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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ONE-PIECE FOOTWEAR**

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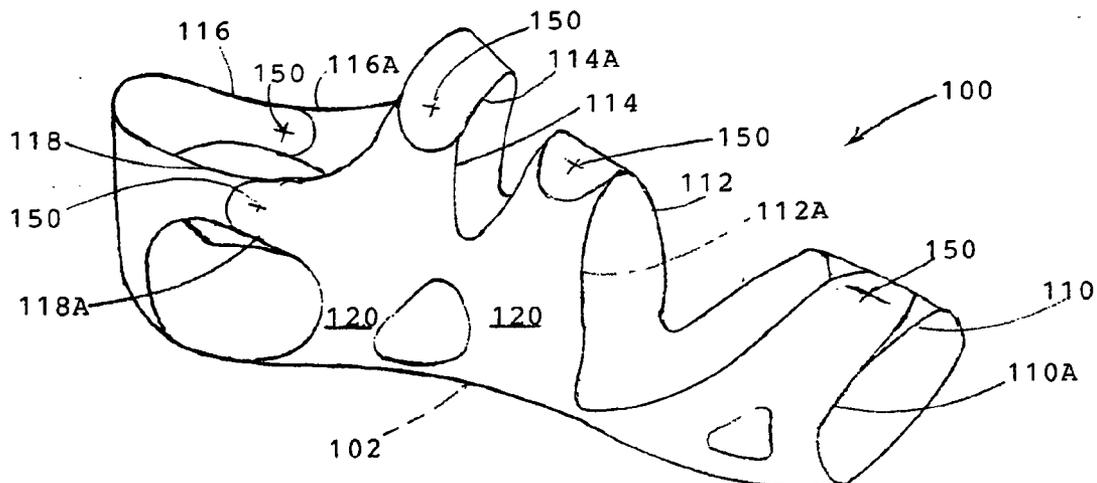
(57) **ABSTRACT**

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Footwear construction of a type resembling a conventional sandal is formed completely from a single piece of a flexible material, wherein tabs extending from one side of the base, or sole portion, connect with symmetrically disposed tabs to form the uppers. The tab connections may be implemented by sewing, by hook and loop type devices, by hook and eye devices, by buttons and buttonholes, by snaps or adhesives or other fastening means, but in any case no additional parts are needed to fully express the present invention.

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/956,236, filed on Jun. 4, 2013.



