

Oct. 29, 1968

S. A. JONES

3,407,927

DISPOSABLE TONGS

Filed May 2, 1966

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. 1.

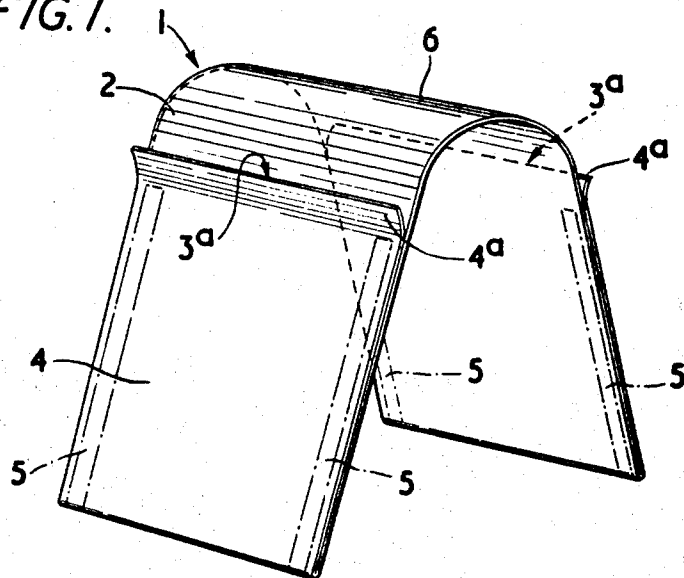
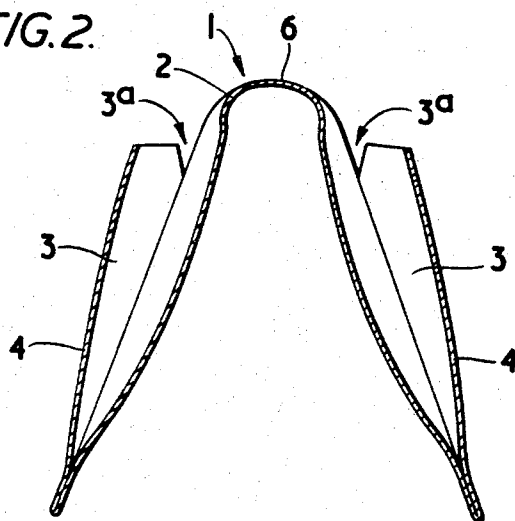


FIG. 2.



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FIG. 3.

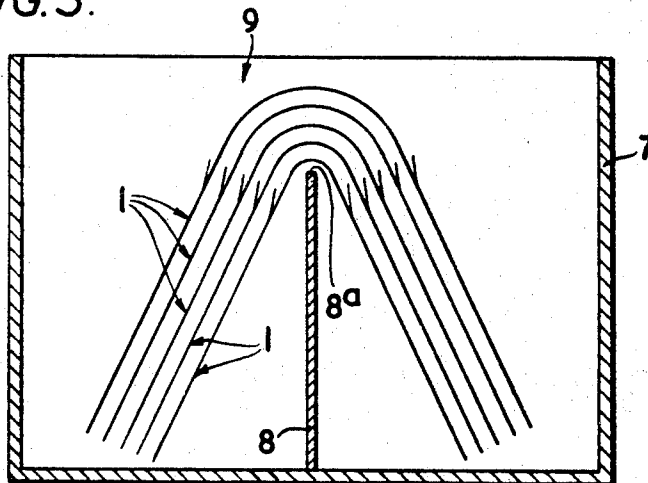


FIG. 4^a

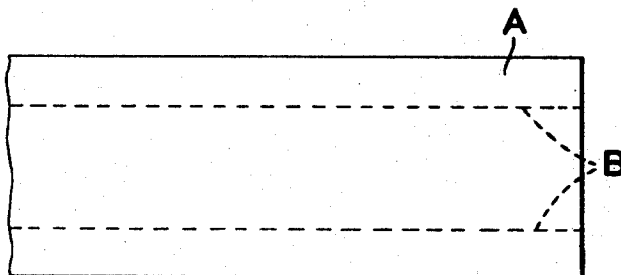


FIG. 4^b

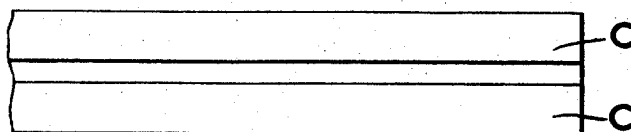


FIG. 4^c

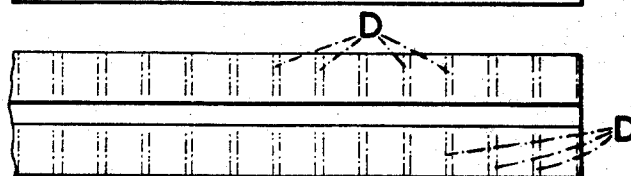
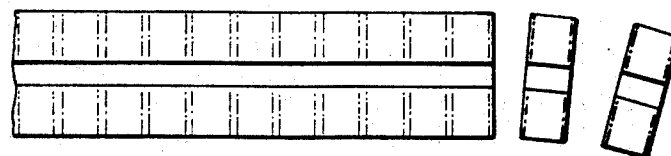


