footwear. The device is comprised of a flat, flexible, medically inert and transparent plastic material which is configurable in a variety of shapes and has a plantar base portion which fits under the toes and on a bottom of a foot stabilizing the device from moving. A web spacer portion fits between the wearer's toes and provides protection from frictional injury. A dorsal flap portion anchors the device to the top side of the foot.

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 2,751,693 to Delia V. Baker describes a sandal comprising a sole, a plurality of toe straps, toe separators, a heel engaging member and a heel. The toe straps are arranged longitudinally with respect to the sole near the toe end thereof with the attachment points of adjacent toe straps spaced apart the width of a toe and positioned to enter spaces between the wearer's toes. An elongated toe separator is slidably mounted on each said toe strap. Each toe separator is a sufficiently large cross section that fills a relatively large portion between each adjacent toe strap. Each toe separator is deformable by pressure exerted by a wearer's toes. A heel engaging member is fastened to the end of the sole with a strap means which includes a tensioning capability.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 2,522,216 to Avery K. Egberts describes a protective device against frictional irritation due to wearing thong type sandals and other footwear. This device also is utilized in applying medications in the aforementioned area.

[0007] None of these prior art references describe the present invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] It is an object of the present invention to provide a soft rubber cushion to place around a toe post of sandals or flip flops.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is a close up prototypical view showing the present invention on a flip flop's toe strap.

[0010] FIG. 2 shows close up diagonal views of four prototypes of the present invention, wherein two examples have a taper at the inward point of the ellipse and two examples do not have a taper at the inner point of the ellipse.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The summer months are a favorite time of year for countless consumers. Embarking on a much needed family vacation, basking in the sun or enjoying the outdoors by taking a leisurely stroll through a neighborhood park are a few of the many ways in which people enjoy sunny summer days. Because an onset of summer typically results in a shift from cool rainy weather to days of intense heat and bright sunshine, most people adjust their wardrobes accordingly. Simply by wearing a tank top, pair of shorts, T shirt or a sundress, a person can spend long hours under a hot sun in relative comfort. A favorite summer accessory is a pair of thong or flip flop sandals. Open toe or backless shoes that allow one's feet to breathe freely, thongs are the perfect accessory for any summer ensemble. A comfortable alternative to wearing leather or canvas shoes, thongs and flip flops are a sporty and functional accessory which are worn for everything from an afternoon at the beach to an outdoor evening wedding. Although thongs and flip flops are fashionable shoes which help keep one's feet cool in summertime, wearing these sandals has drawbacks. Many people find that strap fasteners which hold sandals in place on one's foot may cause discomfort between the person's first and second toes. Anchored between the first and second toes with a double strap that runs outward over either side of the foot, these sandals are primarily held in place by a toe strap. These toe straps are manufactured of leather, fabric or plastic material. The base of the strap which abuts against webbing between the first and second toe often is stiff and textured, causing discomfort to this tender area. Over time, excessive wear of thongs or flip flops results in painful skin irritation and calluses forming between one's toes, sometimes resulting in open sores or blisters forming. Spending an entire summer wearing sneakers because of toe discomfort caused by toe straps of thongs and flip flops is an extremely frustrating experience.

[0012] The present invention, hereinafter referred to as Toe Buddies Sandal Toe Guard, or Toe Buddies, are protective guards to be secured about toe straps of thongs or flip flop style sandals. A Toe Buddie 10 provides a cushiony barrier between a wearer's first and index toe and the strap itself, thus eliminating the painful skin irritation, calluses, blisters and other toe grief that occurs from wearing this type of footwear. An elliptically shaped tube, the Toe Buddie is manufactured of soft, semi-rigid rubber material comparable to rubber utilized in manufacturing protective finger guards on pens and pencils. This rubber material is hypoallergenic and safe to use by individuals with sensitive skin. This thin cushiony padding is slightly tapered 14 at the top edge of the inward point of the ellipse to naturally conform to an area between a wearer's first and second toe. A slotted opening 12 runs vertically from the Toe Buddies' outward point of the ellipse from the top to its base permitting a user to slide the Toe Buddies around existing toe straps. The device is secured with a tension or friction fit. The present invention is produced in a variety of sizes to accommodate adults, teens or children. The present invention also is produced in a sizable length that the wearer may cut and customize to fit their footwear. Toe Buddies are manufactured in neutral colors such as brown, black and beige, as well as vibrant colors, to match the wearer's existing footwear. Packaged in clear containers, Toe Buddies are available in sets of two, one Toe Buddy for each shoe. Toe Buddies are available as either a single package containing one pair or a multi count package containing three pairs.

