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(54) **TOP ACCESSIBLE FOOTWEAR**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A footwear for covering a foot of a user, the footwear including first and second side coverings, top and rear coverings, wherein the first and second side coverings, top and rear coverings form a continuous covering attached to a sole of the footwear, leaving an opening through which the foot penetrates at an ankle of the user, wherein the opening having a front edge, a rear edge, a first side edge of the first side covering and a second side edge of the second side covering, each of the first and second side edges connecting one end of the front edge and one end of the rear edge and each of the coverings including a wall substantially extending at an angle normal to the sole at the periphery; a seam disposed from the first side wall to the second side edge and a closure mechanism disposed along the seam.

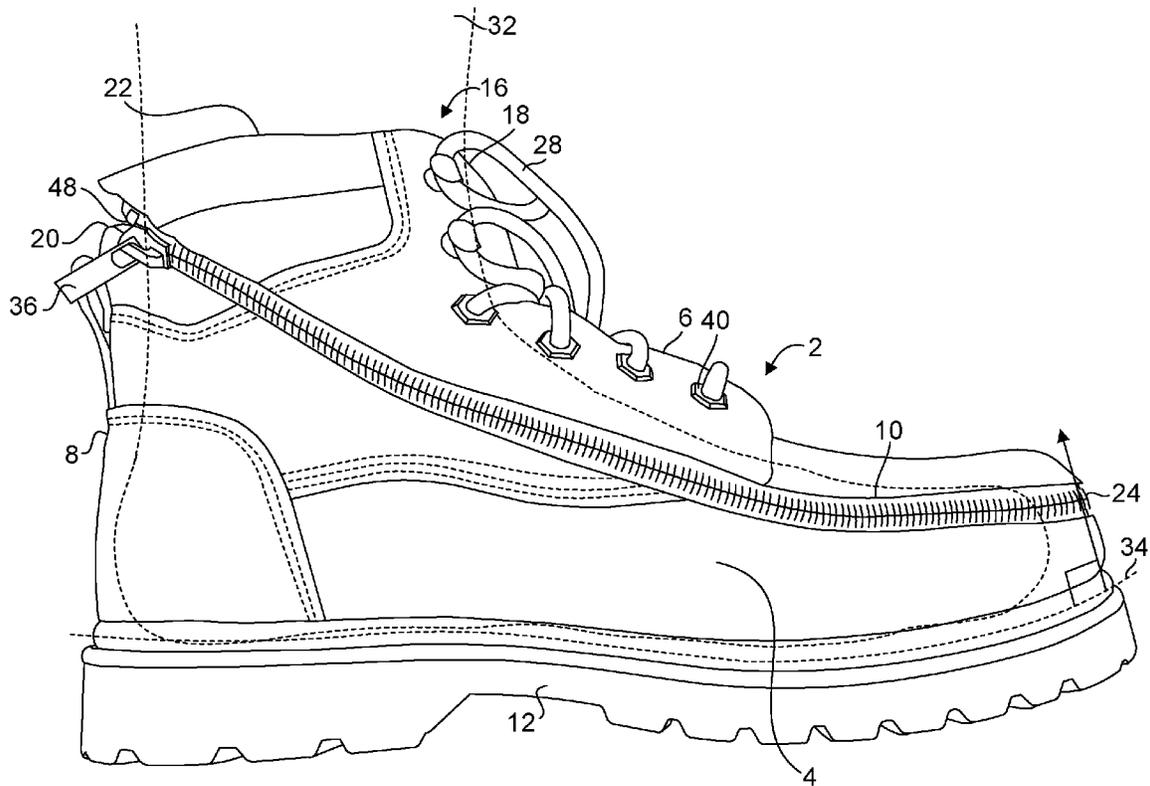
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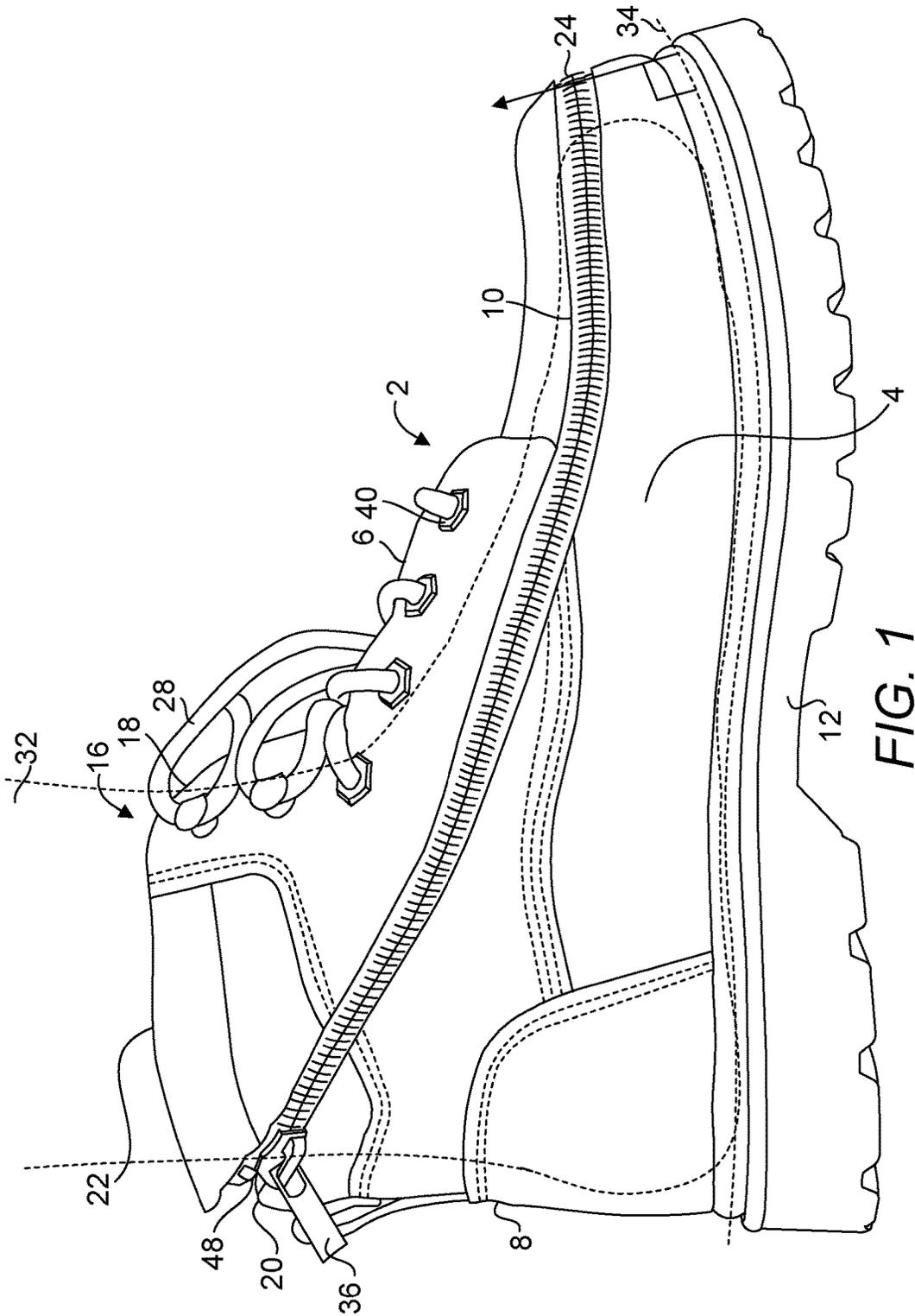