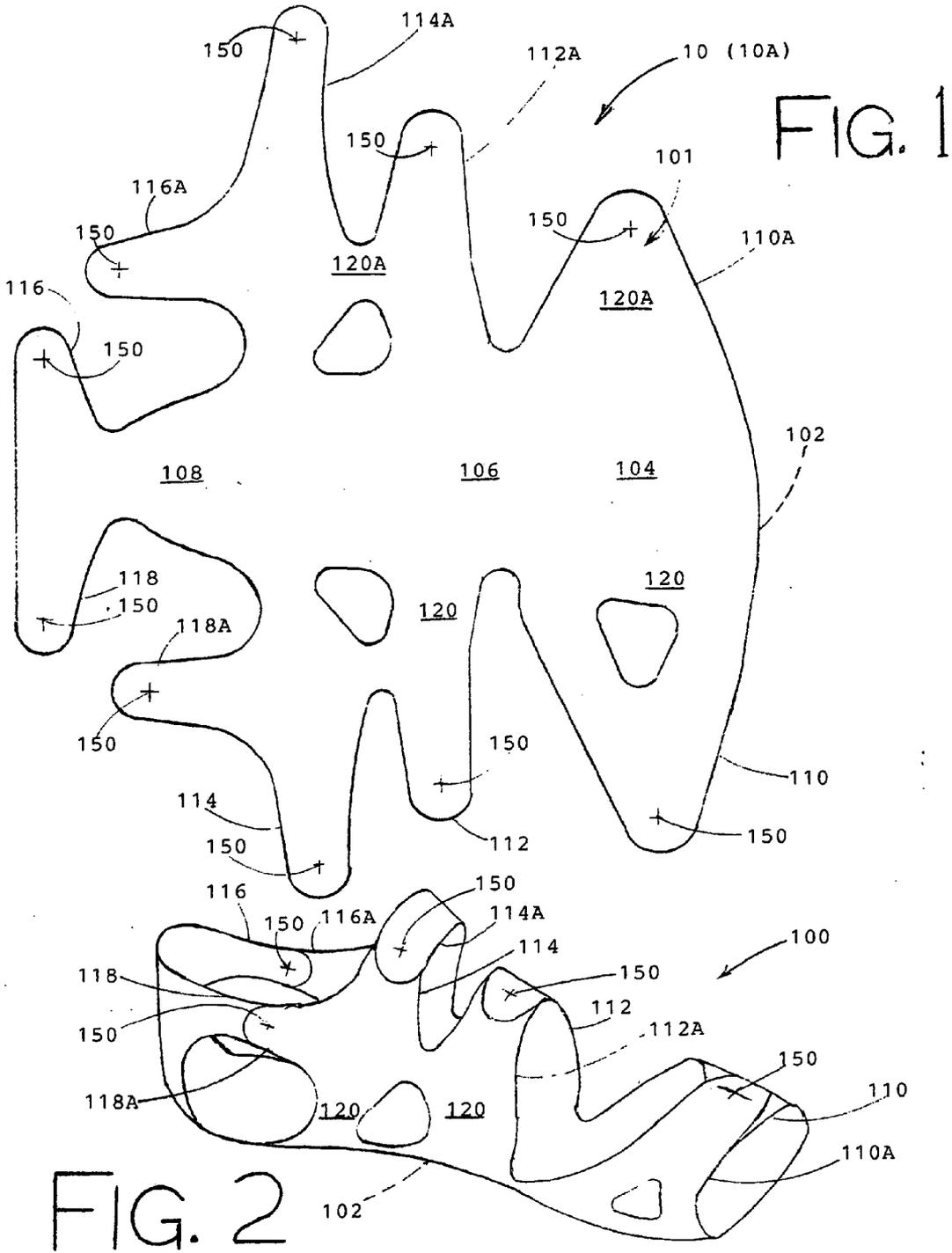


FIG. 1

FIG. 2

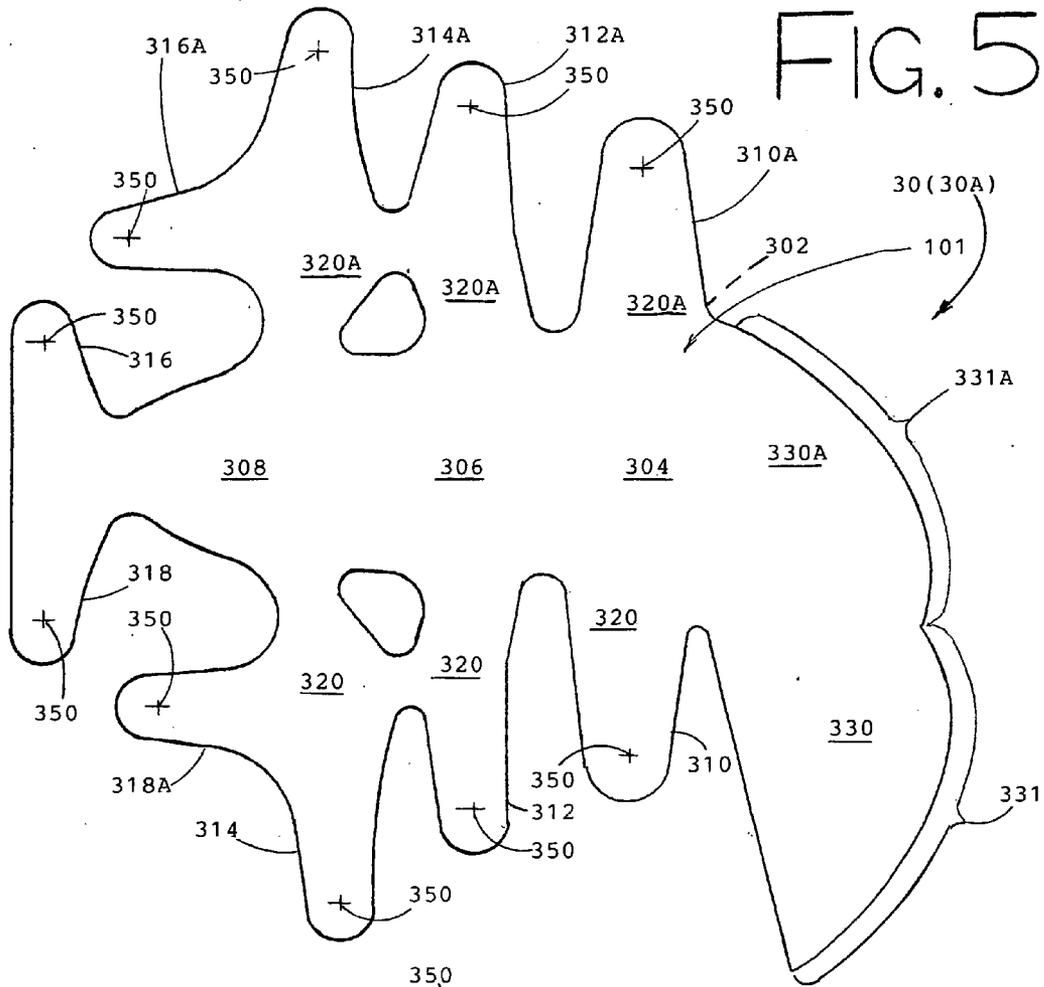


FIG. 5

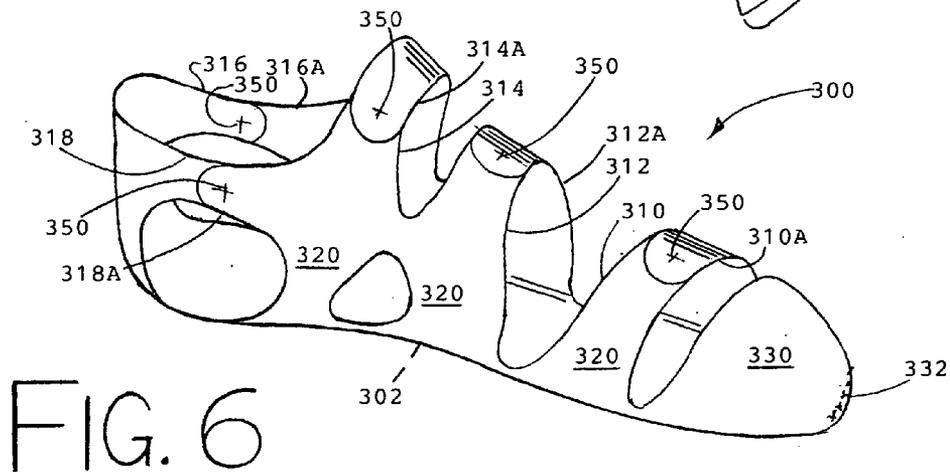


FIG. 6

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ONE-PIECE FOOTWEAR

[0001] This non-provisional application claims priority of the Jun. 4, 2013 filing date of Provisional Application 61/956, 236.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to the field of footwear construction in general and more particularly to footwear constructed without a last.

BACKGROUND

[0003] There are many situations at the beach, at poolside or simply at casual affairs among friends, where comfort is more precious than formality. Some, particularly the young, or young-in-heart amongst us, particularly in the South, prefer to go barefoot wherever they can, and “can” is not always defined in social terms. Certainly, there are practical limitations like walking on gravel driveways, or on hot sand or crossing hot asphalt streets. These “ouches” have given “flip-flops” a place under the Sun, but have you ever watched someone hop or run with flip-flops on? Good for laughs but not great fun, and don’t even think about swimming. While you’re at it, flip-flops are basically ugly, so don’t think about stylish either.

[0004] Ladies, be they adults, teens or children engage in a variety of activities each day. Sometimes they choose footwear for a social occasion, another time for utility, or perhaps just for fun and relaxation. Nothing however, is more likely than change, so the social occasion might take a left turn into the Wal-Mart store, where those 4” heels are a definite liability; the luncheon with friends may morph into a walk on the beach or, that R&R at home may be interrupted by visitors, and you’ll wish you weren’t looking quite so frumpy. (say what you will, barefoot is not chic)

