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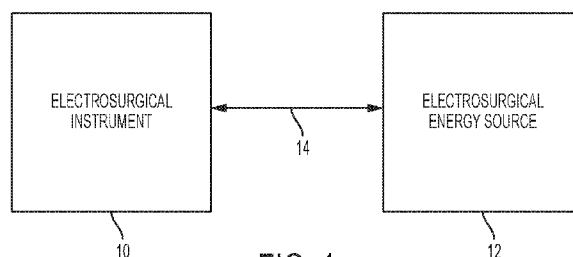


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: An electrosurgical instrument. The electrosurgical instrument includes a first arm, a second arm and a coupling system. The first arm includes a first jaw. The second arm is pivotably connected to the first arm and includes a second jaw, a cutting member movable within the first and second jaws, and a cutting member trigger. The coupling system includes a coupling member mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger. The coupling member is movable between a first position and a second position. In the first position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically uncoupled from the cutting member trigger. In the second position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger.

ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT INCLUDING A CUTTING MEMBER DECOUPLABLE FROM A CUTTING MEMBER TRIGGER

INTRODUCTION

[0001] This application discloses, generally and in various embodiments, an electrosurgical instrument including a cutting member, a cutting member trigger and a coupling system configured to couple the cutting member to or decouple the cutting member from the cutting member trigger.

[0002] Various surgical instruments include opposing jaws for grasping tissue and a knife for cutting the tissue. Some of these instruments also include one or more electrodes for applying electrosurgical energy to the tissue (e.g., to coagulate or seal the tissue). For such instruments, the instrument can be operated in different modes. For example, such instruments may operate in a grasping only mode, in a grasping and cutting mode, in a grasping and sealing mode and in a grasping, sealing and cutting mode.

[0003] For electrosurgical instruments which include opposing jaws for grasping tissue and a knife for cutting the tissue, a knife lockout feature operates to prevent the knife from firing until the opposing jaws are sufficiently closed upon the tissue and/or to prevent the opposing jaws from being opened until the knife has been retracted. Examples of a knife lockout feature are described in U.S. Patent Applications 14/579,299, 14/579,599 and 14/579,623, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties.

[0004] Although a knife lockout feature can help prevent accidental cutting by the knife (e.g., by preventing the knife from advancing or retracting even when the trigger is being actuated), such a feature can introduce an unwanted issue. For instances where the trigger is being pulled (or pushed or rotated) prior to the jaws being in an acceptable position for firing of the knife (either distally or proximally), the knife can experience substantial pressure such that when the jaws reach the acceptable position, the knife experiences a very hard release and can quickly shoot to the opposite end of the jaws with an operator of the electrosurgical instrument having little or no control of the speed of the knife.

SUMMARY

[0005] In one embodiment, an electrosurgical instrument is provided. The electrosurgical instrument comprises a first arm, a second arm and a coupling system. The first arm comprises a first jaw. The second arm is pivotably connected to the first arm and comprises a second jaw, a cutting member movable within the first and second jaws, and a cutting member trigger. The coupling system comprises a coupling member mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger. The coupling member is movable between a first position and a second position. In the first position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically uncoupled from the cutting member trigger. In the second position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger.

[0006] In another embodiment of the electrosurgical instrument, a proximal end of the first arm is movable from a minimum distance from a proximal end of the second arm to a maximum distance from the proximal end of the second arm. In the first position of the coupling member, the proximal end of the first arm is located at the maximum distance from the proximal end of the second arm. In the second position of the coupling member, the proximal end of the first arm is located at the minimum distance from the proximal end of the second arm.

[0007] In another embodiment, the first arm is movable between a first position and a second position and the second arm further comprises a fin member. In the first position of the first arm, the fin member is spaced apart from the coupling member. In the second position of the first arm, the fin member is in contact with the coupling member.

[0008] In another embodiment, the second jaw comprises an electrode and the electrosurgical instrument is configured to selectively apply electrosurgical energy to the electrode.

[0009] In another embodiment, the first jaw defines a first channel, the second jaw defines a second channel, the first and second channels are axially aligned and the cutting member is movable within the first and second channels.

[0010] In another embodiment, the cutting member defines a notch configured to receive the coupling member.

[0011] In another embodiment, the electrosurgical instrument further comprises a first protuberance connected to the cutting member and a second protuberance mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger. At least a portion of the first protuberance is axially aligned with at least a portion of the second protuberance.

[0012] In another embodiment, the cutting member defines a receptacle, the coupling member comprises a protuberance and the receptacle is configured to receive the protuberance.

[0013] In another embodiment, the coupling system further comprises a movement arm mechanically coupled to the first and second arms. The movement arm is movable between a first position and a second position. In the first position of the movement arm, the movement arm is spaced apart from the coupling member. In the second position of the movement arm, the movement arm is in contact with the coupling member.

[0014] In another embodiment, the second arm defines a slot, the coupling system further comprises a pin which mechanically couples the movement arm to the second arm, the pin is slidably movable within the slot and the movement arm is movable along the slot.

[0015] In another embodiment, the coupling member is pivotably connected to the cutting member trigger.

[0016] In another embodiment, the coupling system further comprises a biasing member in contact with the coupling member. In the first position of the coupling member, the biasing member is in an uncompressed state. In the second position of the coupling member, the biasing member is in a compressed state when the coupling member is in the second position.

[0017] In one embodiment, an electrosurgical instrument is provided. The electrosurgical instrument comprises a first arm, a second arm and a coupling system. The first arm comprises a first jaw. The second arm is pivotally connected to the first arm and comprises a second jaw, a cutting member and a cutting member trigger. The second jaw comprises an electrode configured to apply electrosurgical energy to a tissue positioned between the first and second jaws. The cutting member is movable within the first and second jaws and is configured to cut the tissue positioned between the first and second jaws. The coupling system comprises a coupling member mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger. The coupling member is movable between a first position and a second position. In the first position of the coupling member, movement of the cutting member trigger does not produce distal movement of the cutting member. In the second position of the coupling member, movement of the cutting member trigger produces distal movement of the cutting member.

[0018] In another embodiment, the first arm is movable from a first position to a second position. In the first position of the first arm, the first and second jaws are in an open position. In the second position of the first arm, the first and second jaws are in a closed position.

[0019] In another embodiment, the coupling system further comprises a movement arm mechanically coupled to the first arm and the second arm.

[0020] In another embodiment, the coupling system further comprises a biasing member in contact with the coupling member.

[0021] In another embodiment, the movement of the cutting member trigger comprises at least one of the following: a distal movement of the cutting member trigger, a proximal movement of the cutting member trigger and a rotational movement of the cutting member trigger.

[0022] In one embodiment, an electrosurgical instrument is provided. The electrosurgical instrument comprises a first arm, a second arm and a coupling system. The first arm comprises a first jaw. The second arm is pivotally connected to the first arm and comprises a second jaw, a cutting member and a cutting member trigger. The second jaw comprises an electrode configured to apply electrosurgical energy to a tissue positioned between the first and second jaws. The cutting member movable within the first and second jaws and is configured to cut the tissue positioned between the first and second jaws. The coupling system comprises a coupling member mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger. The coupling member is movable between a first position and a second position. In the first position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically uncoupled from the cutting member trigger. In the second position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger.

[0023] In another embodiment, the first arm is movable between an open position and a closed position, the coupling member is in the first position when the first arm is in the open position and the coupling member is in the second position when the first arm is in the closed position.

[0024] In another embodiment, the first jaw is movable between an open position and a closed position, the coupling member is in the first position when the first jaw is in the open position and the coupling member is in the second position when the first jaw is in the closed position.

[0025] The foregoing summary is illustrative only and is not intended to be in any way limiting. In addition to the illustrative aspects, embodiments, and features described above, further aspects, embodiments, and features will become apparent by reference to the drawings and the following detailed description.

FIGURES

[0026] The novel features of the embodiments described herein are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The embodiments, however, both as to organization and methods of operation may be better understood by reference to the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings as follows:

[0027] FIG. 1 illustrates a simplified representation of an electrosurgical instrument according to various embodiments.

[0028] FIG. 2A illustrates a perspective view of various embodiments of the electrosurgical instrument of FIG. 1 in a closed position.

[0029] FIG. 2B illustrates a perspective view of various embodiments of the electrosurgical instrument of FIG. 1 in an open position.

[0030] FIG. 3 illustrates an exploded view of the electrosurgical instrument of FIG. 1 according to various embodiments.

[0031] FIGS. 4A and 4B illustrate various embodiments of first and second jaws of the electrosurgical instrument of FIG. 1 when the first and second jaws are in an open position.

[0032] FIG. 5 illustrates a sideways transparent view of the electrosurgical instrument of FIG. 1 according to various embodiments.

[0033] FIGS. 6-7 illustrate simplified representations of the electrosurgical instrument of FIG. 1 according to various embodiments.

DESCRIPTION

[0034] In the following detailed description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof. In the drawings, similar symbols and reference characters typically identify similar components throughout the several views, unless context dictates otherwise. The illustrative embodiments described in the detailed description, drawings, and claims are not meant to be limiting. Other embodiments may be utilized, and other changes may be made, without departing from the scope of the subject matter presented here.

[0035] The following description of certain examples of the technology should not be used to limit its scope. Other examples, features, aspects, embodiments, and advantages of the technology will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following description, which is by way of illustration, one of the best modes contemplated for carrying out the technology. As

will be realized, the technology described herein is capable of other different and obvious aspects, all without departing from the technology. Accordingly, the drawings and descriptions should be regarded as illustrative in nature and not restrictive.