[0013] Application of Toe Buddies is simple and straight forward. A user purchases Toe Buddies in a desired size and color. If necessary, a user utilizes standard scissors to easily cut the top or bottom off Toe Buddies in accordance to the length of their toe strap, thus ensuring a perfect customized fit. To apply the Toe Buddies' protective guard, the user grasps the present invention in hand, vertically positioning the device directly behind their thong or flip flop's anchoring toe strap. Gently sliding the Toe Buddies' slotted opening around the toe strap, the user then makes necessary adjustments so that the Toe Buddy encompasses the strap completely. This process is repeated with the remaining Toe Buddies and sandals. With Toe Buddies properly applied, the user dons their footwear as usual. The protective guard provides a comfortable barrier between the toe strap and the tender area between the first and second toe. Toe Buddies are worn throughout the life of the sandals and are removed and hand washed as needed.

[0014] Cushiony yet firm protective guards which encompass the sandal's toe strap completely, the Toe Buddies provide a wearer with an effective barrier between the tender webbing of the first and second toes and the strap itself. Manufactured of soft rubber material which conforms to the area between the toes and the toe strap respectively, the Toe Buddies effectively eliminate skin irritation and friction that occurs when the toe strap abuts directly against the skin between the toes. By eliminating sore achy feet often associated with wearing thongs and flip flop sandals, the Toe Buddies enable a wearer to walk for miles in comfort. A practical alternative to purchasing a pair of thong sandals and then only wearing them for a few hours because they cause too much discomfort to the area between the toes, application of the Toe Buddies eliminates unnecessary waste of expensive footwear. Easily applied and supremely comfortable to wear, the Toe Buddies appeal to adults, teens and children. Durably constructed and hand washable, Toe Buddies withstand continued use with ease.

[0015] Although this invention has been described with respect to specific embodiments, it is not intended to be limited thereto and various modifications which will become apparent to the person of ordinary skill in the art are intended to fall within the spirit and scope of the invention as described herein taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and the appended claims.

1. A toe guard for thong or flip flop style sandals having a toe strap between the big toe and the second toe of a user, comprising: a protective guard to be secured about the toe strap of a thong or flip flop style sandal, wherein the toe guard comprises an elliptically shaped tube having a top and a base, wherein the ellipse has an inward point and an outward point, further comprising a slot which runs vertically at the outward point of the ellipse from the top to its base permitting a user to slide the toe guard around an existing toe strap.

2. The toe guard of claim 1 manufactured of soft, semi-rigid rubber material comparable to rubber utilized in manufacturing protective finger guards on pens and pencils.

3. The toe guard of claim 2 wherein the material is hypoallergenic and safe to use by individuals with sensitive skin.

4. The toe guard of claim 2 further comprising a taper at the top of the inward point of the ellipse to naturally conform to an area between a wearer's first and second toe.

5. The toe guard of claim 2 wherein the toe guard is produced in a variety of sizes to accommodate adults, teens or children.

6. The toe guard of claim 2 wherein the toe guard is produced in a sizable length that the wearer may cut and customize to fit their footwear.

7. The toe guard of claim 2 wherein the toe guard is manufactured in neutral colors such as brown, black and beige, or vibrant colors.

8. The toe guard of claim 2 wherein the toe guard is packaged in a clear container.

9. The toe guard of claim 2 wherein the toe guard is available in a set of two.

10. The toe guard of claim 4 wherein the toe guard is produced in a variety of sizes to accommodate adults, teens or children.

11. The toe guard of claim 4 wherein the toe guard is produced in a sizable length that the wearer may cut and customize to fit their footwear.

12. The toe guard of claim 4 wherein the toe guard is manufactured in neutral colors such as brown, black and beige, or vibrant colors.

13. The toe guard of claim 4 wherein the toe guard is packaged in a clear container.

14. The toe guard of claim 4 wherein the toe guard is available in a set of two.

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