[0005] Now, aside from flip-flops, there are things generically referred to “Swim Socks”, with conventional looking soles and mesh uppers. The usefulness of swim socks is limited because the mesh uppers let them fill with sand if you walk on the beach. In any event, either flip-flops or swim socks would win an ugly footwear contest. What women would love is a convenient, attractive alternative.

[0006] A first object of the present invention is therefore, to provide versatile footwear for casual and social use. A second object is that such footwear be capable of protecting the user’s feet against abusive surface conditions, and a third object is that this footwear be inherently attractive. Yet another object of the present invention is that such footwear be readily carried in a glove compartment or purse, so as to be available for use as changing circumstances may demand. A further, yet obvious requirement of the present invention is that such footwear be inexpensive to produce, so as to be popularly available.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The present invention addresses the aforesaid objectives by providing un-lasted footwear construction somewhat resembling conventional sandals, except that a pair can be rolled up in a small pouch. The invention is cut from a flat piece of flexible material, in a shape designed to provide attractively styled casual footwear. Preferred materials might be leather, a decoratively backed neoprene ply, or something

similar. Tabs extending from one side of the sole portion connect with their opposites to form the upper. These connections may be sewn, or be hook and loop fasteners, buttons, snaps, or other means, but no other parts are needed. However, self-adhesive heel and ball wear pads could be marketed as a companion item or an aftermarket sale.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] The accompanying drawings of the present inventions illustrate preferred and alternative examples of how they can be made and used, and are not to be construed as limiting the inventions to only those examples illustrated and described. The various advantages and features of the present inventions will be apparent from a consideration of these drawings in which:

[0009] FIG. 1 is a flat pattern of a preferred, open toe embodiment of the present invention;

[0010] FIG. 2 shows the one-piece footwear embodiment of FIG. 1, ready for wear;

[0011] FIG. 3 is a flat pattern of a second preferred, protected toe embodiment of the present invention;

[0012] FIG. 4 shows the one-piece footwear embodiment of FIG. 3, ready for wear;

[0013] FIG. 5 is a flat pattern of a third preferred, closed toe embodiment of the present invention; and

[0014] FIG. 6 shows the one-piece footwear embodiment of FIG. 5, ready for wear.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] The present inventions will be described in the following by referring to the drawings of examples of how the inventions can be made and used. In these drawings, reference characters are used throughout the views to indicate like or corresponding parts. The embodiments shown and described herein are exemplary. Details well known in the arts, may be neither shown nor described.

[0016] FIGS. 1 and 2 show and describe a first preferred embodiment 100 of un-lasted footwear according to the present invention. FIG. 1 shows pattern 10 for shape 10A, to which a thin, durable sheet of abrasion resisting, membranous material 101 is cut to make embodiment 100, an open toe expression of the present invention. A graduated family of such patterns is required to produce the invention for all common foot sizes however, the nature of the invention is such that each increment of the pattern will accommodate more than one standard shoe size. Obviously, the right foot and left foot are simply opposite sides of the same pattern. Material 101 may be 2 mm thick, or thicker, neoprene, with a fabric backing, as is used for wet suits, or a similar material. The size and shape of a given wearer’s sole 102 is replicated in ball portion 104, instep portion 106 and heel portion 108, with lateral (upper portions) 120 and 120A adjacent thereto at either side.

[0017] Extended tabs 110 and 110A; 112 and 112A; 114 and 114A 116 and 116A and 118 and 118A are provided. When these extended tabs are paired and joined together over sole 102, at junctures 150, lateral portions 120 and 120A are also drawn up as an upper to complete un-lasted embodiment 100. The connections at junctures 150 may be made by sewing, by hook and loop type devices, hook and eye devices, by buttons, by snaps or adhesives. As a designer’s option, paired tabs 114 and 114A may be extended to wrap around the wearer’s ankle before being joined. The wearer’s toes may be

fully exposed, while the sole is protected as shown in FIG. 2 and other options are shown below.

[0018] FIGS. 3 and 4 show and describe a second preferred embodiment 200 of un-lasted footwear according to the present invention. FIG. 3 shows pattern 20 for shape 20A, to which a thin, durable sheet of abrasion resisting, membranous material 101 is cut to make embodiment 200, disclosed as a protected-toe expression of the present inventions. A graduated family of such patterns is required to produce the invention for all common foot sizes, however, the nature of the invention is such that each increment of the pattern will accommodate more than one standard shoe size. Obviously, the right foot and left foot are simply opposite sides of the same pattern. Material 101 may be 2 mm thick, or thicker, neoprene, with a fabric backing, as is used for wet suits, or a similar material. The size and shape of a given wearer's sole 202 is replicated in ball portion 204, instep portion 206 and heel portion 208, with lateral (upper) portions 220 and 220A adjacent thereto at either side. Extended tabs 210 and 210A; 212 and 212A; 214 and 214A 216 and 216A and 218 and 218A are provided. When these extended tabs are paired and joined together over sole 202 at junctures 250, upper portions 220 and 220A are also drawn up to complete un-lasted embodiment 200.

[0019] Notably different from embodiment 100, here, in embodiment 200 of FIG. 3, we see ball portion 204 to be extended forward to cover the underside of the given wearer's toes, with tab 204A provided to secure this under-toe protection in place. Extended tabs 210 and 210A; 212 and 212A; 214 and 214A 216 and 216A and 218 and 218A are provided, to be paired and joined at junctures 250. When these extended tabs are paired and joined together over sole 202, lateral (upper) portions 220 and 220A are also drawn up. In a similar manner, tab 204A is joined to tabs 210 and 210 at their junctures 250, or to tab 210 at juncture 260. This completes "construction" of un-lasted embodiment 200. Again, as a designer's option, paired tabs 214 and 214A may be extended to wrap around the wearer's ankle before being joined.