[0036] It is further understood that any one or more of the teachings, expressions, embodiments, examples, etc. described herein may be combined with any one or more of the other teachings, expressions, embodiments, examples, etc. that are described herein. The following-described teachings, expressions, embodiments, examples, etc. should therefore not be viewed in isolation relative to each other. Various suitable ways in which the teachings herein may be combined will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art in view of the teachings herein. Such modifications and variations are intended to be included within the scope of the claims.

[0037] Before explaining the various embodiments of the electrosurgical instrument including a cutting member decouplable from a cutting member trigger in detail, it should be noted that the various embodiments disclosed herein are not limited in their application or use to the details of construction and arrangement of parts illustrated in the accompanying drawings and description. Rather, the disclosed embodiments may be positioned or incorporated in other embodiments, variations and modifications thereof, and may be practiced or carried out in various ways. Accordingly, embodiments of the surgical devices disclosed herein are illustrative in nature and are not meant to limit the scope or application thereof. Furthermore, unless otherwise indicated, the terms and expressions employed herein have been chosen for the purpose of describing the embodiments for the convenience of the reader and are not to limit the scope thereof. In addition, it should be understood that any one or more of the disclosed embodiments, expressions of embodiments, and/or examples thereof, can be combined with any one or more of the other disclosed embodiments, expressions of embodiments, and/or examples thereof, without limitation.

[0038] For clarity of disclosure, the terms "proximal" and "distal" are defined herein relative to a human or robotic operator of the surgical instrument. The term "proximal" refers the position of an element closer to the human or robotic operator of the surgical instrument and further away from the surgical end effector of the surgical instrument. The term "distal" refers to the position of an element closer to the surgical end effector of the surgical instrument and further away from the human or robotic operator of the surgical instrument.

[0039] Also, in the following description, it is to be understood that terms such as front, back, inside, outside, top, bottom, upper, lower and the like are words of convenience and are not to be construed as limiting terms. Terminology used herein is not meant to be limiting insofar as devices described herein, or portions thereof, may be attached or utilized in other orientations. The various embodiments will be described in more detail with reference to the drawings.

[0040] In various embodiments, the present disclosure provides an electrosurgical instrument having a cutting member, a cutting member trigger and a coupling system. The cutting member is decouplable from the cutting member trigger, and the coupling system operates to mechanically couple the cutting member to or decouple the cutting member from the cutting member trigger.

[0041] FIG. 1 illustrates a simplified representation of an electrosurgical instrument 10 according to various embodiments. The electrosurgical instrument 10 may be coupled to an electrosurgical energy source 12 via an electrically conductive cable 14. The electrosurgical energy source 12 may be any type of electrosurgical energy source supply suitable for providing electrosurgical energy for therapeutic tissue treatment, tissue cauterization/sealing, as well as sub-therapeutic treatment and measurement. For example, according to various embodiments, the electrosurgical energy source 12 is a voltage supply which can provide electric current to the electrosurgical instrument 10, wherein the magnitude, duration, wave form, and/or frequency, for example, of the electric current can be sufficiently controlled or modulated to provide a desired amount of electrosurgical energy to the electrosurgical instrument 10. Although not shown in FIG. 1 for purposes of simplicity, it will be appreciated that the electrically conductive cable 14 includes at least two electrically conductive wires - one for delivering current from the electrosurgical energy source 12 to the electrosurgical instrument 10 and one for returning current from the electrosurgical instrument 10 to the electrosurgical energy source 12.

[0042] As described in more detail hereinbelow, the electrosurgical instrument 10 includes a grasping system, a sealing system, a cutting system and a coupling system. The cutting system includes a cutting member trigger 16 (See FIGS. 2A-2B) and a cutting member 18 (See FIG. 3). The cutting member 18 is normally mechanically decoupled from, but is mechanically couplable to, the cutting member trigger 16. In the mechanically decoupled condition, movement of the cutting member trigger 16 (if possible) does not produce distal or proximal movement of the cutting member 18. The coupling system allows the cutting member 18 to be mechanically

coupled to the cutting member trigger 16, and once the cutting member 18 is coupled the cutting member trigger 16, the cutting member trigger 16 can actuate the cutting member 18 (i.e., movement of the cutting member trigger 16 can produce distal or proximal movement of the cutting member 18). According to various embodiments, the electrosurgical instrument 10 also includes a cutting member lockout system, a jaw lock system and/or an electrosurgical energy activation system.

GRASPING SYSTEM

[0043] FIG. 2A illustrates a perspective view of various embodiments of the electrosurgical instrument 10 in a closed position and FIG. 2B illustrates a perspective view of various embodiments of the electrosurgical instrument 10 in an open position. The electrosurgical instrument 10 includes a first arm 20 and a second arm 22 which are pivotally connected to each other by a pin 24 which is near a distal end of the electrosurgical instrument 10.

[0044] According to various embodiments, the first arm 20 includes a finger ring 26, a bend arm 28 and a first jaw 30 (e.g., a lower jaw). The finger ring 26 is near the proximal end of the first arm 16 and is shaped such that a human finger can be inserted therein. The bend arm 28 is between the proximal and distal ends of the first arm 20 and connects the finger ring 26 to the first jaw 30. The first jaw 30 is at the distal end of the first arm 20 and is fixedly coupled to the bend arm 28. The finger ring 26, the bend arm 28 and the first jaw 30 are connected in a fixed orientation, such that as the finger ring 26 is moved (e.g., relative to the second arm 22), the bend arm 28 and the first jaw 30 move together with the finger ring 26.

[0045] According to various embodiments, the second arm 22 includes a finger ring 32, a housing 34, a jaw tail 36 (See FIG. 3) and a second jaw 38 (e.g., an upper jaw). According to various embodiments, the finger ring 32 is formed integral with the housing 34. The finger ring 32 is near the proximal end of the housing 34 and is shaped such that a human finger can be inserted therethrough. The jaw tail 36 is positioned within the distal end of the housing 34 and is fixedly coupled to the housing 34 and the proximal end of the second jaw 36. The finger ring 32, the housing 34, the jaw tail 36 and the second jaw 38 are connected in a fixed orientation, such that as the finger ring 32 is moved, the housing 34, the jaw tail 36 and the second jaw 38 move together with the finger ring 32. According to various embodiments, the housing 34 includes a

first portion 34a (e.g., a left portion) and a second portion 34b, and the finger ring 32 may be formed integral with the first portion 34a of the housing 34 as shown in FIG. 3.

[0046] The first and second jaws 30, 38 are movable relative to one another between a first position (e.g., a closed position as shown in FIG. 2A) and a second position (e.g., an open position as shown in FIG. 2B). The movement of the first and second jaws 30, 38 is similar to the movement experienced by the pivotable blades of a pair of scissors. In operation, starting from the open position, where the distal ends of the first and second jaws 30, 38 are spaced a maximum distance apart from each other, a tissue (not shown) may be positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38. As the first and second jaws 30, 38 are moved toward one another (e.g., by moving the finger ring 26 toward the finger ring 32), the tissue positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38 is grasped and compressed. It will be appreciated that the finger ring 26, the bend arm 28, the first jaw 30, the finger ring 32, the housing 34, the jaw tail 36 and the second jaw 38 may be considered components of the grasping system of the electrosurgical instrument 10. Additional details of the grasping system can be found, for example, in U.S. Patent Applications 14/579,299, 14/579,599 and 14/579,623, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties. From the closed position, where the distal ends of the first and second jaw members 30, 38 are spaced a minimum distance apart from each other, the first and second jaws 30, 38 may be moved toward the open position by moving the finger ring 26 away from the finger ring 32.

[0047] The electrosurgical instrument 10 is configured such that it can be easily operated by a right-handed person or a left-handed person in the orientation shown in FIGS. 2A-2B or upside down from the orientation shown in FIGS. 2A-2B. In the orientation shown in FIGS. 2A-2B, the operator can place their thumb in the finger ring 26 and one or more of their other fingers in the finger ring 32, then manipulate their fingers to cause the first and second jaws 30, 38 to open and close. In an orientation which is upside down from the orientation shown in FIGS. 2A-2B, the operator can place their thumb in the finger ring 32 and one or more of their other fingers in the finger ring 26, then manipulate their fingers to cause the first and second jaws 30, 38 to open and close. As such, the terms upper, lower, left and right are used for convenience only, and not as a limitation. Also, although the finger rings 26, 32 are shown as being substantially similar in size and configuration, it will be appreciated that according to other embodiments the finger rings 26, 32 may be of different sizes and/or configurations.

[0048] According to various embodiments, the first arm 20 also includes a lock button 40, a switch arm 42, a biasing member 44 (See FIG. 3) and a cover member 46. For such embodiments, the second arm 22 also includes a switch arm slot 48. As described in more detail hereinbelow, the lock button 40, the switch arm 42, the biasing member 44 (e.g., a spring) and the switch arm slot 48 may be considered components of the jaw lock system of the electrosurgical instrument 10 and/or the electrosurgical energy activation system of the electrosurgical instrument 10. As shown in FIG. 2B, according to various embodiments, the electrosurgical instrument 10 may also include a movement arm 50 mechanically coupled to the first and second arms 20, 22. As described in more detail hereinbelow, the movement arm 50 may be considered a component of the cutting member lockout system of the electrosurgical instrument 10.