FIG. 4^d



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DISPOSABLE TONGS

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19,263/65

2 Claims. (Cl. 206—65)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A container with a stack of sanitary paper tongs contained therein. The tongs are arranged in stacked relation in the container and are draped over the top edge of a central, vertical partition in the container. Each tong is provided with a pocket at each of its ends and the draping of the tongs in the stack disposes the tongs in a position so that their pockets have open mouths directed upwardly. This permits the hand of a user to enter the container and insert his fingers and thumb into the respective pockets in the uppermost tongs in the stack and lift the tongs from off the stack and remove it from the container. The tongs are thus picked up and handled without the fingers of the user touching that part of the tongs which contacts with an article to be handled so that such article will then be handled in a hygienic manner and safeguarded from contamination.

This invention relates to disposable tongs which are more particularly intended for use in handling unwrapped food, for example, in shops, although the said tongs may if desired be used in suitable other cases where it is desired to avoid touching substances or articles to be picked up by hand.

A common method of handling food in an unwrapped condition in shops is to use metal tongs, which may be used a considerable number of times, in the course of a day's trading, between cleanings. This is a disadvantage from a hygienic point of view, particularly as in the course of such use the food-gripping surfaces of the tongs may inadvertently be handled or soiled.

An object of the present invention is to provide tongs, suitable for use in handling food, which can be produced at a cost sufficiently low to make it practicable for the user to throw them away after use once only.

Another object of the invention is, preferably, to provide tongs packaged in such a way that they can readily be withdrawn for use without the user's hands coming into contact with those surfaces of the tongs which are to engage the substance or article to be picked up.

According to the invention, disposable tongs are formed by a strip of paper or other flexible disposable material which is provided at each end with a pocket and is folded about its middle so that its pocketed ends form jaws and so that each pocket is at the outside of the tongs and has its mouth presented towards the middle of the strip, whereby the tongs can be held in use by the user inserting a finger, or fingers, into the one pocket, and a thumb into the other pocket.

Also, according to the invention, a plurality of disposable tongs each of the construction set forth in the last preceding paragraph are housed in a box-like dispenser, said tongs being positioned in nested-together relationship over an edge of a partition of said dispenser, whereby the opposed jaws of each of the tongs are respectively disposed at opposite sides of the partition, with the mouths of the pocket presented towards a mouth of the dispenser, so that the user can insert a finger, or fingers, and a thumb into the respective pockets and withdraw the tongs, one at a time, from the dispenser without

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having to touch the surface of the tongs which are to come into contact with the substance or article to be picked up.

FIGURE 1 of the accompanying drawings shows, by way of example, disposable tongs constructed in accordance with the present invention.

FIGURE 2 is a vertical section through the tongs shown in FIGURE 1, the thickness of the material being exaggerated in this view, for the sake of clarity.

FIGURE 3 shows, in diagrammatic vertical section, a dispenser housing a plurality of tongs each of the construction shown in FIGURES 1 and 2.

FIGURES 4(a) to 4(d) illustrate stages in the formation of tongs, of the construction shown in FIGURES 1 and 2, from a web of disposable material.

Referring to FIGURES 1 and 2 of the drawings, disposable tongs 1 more particularly intended for use in handling unwrapped food in shops and the like are formed by a strip of paper 2 provided at each end with a pocket 3. Each pocket 3 has a front wall 4 which constitutes a folded-over extension of the respective end of the strip 2 and which is secured at the sides, at 5, by a band of suitable adhesive, to adjacent marginal portions of the strip 2. The strip 2 is folded at 6 about its middle, so that the pocketed ends of the strip form jaws of the tongs, each pocket 3 being at the outside of the tongs and having its mouth, shown at 3a, upwardly presented towards the middle of the strip 2. The arrangement is such that the tongs 1 can be held in use by the user inserting a finger or fingers into the one pocket 3 and a thumb into the other pocket 3. On pressing together the said fingers and thumb, or finger and thumb, inserted in the respective pockets 3, gripping pressure can thereby be applied through the tongs to the substance or article picked up.