[0020] FIGS. 5 and 6 show and describe a third preferred embodiment 300 of un-lasted footwear according to the present invention. FIG. 5 shows pattern 30 for shape 30A, to which a thin, durable sheet of abrasion resisting, membranous material 101 is cut to make embodiment 300, a closed toe expression of the present invention. Again, a graduated family of such patterns is required to produce the invention for all common foot sizes. Sizing of embodiment 300 is somewhat more critical than for embodiments 100 and 200, so that more patterns may be required to cover all sizes. Obviously, the right foot and left foot shapes are simply opposite sides of the same pattern. Material 101 may be 2 mm thick, or thicker, neoprene, with a fabric backing, as is used for wet suits, or a similar material. The size and shape of a given wearer's sole 302 is replicated in ball portion 304, instep portion 306 and heel portion 308, with lateral (upper) portions 320 and 320A adjacent thereto at either side.

[0021] Making embodiment 300, with its fully covered toe portion, unlike embodiments 100 and 200, requires some sewing. The top cover 330 is folded back, under sole 302, to match its edge 331 with edge 331A of under toe portion 330A. Edge 331/331A can then be sewn from the inside, and after making seam 32, the unfinished embodiment is turned right side out. Extended tabs 310 and 310A; 312 and 312A; 314 and 314A 316 and 316A and 318 and 318A are provided. When these extended tabs are paired and joined together

above sole 302, at junctures 350, lateral (upper) portions 320 and 320A are also drawn up, so as to complete un-lasted embodiment 300. The connections at junctures 350 may be made by sewing, by hook and loop type devices, hook and eye devices, by buttons, by snaps or adhesives. As a designer's option, paired tabs 314 and 314A may be extended to wrap around the wearer's ankle before being joined.

[0022] The embodiments shown and described above are exemplary. Even though many characteristics and advantages of the present inventions have been described in the drawings and accompanying text, the description is illustrative only. Changes may be made in the detail, especially in matters of shape, size, and arrangement, within the scope and principles of the inventions. The restrictive description and drawings of the specific examples above do not point out what an infringement of this patent would be, but are to provide at least one explanation of how to use and make the inventions. The limits of the inventions and the bounds of the patent protection are measured by and will be defined in the following claims.

I claim:

1. A method for un-lasted footwear construction comprising:

the step of providing a pattern conforming to the sole of a given wearer's foot, the pattern further to include lateral portions and oppositely extended tab members;

providing a durable, abrasion resisting, membranous material;

cutting the material according to the flat pattern, so as to make a footwear sole portion, with lateral portions and extended tab members;

providing means for joining the extended tab members; and

joining the oppositely extended tab members above the sole portion by sewing or other means so that the lateral portions form an upper portion.

2. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of providing buttons and buttonholes as other means for joining the oppositely extended tab members.

3. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of providing male and female snap members as other means for joining the oppositely extended tab members.

4. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of providing hook and loop connectors as other means for joining the oppositely extended tab members.

5. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of providing an adhesive as other means for joining the oppositely extended tab members.

6. Footwear made in one piece comprising:

a sole portion cut from a sheet of durable, abrasion resisting, membranous material so as to replicate the shape and size of the sole of a given wearer's foot; and

the sole portion further comprising oppositely extended tab members; so that joining the opposed tab members over the sole portion by sewing or other means will provide an upper portion.

7. The footwear of claim 6, further comprising buttons and buttonholes as the other means for joining the opposed tab members.

8. The footwear of claim 6, further comprising male and female snap members for as the other means joining the opposed tab members.

9. The apparatus of claim 6, and further comprising hook and loop connectors as the other means for joining the opposed tab members.

10. The apparatus of claim **6**, and further comprising an adhesive as the other means for joining the opposed tab members.

11. Apparatus for un-lasted footwear comprising:
a flat piece of durable, abrasion resisting, membranous material, cut to provide a sole portion replicating the shape and size of the sole of a given wearer's foot, and further including lateral portions with opposed tab members having extended ends;
the opposed tab members being made so that the ends reach for joining atop the user's foot by a sewn connection, or other joining means; and
the lateral portions thereby comprising an upper to the sole portion.

12. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein other means for joining the opposed tab members further comprises buttons and buttonholes.

13. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein other means for joining the opposed tab members further comprises male and female snap members.

14. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein other means for joining the opposed tab members further comprises hook and loop connectors.

15. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein other means for joining the opposed tab members further comprises an adhesive.

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