SEALING SYSTEM

[0049] FIG. 3 illustrates an exploded view of the electrosurgical instrument 10 according to various embodiments. According to various embodiments, the second arm 22 also includes a port 52, an energy button 54, an energy button circuit 56, an electrode connector 58, an electrode 60, an electrically conductive jaw stop 62 (See FIG. 4B) and a return connector 64. For such embodiments, the second arm 22 may further include a compression circuit button 66 and a compression circuit 68. The port 52 is configured to receive an end of the electrically conductive cable 14 to electrically couple the electrosurgical energy source 12 to the electrosurgical instrument 10. Although not shown in FIG. 3 for purposes of simplicity, it will be appreciated that according to various embodiments, the second arm 22 includes wiring for electrically connecting the energy button circuit 56 to the port 52, wiring for electrically connecting the electrode 60 (or the electrode connector 58) to the port 52, wiring and/or electrically conductive members for electrically connecting the first jaw 30, the second jaw 38 and/or the electrically conductive jaw stop 62 to the return connector 64, wiring for electrically connecting the return connector 64 to the port 52 and wiring for electrically connecting the compression circuit 68 to the port 52. According to various embodiments, the energy button circuit 56 comprises a portion of a first electrical circuit (e.g., a switch circuit) and the electrode 60 comprises a portion of a second electrical circuit (e.g., an electrosurgical energy circuit). For such embodiments, the two

circuits can share a common neutral connector to the port 52 (and from the port 52 to the electrosurgical energy source 12).

[0050] The electrode 60 runs along the length of the second jaw 38 and extends into the housing 34. The proximal end of the electrode 60 positioned in the housing 34 is electrically connected to the electrode connector 58. The electrode connector 58 is electrically connected to the port 52 via wiring (not shown for purposes of simplicity). In some embodiments, the selective application of the electrosurgical energy to the electrode 60 can be controlled by the energy button 54. The energy button 54 is movable from a first position (e.g., a “normally open” position) to a second position (e.g., a “closed” position). As shown in FIG. 3, the energy button 54 can include a first body portion 54a (e.g., the left portion), a second body portion 54b (e.g., the right portion), a rocker 70 that is configured to allow the energy button 54 to pivot and a pin 72 that mechanically couples the rocker 70 to the first and second body portions 54a, 54b of the energy button 54. According to various embodiments, after the energy button 54 is activated, the energy button circuit 56 signals the electrosurgical energy source 12 to deliver electrosurgical energy (e.g., bipolar radio-frequency energy) to the electrode 60. As described hereinabove, the electrosurgical energy source 12 can deliver the electrosurgical energy to the port 52 via the conductive cable 14, from the port 52 to the electrode connector 58 via wiring and from the electrode connector 58 to the electrode 60.

[0051] According to various embodiments, if the energy button 54 is in the first position, the energy button circuit 56 does not signal the electrosurgical energy source 12 to deliver electrosurgical energy to the electrode 60 and thus no electrosurgical energy is applied by the electrode 60 to tissue positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38. For such embodiments, if the energy button 54 is moved to the second position, the energy button circuit 56 signals the electrosurgical energy source 12 to deliver electrosurgical energy to the electrode 60 and the delivered electrosurgical energy is applied by the electrode 60 to tissue positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38 to seal or coagulate the tissue.

[0052] The current return path from the electrode 60 to the electrosurgical energy source 12 may include the tissue positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38, the first jaw 30, and the second jaw 38 via the electrically conductive jaw stop 62. Each of the first and second jaws 30, 38 can comprise portions of the current return path and can be electrically connected to the port 52 in any reasonable manner. For example, in various embodiments, the first and second jaws

30, 38 are electrically connected to the port 52 via the return connector 64 and wiring from the return connector 64 to the port 52. In other embodiments, the first and second jaws 30, 38 are soldered/welded directly to wiring which is electrically connected to the port 52. As shown in FIG. 4B, the electrically conductive jaw stop 62 is positioned at the distal end of the second jaw 38, extends above a tissue-facing surface of the second jaw 38 and operates to set a minimum gap between the first and second jaws 30, 38. It will be appreciated that the port 52, the energy button 54, the energy button circuit 56, the electrode connector 58, the electrode 60, the electrically conductive jaw stop 62 and the return connector 64 may be considered components of the sealing system of the electrosurgical instrument 10.

[0053] According to various embodiments, the second arm 22 includes the compression circuit button 66 and the compression circuit 68. The compression circuit button 66 is movable from a first position (e.g., a “normally open” position) and a second position (e.g., a “closed” position). The compression circuit 68 may be wired and configured to signal the electrosurgical energy source 12 when the compression circuit button 66 is in the closed position. In some embodiments, only the energy button 54 needs to be in the closed position in order for electrosurgical energy to be delivered to the electrode 60. In other embodiments, the energy button 54 and the compression circuit button 66 both need to be in their respective closed positions in order for electrosurgical energy to be delivered to the electrode 60. In yet other embodiments, only the compression circuit button 66 needs to be in the closed position in order for electrosurgical energy to be delivered to the electrode 60. Details of how the compression circuit button 66 can be placed into the closed position are described hereinbelow. It will be appreciated that according to various embodiments, the compression circuit button 66 and the compression circuit 68 may also be considered components of the sealing system of the electrosurgical instrument 10.

[0054] In general, when tissue is positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38 and the compression circuit button 66 is in the closed position, the first and second jaws 30, 38 apply sufficient compression to the tissue to enable a good seal of the tissue when the electrode 60 applies electrosurgical energy to the tissue. According to various embodiments, responsive to the signal received from the compression circuit 68, the electrosurgical energy source 12 may generate an end tone or tissue seal completion signal when the tissue is sufficiently sealed and ready to be cut by the cutting member 18. In some embodiments, when the compression circuit

button 66 is in the open position, electrosurgical energy is not delivered to the electrode 60 and/or the end tone or tissue seal completion signal is not generated.

[0055] According to various embodiments, the electrosurgical instrument 10 further includes an insulator 74 which is mechanically coupled to and surrounds the electrode 60. According to various embodiments, the electrode 60 and the insulator 74 form portions of the second jaw 38. As shown in FIG 3, the second arm 22 may further include a bump 76 connected to the housing 34. The bump 76 may be formed integral with the housing 34 and operates to prevent accidental activation of the energy button 54. Although the bump 76 is shown as being connected to the second portion 34b of the housing 34, it will be appreciated that a similar bump (hidden from view in FIG. 3) may also be connected to the first portion 34a of the housing 34. Additional details of the sealing system can be found, for example, in U.S. Patent Applications 14/579,299, 14/579,599 and 14/579,623, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties.

CUTTING SYSTEM

[0056] As described hereinabove, the cutting member 18 is normally mechanically uncoupled from, but is mechanically couplable to, the cutting member trigger 16 which actuates the cutting member 18. Although the cutting member trigger 16 is shown as a pull ring in FIG 3, it will be appreciated that the cutting member trigger 16 may be configured in a number of different ways. As described in more detail hereinbelow, once the cutting member 18 is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger 16, the distal end of the cutting member 18 can be advanced from its unfired position in the housing 34 toward the distal end of the electrosurgical instrument 10 to cut tissue positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38. The cutting member 18 can also be retracted proximally back to its unfired position in the housing 34. The cutting member trigger 16 provides an operator of the electrosurgical instrument 10 control of the cutting member 18.

[0057] For the embodiments shown in FIG. 3, once the cutting member 18 is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger 16, movement of the cutting member trigger 16 toward the proximal end of the electrosurgical instrument 10 causes the advancement of the cutting member 18 toward the distal end of the electrosurgical instrument 10. According to various embodiments, as shown in FIG. 3, the second arm 22 also includes a plate member 78, a biasing

member 80, a push arm 82 and a slide 84. According to various embodiments, the plate member 78 is formed integral with the cutting member trigger 16. Stated differently, in some embodiments, the cutting member trigger 16 includes a pull ring and the plate member 78. The plate member 78 defines an opening 86 and a slot 88, and is mounted within the housing 34 such that the plate member 78 is able to slide along the proximal-distal axis of the electrosurgical instrument 10. The proximal end of the plate member 78 rests against the biasing member 80 (e.g., a spring). When the biasing member 80 is in a relaxed or minimally compressed state as shown in FIG. 3, the plate member 78 is in a distal or neutral position and the distal end of the cutting member 18 is in an unfired or retracted position within the housing 34 (i.e., it is not exposed between the first and second jaws 30, 38). The push arm 82 defines a slot 90 and an opening 92, and is mechanically coupled to the plate member 78 by a pin 94 and a pin 96. The pin 94 passes through the opening 92 of the push arm 82 and the slot 88 of the plate member 78, and is mounted within matching openings 98 defined by the first and second portions 34a, 34b of the housing 34 (the opening 94 defined by the second portion 34b of the housing 34 is hidden from view in FIG. 3). The pin 96 passes through the slot 90 of the push arm 82 and the opening 86 of the plate member 78, and is mounted within matching slots 100 defined by the first and second portions 34a, 34b of the housing 34 (the slot 100 defined by the second portion 34b of the housing 34 is hidden from view in FIG. 3). The bottom end of the push arm 82 is mechanically coupled to the slide 84 near the proximal end of the slide 84, and the slide 84 is mechanically coupled to the proximal end of the cutting member 18 near the distal end of the slide 84.