The bands of adhesive, securing the sides of the front wall 4 of each pocket to the strip 2, stop short of the top edge portion 4a of the wall 4, so as that said portion 4a forms a flap facilitating insertion of the finger, or fingers, or thumb, into the respective pocket 3.

Referring to FIGURE 3, a plurality of tongs 1 each constructed as described in the last preceding paragraph can be packaged in a particularly convenient manner by housing them, in a nested-together relationship, in a dispenser 7 of a rectangular box-like form having a central vertical partition 8 which stops short of the top of the dispenser, the said tongs 1 being positioned over a top edge 8a of said partition whereby the opposed jaws of each of the tongs 1 depend at opposite sides of the partition 8, with the mouths of the pockets presented upwards. This arrangement is such that it enables the user to insert, through a top mouth 9 of the dispenser, a plurality of fingers and a thumb, or a finger and thumb, into the respective pockets of the topmost of the tongs 1 and the user can readily withdraw said topmost tongs without having to touch the inner surfaces of the ends of the tongs, that is, without having to touch those surface portions of the tongs which come into contact with the substance or article to be picked up. After being used once, the said tongs can be thrown away, and the next tongs (now the topmost tongs) in the dispenser 7 can be withdrawn from the latter, in the same way as with the first tongs, when required for use. The operation can be continued, withdrawing the tongs 1 one at a time, as long as tongs remain in the dispenser.

The ends of this strip, which form the outer ends of the jaws of the tongs, are shown with right-angled corners but may be of any other suitable shape. They may, for example, be of a rounded or a pointed shape, or have bevelled corners.

Referring to FIGURES 4(a) to 4(d), the tongs may be made in quantity from a paper web A by first folding

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over said web A longitudinally at opposite sides along fold lines B (FIGURE 4(a)) to provide a pair of marginal portions C (FIGURE 4(b)) each overlapping a part of the central portion of the web, next securing these marginal portions C, to the parts they overlap, by bands of adhesive D (FIGURE 4(c)) extending transversely of the web and spaced apart in the longitudinal direction of the web, next cutting the web transversely to divide the web into a plurality of pocketed strips (FIGURE 4(d)), and then folding each strip about its middle to form the tongs.

If desired, the tongs may be made from a suitable flexible disposable plastic, instead of from paper, and the pockets of such plastic strips may be secured at their side edges by heat-sealing, instead of by adhesive.

The invention thus provides simple means for handling food hygienically, and a further advantage is that there is less likelihood of delicate foodstuffs, such as cream cakes or pastries, being accidentally crushed when being picked up by tongs constructed in accordance with the invention, than would be the case if conventional metal tongs were used.

Whilst it is preferred that the pocket width is such that in use, with a thumb inserted into the one pocket, more than one finger can be inserted in the other pocket, if desired the pocket width may be such as to permit only one finger to be inserted in the pocket not occupied by the thumb.

If desired, tongs constructed in accordance with the invention may be used in hospitals for handling hospital instruments and utensils, and toilet paper.

I claim:

1. A container and a plurality of disposable tongs contained therein, each of the tongs consisting of a strip of disposable flexible material, the strip having an open-mouthed pocket at each end and being folded at its middle so that each pocket is directed upwardly in the container and has its mouth presented toward the middle of the strip whereby the tongs can be placed in use by the user inserting one or more fingers on one hand in one of the

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pockets and the thumb of the same hand into the other pocket, the container having an open top and a partition, the tongs being stacked in nested relation over an edge of the partition whereby the pockets on each strip are arranged on opposite sides of the partition with the mouths of the pockets directed toward the open top of the container so that a user can insert a finger or fingers and a thumb into the respective pockets and without touching that part of the tongs which comes into contact with an article or substance to be picked up by the tongs.

2. A container and paper tongs housed therein, the container having a central, vertically disposed partition and an open top, the upper end of the partition being located below the open top, the receptacle having a chamber on each side of the partition, a stack of paper tongs draped over the upper edge of the partition, each of the tongs being provided with an open-mouthed pocket at each end, the pockets at one end of the stacked tongs being disposed in one of the chambers and the pockets at the other end of the tongs being disposed in the other chamber, the tongs being folded across on a transverse fold line located between the pockets, which fold line is located along the top edge of the partition, the mouths of the pockets being directed toward the open top of the container whereby the hand of a user can enter through such open top and the fingers of the hand can be extended into one of the pockets in the uppermost tongs in the stack and the thumb in the other pocket of the tongs and can lift the engaged tongs from off the stack and out of the container.

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