[0058] When an operator applies a force to the cutting member trigger 16 to move the cutting member trigger 16 in a proximal direction, the pin 94 mounted within the matched openings 98 doesn't move proximally or distally, the pin 96 mounted within the matched slots 100 moves proximally within the slots 100, the slot 88 of the plate member 78 slides over the pin 94 allowing the plate member 78 to move proximally, the biasing member 80 becomes compressed and the push arm 82 pivots relative to the plate member 78. The pivoting of the push arm 82 causes the slot 90 of the push arm 82 to slide proximally over the pin 96, the top of the push arm 82 to move proximally and the bottom of the push arm 82 to move distally. The distal movement of the bottom of the push arm 82 causes the slide 84 to move distally and the distal movement of the slide 84 causes the cutting member 18 to advance distally from its unfired position within the housing 34 toward the distal end of the electrosurgical instrument 10. When

the operator removes the force from the cutting member trigger 16, the biasing member 80 decompresses and moves the plate member 78 distally which causes the push arm 82 to pivot relative to the plate member 78. The pivoting of the push arm 82 causes the slot 90 of the push arm 82 to slide distally over the pin 96, the top of the push arm 82 to move distally and the bottom of the push arm 82 to move proximally. The proximal movement of the bottom of the push arm 82 causes the slide 84 to move distally and the distal movement of the slide 84 causes the cutting member 18 to retract proximally toward the proximal end of the electrosurgical instrument 10 back to its unfired position within the housing 34. In various embodiments, the plate member 78 may be replaced with a ring plate, without limitation.

[0059] Although the distal advancement of the cutting member 18 is described as being actuated by pulling the cutting member trigger 16 in the proximal direction, it will be appreciated that according to other embodiments, the distal advancement of the cutting member 18 can be actuated by pushing the cutting member trigger 16 in a distal direction, rotating the cutting member trigger 16, etc. Similarly, although the proximal retraction of the cutting member 18 is described as being actuated by pushing the cutting member trigger 16 in the distal direction, it will be appreciated that according to other embodiments, the proximal retraction of the cutting member 18 can be actuated by pulling the cutting member trigger 16 in a proximal direction, rotating the cutting member trigger 16, etc.

[0060] FIGS. 4A and 4B illustrate various embodiments of the first and second jaws 30, 38 when the first and second jaws 30, 38 are in an open position. In the open position, tissue may be positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38. In FIG. 4A, the electrosurgical instrument 10 is oriented so that the first jaw 30 is oriented below the second jaw 38 and the tissue-facing surface of the first jaw 30 is visible. The first jaw 30 defines a slot 102 configured so that the cutting member 18 can translate therein. The first jaw 30 also includes a tissue stop 104 configured to limit or block tissue positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38 from advancing any further towards the proximal end of the first and second jaws 30, 38. In some embodiments, the tissue-facing surface of the first jaw 30 is substantially smooth. In one embodiment, the slot 102 may be configured as a channel defining a base and laterally opposed sidewalls extending outwardly from the base.

[0061] In FIG. 4B, the electrosurgical instrument 10 is oriented so that the second jaw 38 is oriented below the first jaw 30 and the tissue-facing surface of the second jaw 38 is visible. The

second jaw 38 includes the electrode 60 and the insulator 74 which partially surrounds the electrode 60. According to various embodiments, the electrode 60 is a U-shaped electrode which extends from the interior of the housing 34 along one side of the second jaw 38 to the distal end of the second jaw 38 and returns along the other side of the second jaw 38, ending behind the tissue stop 104. The body of the electrode 60 thus defines a slot 106 within which the cutting member 16 can translate. In one embodiment, the slot 106 may be configured as a channel defining a base and laterally opposed sidewalls extending outwardly from the base. The slot 102, or channel, defined by the first jaw 30 is axially aligned with the slot 106, or channel, defined by the second jaw 38. As shown in FIG. 4B, the second jaw 38 may include one or more non-conductive teeth 108 and the electrically conductive jaw stop 62. The non-conductive teeth 108 are positioned along the tissue-facing surface of the electrode 60 and are configured to assist in gripping tissue placed between the first and second jaws 30, 38. The electrically conductive jaw stop 62 is positioned at the distal end of the second jaw 38, extends above the tissue-facing surface of the second jaw 38 and operates to set a minimum gap between the first and second jaws 30, 38. It will be appreciated that the cutting member trigger 16, the cutting member 18, the first and second jaws 30, 38, the plate member 78, the biasing member 80, the push arm 82, and the slide 84 may be considered components of the cutting system of the electrosurgical instrument 10.

[0062] Additional details of the cutting system can be found, for example, in U.S. Patent Applications 14/579,299, 14/579,599 and 14/579,623, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties. Furthermore, it will be appreciated that the sealing system and the cutting system can be used separately or together. That is, the operator of the electrosurgical instrument 10 can choose to activate the sealing system without also activating the cutting system. Similarly, the operator can choose to activate the cutting system without also activating the sealing system. The operator can also choose to seal and cut, typically in that order, by activating the sealing system and subsequently activating the cutting system.

CUTTING MEMBER LOCKOUT SYSTEM

[0063] Safe and effective operation of the cutting member 18 may raise at least two concerns that may be addressed by the cutting member lockout system. First, it may be desirable to prevent the cutting member 18 from firing until the first and second jaws 30, 38 are sufficiently

closed to cut the tissue held by the first and second jaws 30, 38. Second, it may be desirable to prevent the first and second jaws 30, 38 from opening until the cutting member 18 has been retracted. The first safety concern seeks to prevent the first and second jaws 30, 38 from being wider apart than the cutting member 18 is tall, so that the cutting member 18 will always cut through all layers of the tissue held by the first and second jaws 30, 38. The second safety concern seeks to prevent the cutting member 18 from being exposed and inadvertently cutting tissue that was not meant to be cut.

[0064] FIG. 5 illustrates a sideways transparent view of the electrosurgical instrument 10 according to various embodiments. As shown in FIG. 5, a distal end of the movement arm 50 is pivotably connected to the first arm 20 by a pin 110, and a proximal end of the movement arm 50 is mechanically coupled to the plate member 78 by a pin 112 which passes through the proximal end of the movement arm 50 and through a slot 114 defined by the plate member 78. The movement arm 50 provides a link between the first arm 20 and the cutting member trigger 16 (which may include the plate member 78). As the first arm 20 is moved away from the second arm 22, the pin 112 rides upward in the slot 114. When the first and second jaws 30, 38 reach the fully open position, the pin 112 is at the top of the slot 114. The slot 114 is shaped such that the pin 112 prevents the plate member 78 from moving until the first and second jaws 30, 38 are partially or entirely closed.

[0065] In some embodiments, the slot 114 comprises an angled "L" shape such that the upper or upright arm portion of the slot 114 is at an angle to the direction of travel of the plate member 78 and the lower or horizontal portion of the slot 114 is parallel to the direction of travel of the plate member 78. In such embodiments, the angle of the upright arm portion of the slot 114 and the location of the pin 112 within the upright arm portion of the slot 114 prevents the plate member 78 from moving forwards or backwards. The pin 112 must travel to the horizontal portion of the slot 114 in order for the plate member 78 to be able to move. The horizontal portion of the slot 114 is positioned parallel to the direction of travel of the plate member 78. The position of the pin 112 within the horizontal portion of the slot 114 thus operates to prevent the first and second jaws 30, 38 from being opened. The plate member 78 must be returned to the neutral position such that the pin 112 can access the upright arm portion of the slot 114 before the first and second jaws 30, 38 can be opened.

[0066] It will be appreciated that the movement arm 50 and the plate member 78 may be considered components of the cutting member lockout system of the electrosurgical instrument 10. Additional details of the cutout member locking system can be found, for example, in U.S. Patent Applications 14/579,299, 14/579,599 and 14/579,623, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties.

COUPLING SYSTEM

[0067] FIGS. 6-7 illustrate simplified representations of the electrosurgical instrument 10 of FIG. 1 according to various embodiments. For purposes of simplicity, certain components described hereinabove of the electrosurgical instrument 10 are not shown in FIGS. 6-7. As shown in FIGS. 6-7, the electrosurgical instrument 10 further includes a coupling member 118. The coupling member 118 may be configured in any manner suitable for mechanically coupling the cutting member 18 to the cutting member trigger 16 (not shown in FIG. 6). The cutting member trigger 16 and the cutting member 18 may be configured in any manner suitable for being mechanically coupled to one another via the coupling member 118. According to various embodiments, the coupling member 118 is a flexible member (e.g., a leaf spring) which is fixedly connected to the slide 84 (the slide 84 is shown in FIGS. 3 and 5) and has a bent or hooked distal end (e.g., See FIG. 6). According to other embodiments, the coupling member 118 is a flexible member which defines a downward extending protuberance and is fixedly connected to the slide 84 at its distal end. According to yet other embodiments, the coupling member 118 is a rigid member which is pivotably connected to the cutting member trigger 16 and includes a downward extending protuberance at its distal end (e.g., See FIG. 7). According to yet other embodiments, the coupling member 118 is a cam member.

[0068] For the embodiments shown in FIG. 6, the coupling member 118 is a leaf spring which has a bent or hooked distal end, the coupling member 118 is fixedly connected to the slide 84, the cutting member 18 defines a notch 120 near its proximal end, the notch 120 is configured to receive the bent or hooked distal end of the coupling member 118, a protuberance 122 is connected to the bottom of the cutting member 18 near its proximal end and a protuberance 124 is connected to the slide 84 near its distal end. The protuberances 122 and 124 are aligned such that movement of the slide 84 in the proximal direction causes the engagement of the protuberances 122, 124 and movement of the cutting member 18 in the proximal direction

(retraction). According to various embodiments, the protuberance 122 is formed integral with the cutting member 18 and/or the protuberance 124 is formed integral with the slide 84. The upper end of the movement arm 50 is still mechanically coupled to the first arm 20 by the pin 110, but the pin 112 which mechanically couples the lower end of the movement arm 50 to the second arm 22 is movably positioned in a slot 116 which is defined by the second arm 22 (instead of in the slot 114 of the plate member 78). As described hereinabove, the slide 84 is mechanically coupled to the push arm 82, which is mechanically coupled to the plate member 78, which can be formed integral with the cutting member trigger 16. Thus, when the coupling member 118 is seated in the notch 120 of the cutting member 18, the cutting member 18 is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger 16.

[0069] When the first and second jaws 30, 38 are in the open position, the distal end of the coupling member 118 is positioned above the notch 120 of the cutting member 16 and the cutting member 18 is mechanically decoupled from the cutting member trigger 16. In this mechanically decoupled condition, movement of the cutting member trigger 16 (if possible) does not cause any distal advancement of the cutting member 18. As the first and second jaws 30, 38 are moved toward the closed position, the pin 112 slides proximally in the slot 116 and the proximal end of the movement arm 50 moves proximally. Due to the configuration of the proximal end of movement arm 50, as the movement arm 50 moves proximally, the movement arm 50 pushes down on the coupling member 118, causing the distal end of the coupling member 118 to move toward the notch 120. When the first and second jaws 30, 38 are in the closed position, due to the downward force applied by the proximal end of the movement arm 50 on the coupling member 118, the coupling member 118 is positioned in the notch 120 and the cutting member 18 is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger 16. In this mechanically coupled condition, when the cutting member trigger 16 is pulled proximally, the slide 84 and the coupling member 118 move distally thereby causing the cutting member 18 to advance distally.

[0070] Regardless of whether or not the cutting member 18 is coupled to or decoupled from the cutting member trigger 16, when the cutting member trigger 16 is pushed distally, the slide 82 and the protuberance 124 move proximally. The proximal movement of the protuberance 124 causes it to engage with the protuberance 122 and move the protuberance 122 proximally thereby causing the retraction of the cutting member 18. Thus, it will be appreciated that the cutting

member 18 can always be retracted from an extended state regardless of the position of the first and second jaws 30, 38.

[0071] Although the distal advancement of the cutting member 18 is described with respect to FIG. 6 as being actuated by pulling the cutting member trigger 16 in the proximal direction, it will be appreciated that according to other embodiments, the distal advancement of the cutting member 18 can be actuated by pushing the cutting member trigger 16 in a distal direction, rotating the cutting member trigger 16, etc. Similarly, although the proximal retraction of the cutting member 18 is described as being actuated by pushing the cutting member trigger 16 in the distal direction, it will be appreciated that according to other embodiments, the proximal retraction of the cutting member 18 can be actuated by pulling the cutting member trigger 16 in a proximal direction, rotating the cutting member trigger 16, etc.

[0072] For the embodiments shown in FIG. 7, the first arm 20 further includes a fin member 126, and the second arm 22 further includes a biasing member 128 and the coupling member 118. The fin member 126 extends in a downward direction from the bottom side of the first arm 20. According to various embodiments, the fin member 126 is formed integral with the first arm 20. The biasing member 128 operates to push up on the coupling member 118.

[0073] For these embodiments, the coupling member 118 is a solid member which includes a downward extending protuberance 130 near its distal end, the coupling member 118 is pivotably connected to the cutting member trigger 16 (or to a component which is formed integral with the cutting member trigger 16), the cutting member 18 defines a receptacle 132 near its proximal end and the receptacle 132 is configured to receive the protuberance 130. According to various embodiments, the protuberance 130 is formed integral with the coupling member 118. According to other embodiments, the protuberance 130 is a separate component which is connected to the coupling member 118. The movement arm 50 may still be mechanically coupled to the first arm 20 by the pin 110 and to the plate member 78 by the pin 112, or the movement arm 50 and the pins 110, 112 can be eliminated.

[0074] When the first and second jaws 30, 38 are in the open position, the proximal ends of the first and second arms 20, 22 are spaced apart from one another, the fin member 126 is positioned above and is not in contact with the coupling member 118, the biasing member 128 is in a relaxed or minimally compressed state and is in contact with the coupling member 118, and the cutting member 18 is mechanically decoupled from the cutting member trigger 16. In this

mechanically decoupled condition, movement of the cutting member trigger 16 (if possible) does not cause any distal advancement of the cutting member 18. As the first and second jaws 30, 38 are moved toward the closed position (by moving the first arm 20 toward the second arm 22), the fin member 126 moves toward the top of the coupling member 118, eventually making contact with and pushing down on the coupling member 118, causing the biasing member 128 to compress, the coupling member 118 to pivot in a downward direction and the protuberance 130 to start being received by the receptacle 132. When the first and second jaws 30, 38 are in the closed position, due to the downward force applied by the fin member 126, the biasing member 128 is in a compressed condition, the protuberance 130 is positioned in the receptacle 132 and the cutting member 18 is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger 16. In this mechanically coupled condition, when the cutting member trigger 16 is pushed distally, the coupling member 118 moves distally and the protuberance 130 moves distally, causing the cutting member 18 to advance distally. When the cutting member trigger 16 is pulled proximally, the coupling member 118 moves proximally and the protuberance 130 moves proximally, causing the cutting member 18 to retract.

[0075] Although the distal advancement of the cutting member 18 is described with respect to FIG. 7 as being actuated by a pushing of the cutting member trigger 16 in the distal direction, it will be appreciated that according to other embodiments, the distal advancement of the cutting member 18 can be actuated by a pulling of the cutting member trigger 16 in a proximal direction, a rotation of the cutting member trigger 16, etc. Similarly, although the proximal retraction of the cutting member 18 is described as being actuated by a pulling of the cutting member trigger 16 in the proximal direction, it will be appreciated that according to other embodiments, the proximal retraction of the cutting member 18 can be actuated by a pushing of the cutting member trigger 16 in a distal direction, a rotation of the cutting member trigger 16, etc.

[0076] It will be appreciated that according to various embodiments, the movement arm 50, the coupling member 118, the cutting member trigger 16 and the cutting member 18 may be considered components of the coupling system of the electrosurgical instrument 10.

JAW LOCK SYSTEM

[0077] When using an electrosurgical instrument 10 as described above, once the tissue positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38 is grasped and compressed, it may be

desirable to lock the first and second jaws 30, 38 at that position. This allows the operator to remove his or her fingers from the finger rings 26, 32 and use the electrosurgical instrument 10 in a manner similar to a surgical clamp. The electrosurgical instrument 10 should only lock when desired and not automatically.

[0078] For embodiments of the electrosurgical device 10 which include the jaw lock system, the second arm 22 includes the compression circuit 68 and the compression circuit button 66. The compression circuit 68 and the compression circuit button 66, together with the lock button 40, the switch arm 42, the biasing member 44 and the switch arm slot 48 may be considered components of the jaw lock system of the electrosurgical instrument 10. Additional details of the jaw locking system can be found, for example, in U.S. Patent Applications 14/579,299, 14/579,599 and 14/579,623, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties.

[0079] The lock button 40 is positioned between the cover member 46 and the first portion 34a of the housing 34, is accessible by a finger positioned in the finger ring 26, is pivotably connected to the first portion 34a of the housing 34 and is actuatable between a first position (e.g., a locked position) and a second position (e.g., an unlocked position). The switch arm 42 is pivotably connected to the first portion 34a of the housing 34, is movable between a first position and a second position and is in contact with the biasing member 44. With the lock button 40 in its first position, as the first and second jaws 30, 38 are moved toward the closed position and the bottom end of the switch arm 42 is about to be received by the top portion of the switch arm slot 48, the biasing member 44 is in a relaxed or minimally compressed state and is in contact with the switch arm 42, and a top end of the switch arm 42 is in contact with a proximal end of the lock button 40. This may be considered a neutral position of the switch arm 42. The top end of the switch arm 42 operates to prevent the lock button 40 from moving, effectively locking the lock button 40 in the first position.

[0080] As the first and second jaws 30, 38 are moved further toward the closed position, the bottom end of the switch arm 42 advances toward the bottom end of the switch arm slot 48, and the configuration of the switch arm slot 48 causes the bottom end of the switch arm 42 to move distally, thereby causing the top end of the switch arm 42 to move proximally and compress the biasing member 44. With the top end of the switch arm 42 moved proximally, pressure can be applied to the proximal end of the lock button 40 to move the lock button 40 past the top end of

the switch arm 42 and into its second position where the lock button 40 is in contact with a portion (e.g., a notch) of the switch arm 42. When the lock button 40 is in this position, the switch arm 42 cannot be rotated by the force of the biasing spring 44, thus locking the switch arm 42 in position and allowing the first and second jaws 30, 38 to be locked in the closed position. In this position, the lower end of the switch arm 42 has compressed the compression circuit button 68 and the compression circuit 66 can signal the electrosurgical energy source 12 accordingly.

[0081] To move the lock button 40 back to its first position, pressure is applied to the distal end of the lock button 40 to cause the lock button 40 to move away from the portion/notch of the switch arm 42. With the lock button 40 no longer in contact with the portion/notch of the switch arm 42, the biasing member 44 drives the switch arm 42 back to its neutral position. As the switch arm 42 is being driven back to its neutral position, the lower end of the switch arm 42 releases the compression circuit button 68 and the compression circuit 66 may send a different signal to or stop signaling the electrosurgical energy source 12. Once the switch arm 42 is back in its neutral position, the switch arm 42 can exit the switch arm slot 48.

ELECTROSURGICAL ENERGY ACTIVATION SYSTEM

[0082] For embodiments which include the sealing system, the electrosurgical energy that seals or coagulates tissue positioned between the first and second jaws 30, 38 should only be activated at the desired time. Specifically, it may be desirable to activate the electrosurgical energy only when the first and second jaws 30, 38 are applying sufficient pressure to tissue positioned therebetween. This typically occurs when the first and second arms 20, 22 are in the closed position and one of the first and second arms 20, 22 is possibly flexing to provide a load on the distal ends of the first and second jaws 30, 38. Thus it is desirable that the electrosurgical activation be disabled unless the first and second jaws 30, 38 are fully closed. It is also desirable, however, for the operator to be able to close the first and second jaws 30, 38 without activating the electrosurgical energy.

[0083] The delivery of electrosurgical energy to the electrode 60 may be activated in different ways. For example, according to various embodiments, the delivery of electrosurgical energy to the electrode 60 may be activated by moving the energy button 54 from its “open” position to its “closed” position. According to other embodiments, the delivery of electrosurgical energy to the

electrode 60 may be activated by moving the compression circuit button 66 from its “open” position to its “closed” position. According to yet other embodiments, the delivery of electrosurgical energy to the electrode 60 may be activated by moving the energy button 54 from its “open” position to its “closed” position and moving the compression circuit button 66 from its “open” position to its “closed” position. In view of the above, it will be appreciated that the energy button 54, the energy button circuit 56, the compression circuit button 66 and the compression circuit 68, as well as the lock button 40, the switch arm 42 and the switch arm slot 48 may be considered components of the electrosurgical energy activation system of the electrosurgical instrument 10. Additional details of the electrosurgical energy activation system can be found, for example, in U.S. Patent Applications 14/579,299, 14/579,599 and 14/579,623, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties.

[0084] It is worthy to note that any reference to “one aspect,” “an aspect,” “one embodiment,” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the aspect is included in at least one aspect. Thus, appearances of the phrases “in one aspect,” “in an aspect,” “in one embodiment,” or “in an embodiment” in various places throughout the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same aspect. Furthermore, the particular features, structures or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more aspects.

[0085] Although various embodiments have been described herein, many modifications, variations, substitutions, changes, and equivalents to those embodiments may be implemented and will occur to those skilled in the art. Also, where materials are disclosed for certain components, other materials may be used. It is therefore to be understood that the foregoing description and the appended claims are intended to cover all such modifications and variations as falling within the scope of the disclosed embodiments. The following claims are intended to cover all such modification and variations.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An electrosurgical instrument, comprising:
a first arm comprising a first jaw;
a second arm pivotally connected to the first arm, the second arm comprising:
a second jaw;
a cutting member movable within the first and second jaws; and
a cutting member trigger; and
a coupling system comprising a coupling member mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger, wherein the coupling member is movable between a first position and a second position, wherein:
in the first position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically uncoupled from the cutting member trigger; and
in the second position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger.
2. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 1, wherein:
a proximal end of the first arm is movable from a minimum distance from a proximal end of the second arm to a maximum distance from the proximal end of the second arm, wherein:
in the first position of the coupling member, the proximal end of the first arm is located at the maximum distance from the proximal end of the second arm; and
in the second position of the coupling member, the proximal end of the first arm is located at the minimum distance from the proximal end of the second arm.
3. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the first arm is movable from a first position to a second position and further comprises a fin member, wherein:
in the first position of the first arm, the fin member is spaced apart from the coupling member; and
in the second position of the first arm, the fin member is in contact with the coupling member.

4. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 1, wherein:
the second jaw comprises an electrode; and
the electrosurgical instrument is configured to selectively apply electrosurgical energy to the electrode.
5. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 1, wherein:
the first jaw defines a first channel;
the second jaw defines a second channel, wherein the first and second channels are axially aligned; and
the cutting member is movable within the first and second channels.
6. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the cutting member defines a notch configured to receive the coupling member.
7. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 1, further comprising:
a first protuberance connected to the cutting member; and
a second protuberance mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger, wherein at least a portion of the first protuberance is axially aligned with at least a portion of the second protuberance.
8. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 1, wherein:
the cutting member defines a receptacle;
the coupling member comprises a protuberance; and
the receptacle is configured to receive the protuberance.
9. The electrosurgical system of claim 1, wherein:
the coupling system further comprises a movement arm mechanically coupled to the first and second arms; and
the movement arm is movable between a first position and a second position, wherein:

in the first position of the movement arm, the movement arm is spaced apart from the coupling member; and

in the second position of the movement arm, the movement arm is in contact with the coupling member.

10. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 9, wherein:
the second arm defines a slot;
the coupling system further comprises a pin which mechanically couples the movement arm to the second arm;
the pin is slidably movable within the slot; and
the movement arm is movable along the slot.

11. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the coupling member is pivotably connected to the cutting member trigger.

12. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 11, wherein:
the coupling system further comprises a biasing member in contact with the coupling member, wherein:
in the first position of the coupling member, the biasing member is in an uncompressed state; and
in the second position of the coupling member, the biasing member is in a compressed state.

13. An electrosurgical instrument, comprising:
a first arm comprising a first jaw;
a second arm pivotally connected to the first arm, the second arm comprising:
a second jaw comprising an electrode configured to apply electrosurgical energy to a tissue positioned between the first and second jaws;
a cutting member movable within the first and second jaws, wherein the cutting member is configured to cut the tissue positioned between the first and second jaws; and
a cutting member trigger; and

a coupling system comprising a coupling member mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger, wherein the coupling member is movable between a first position and a second position, wherein:

in the first position of the coupling member, movement of the cutting member trigger does not produce distal movement of the cutting member; and

in the second position of the coupling member, movement of the cutting member trigger produces distal movement of the cutting member.

14. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 13, wherein the first arm is movable from a first position to a second position, and wherein:

in the first position of the first arm, the first and second jaws are in an open position; and

in the second position of the first arm, the first and second jaws are in a closed position.

15. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 13, wherein the coupling system further comprises a movement arm mechanically coupled to the first arm and the second arm.

16. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 13, wherein the coupling system further comprises a biasing member in contact with the coupling member.

17. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 13, wherein the movement of the cutting member trigger comprises at least one of the following:

a distal movement of the cutting member trigger;

a proximal movement of the cutting member trigger; and

a rotational movement of the cutting member trigger.

18. An electrosurgical instrument, comprising:

a first arm comprising a first jaw;

a second arm pivotally connected to the first arm, the second arm comprising:

a second jaw comprising an electrode configured to apply electrosurgical energy to a tissue positioned between the first and second jaws;

a cutting member movable within the first and second jaws, wherein the cutting member is configured to cut the tissue positioned between the first and second jaws; and

a cutting member trigger; and

a coupling system comprising a coupling member mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger, wherein the coupling member is movable between a first position and a second position, wherein:

in the first position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically uncoupled from the cutting member trigger; and

in the second position of the coupling member, the cutting member is mechanically coupled to the cutting member trigger.

19. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 18, wherein:

the first arm is movable between an open position and a closed position;

the coupling member is in the first position when the first arm is in the open position; and

the coupling member is in the second position when the first arm is in the closed position.

20. The electrosurgical instrument of claim 18, wherein:

the first jaw is movable between an open position and a closed position;

the coupling member is in the first position when the first jaw is in the open position; and

the coupling member is in the second position when the first jaw is in the closed position.

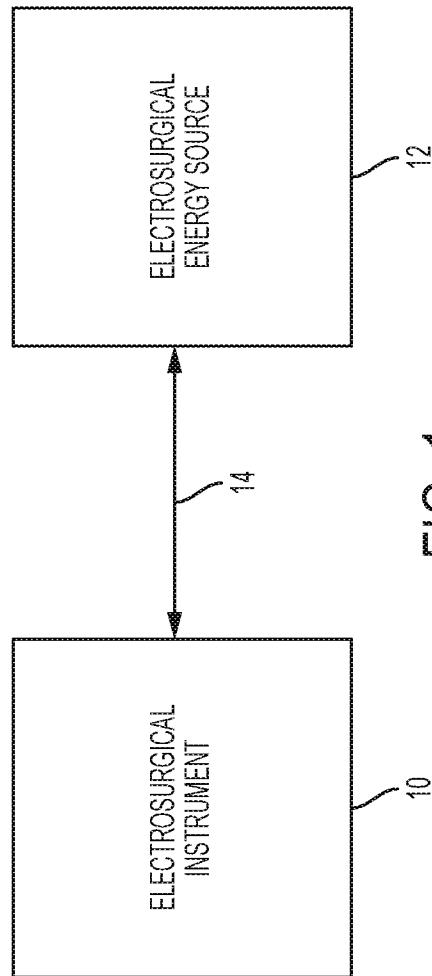
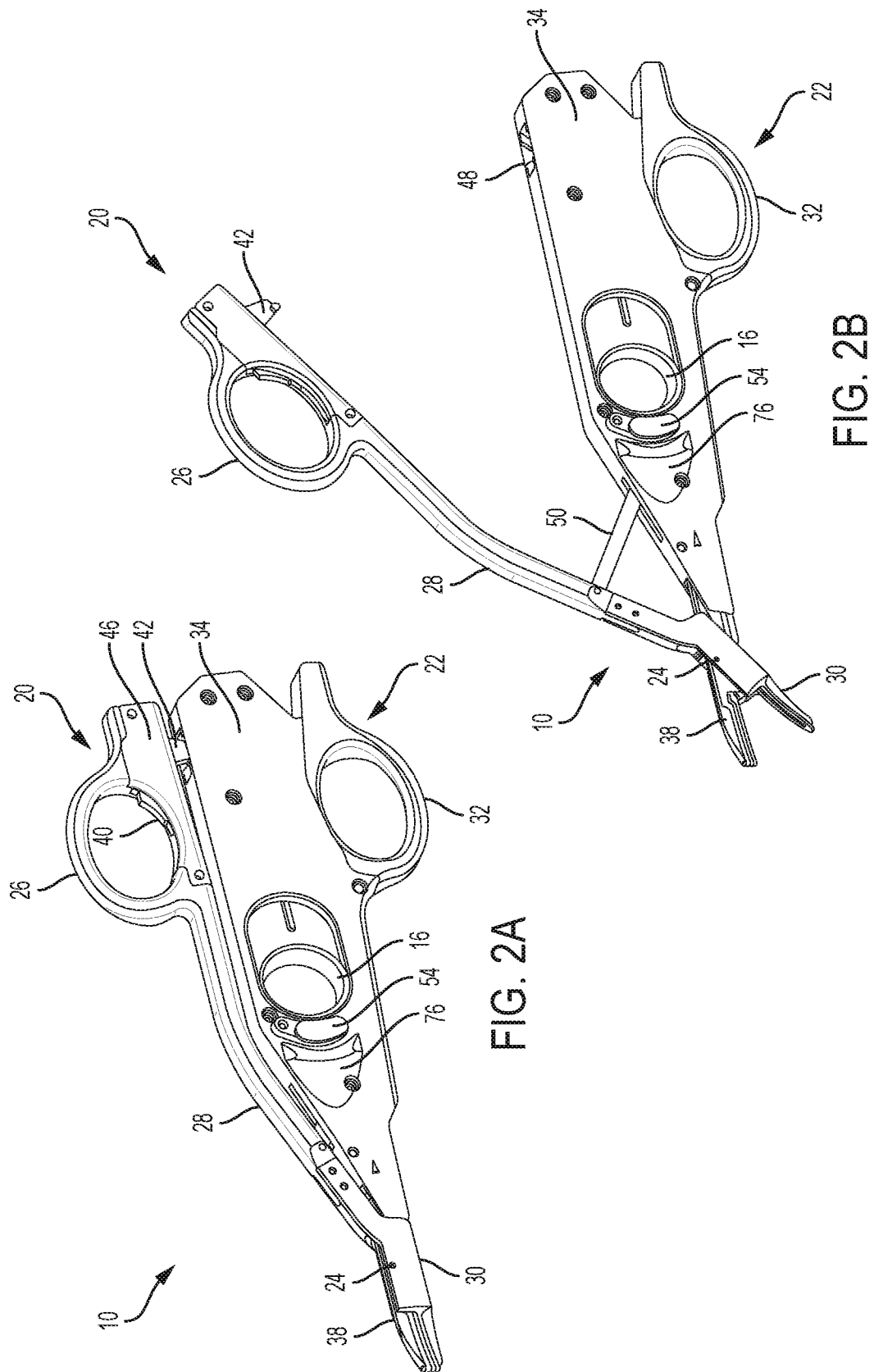
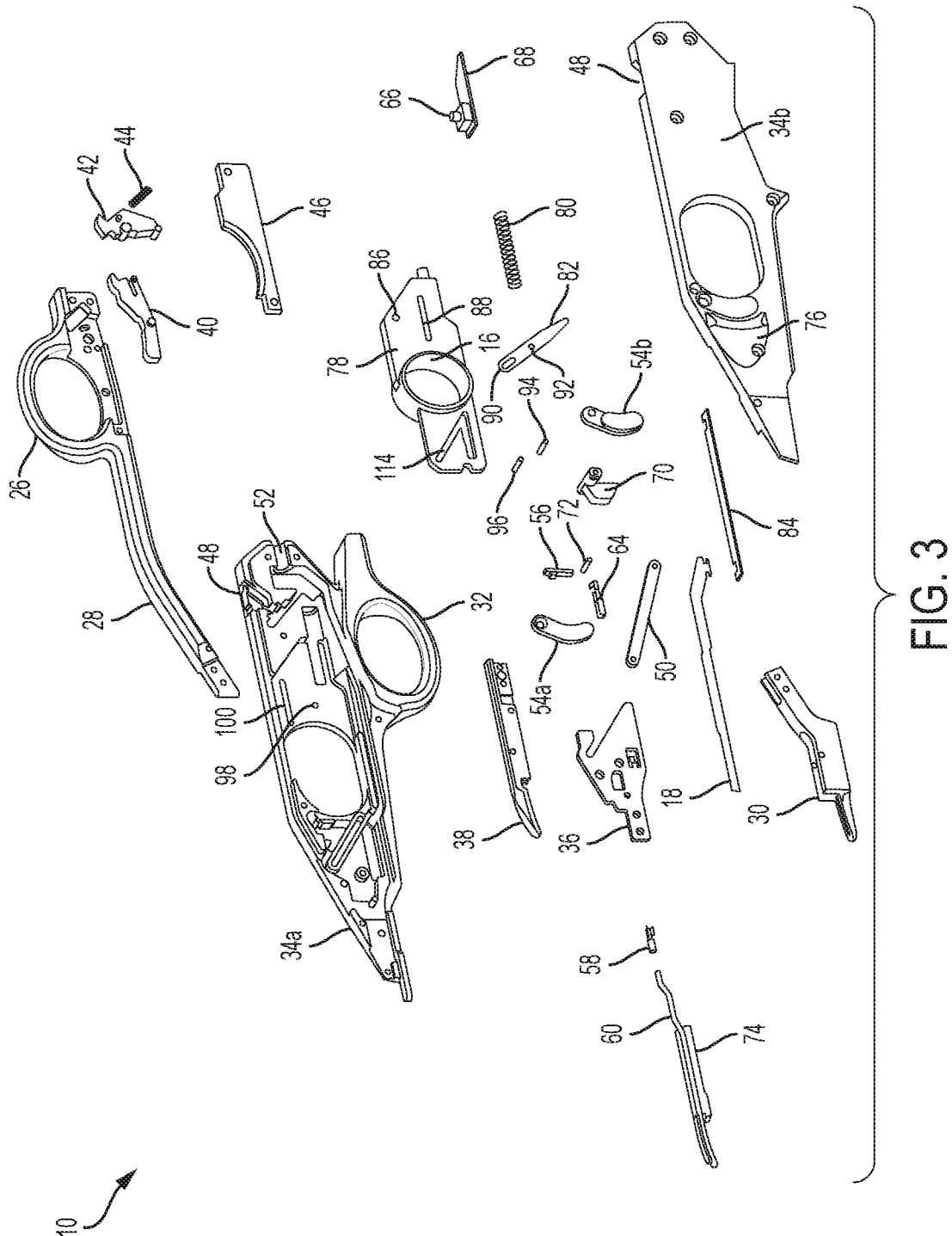
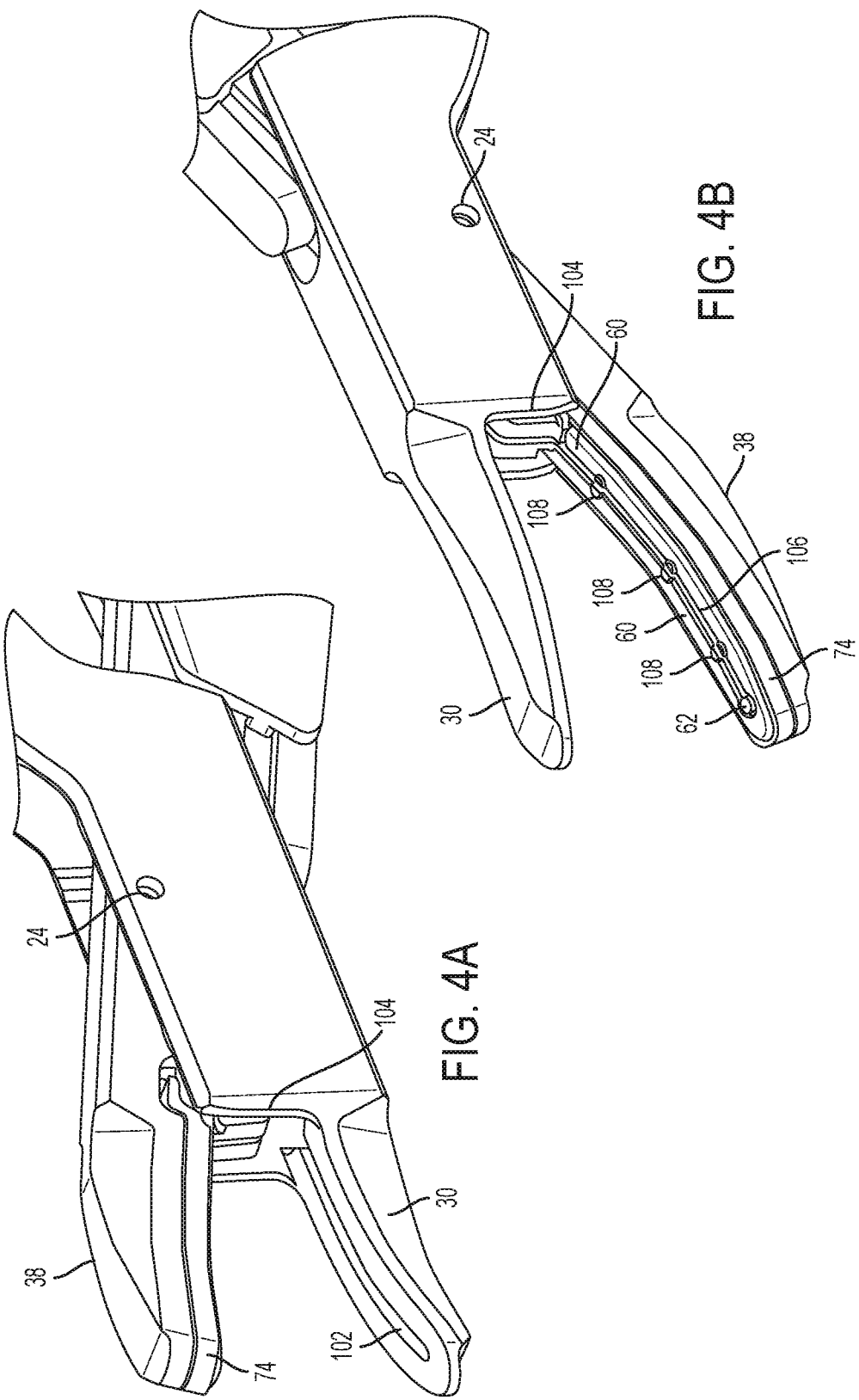


FIG. 1







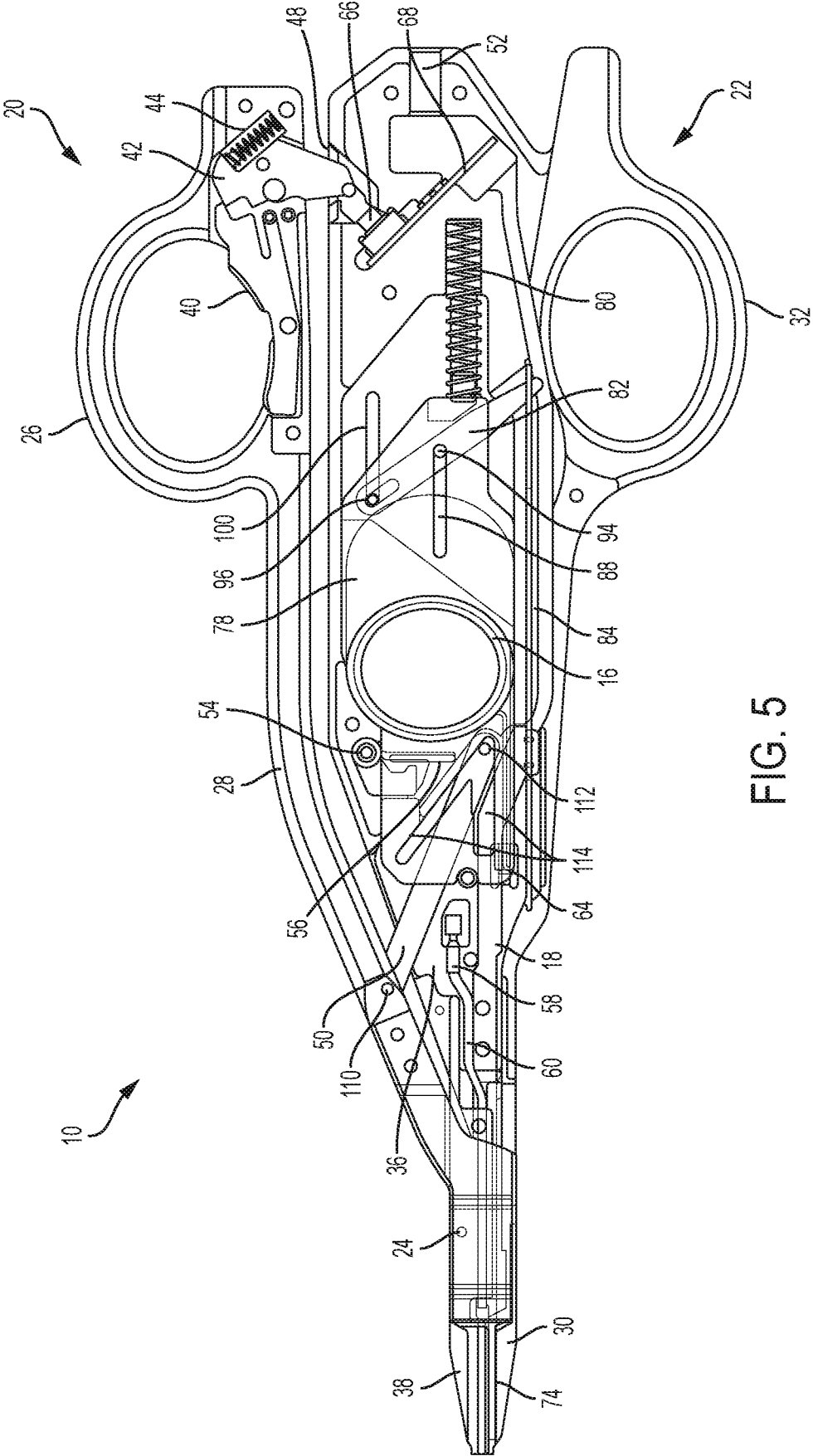
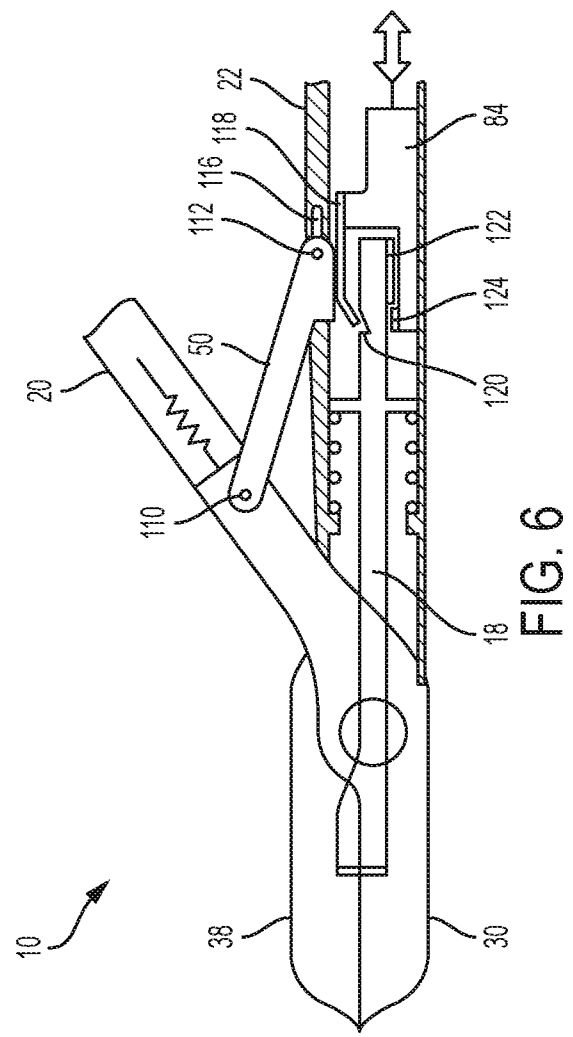


FIG. 5



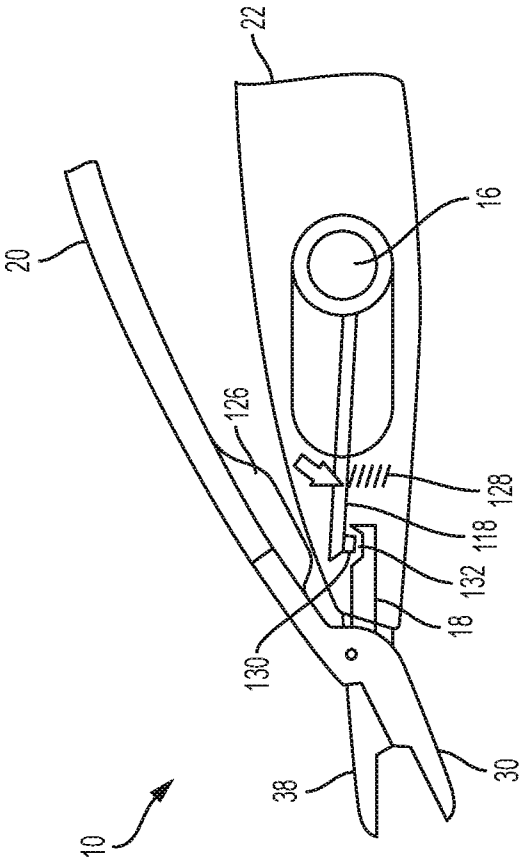


FIG. 7