FIG. 1

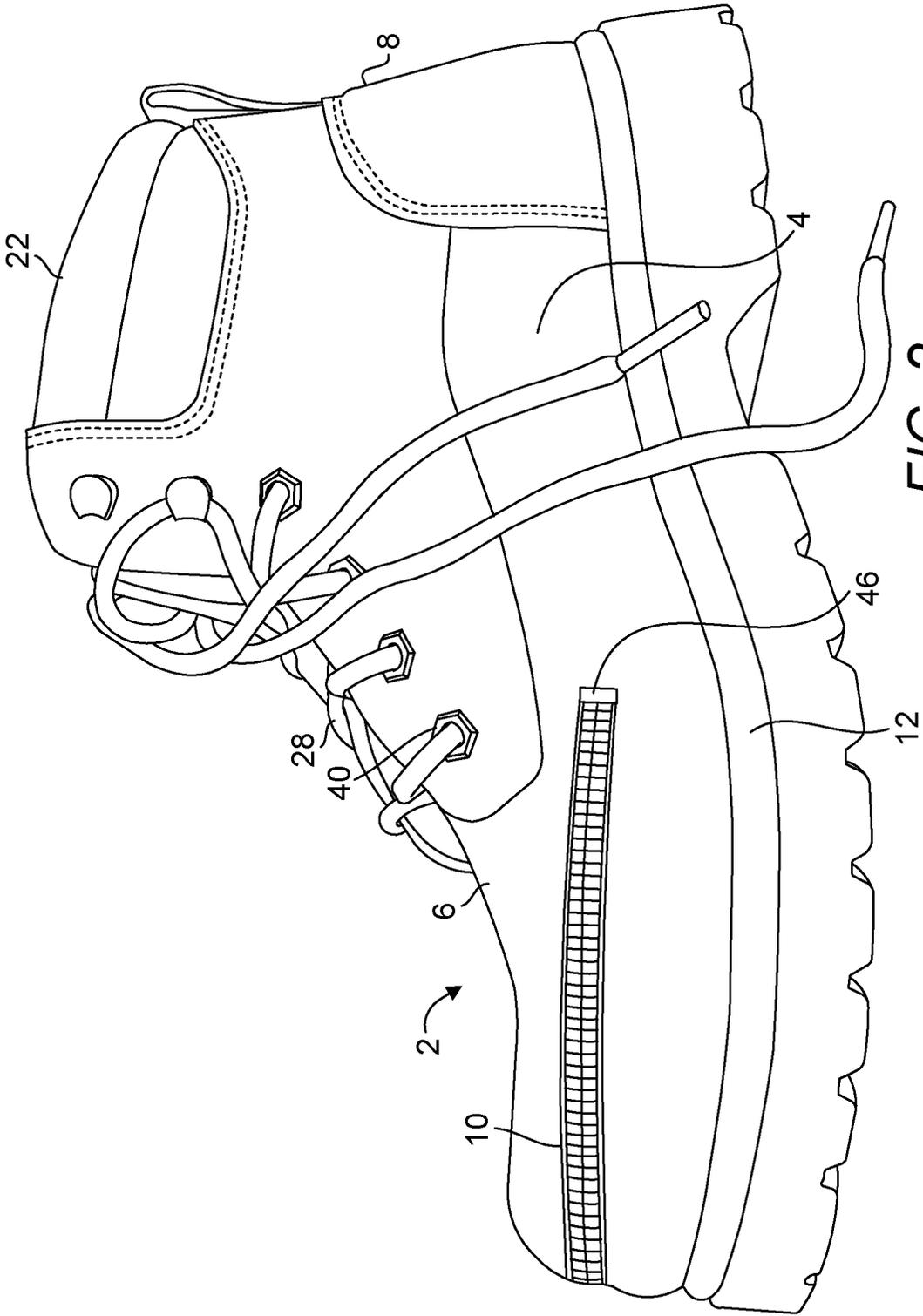


FIG. 2

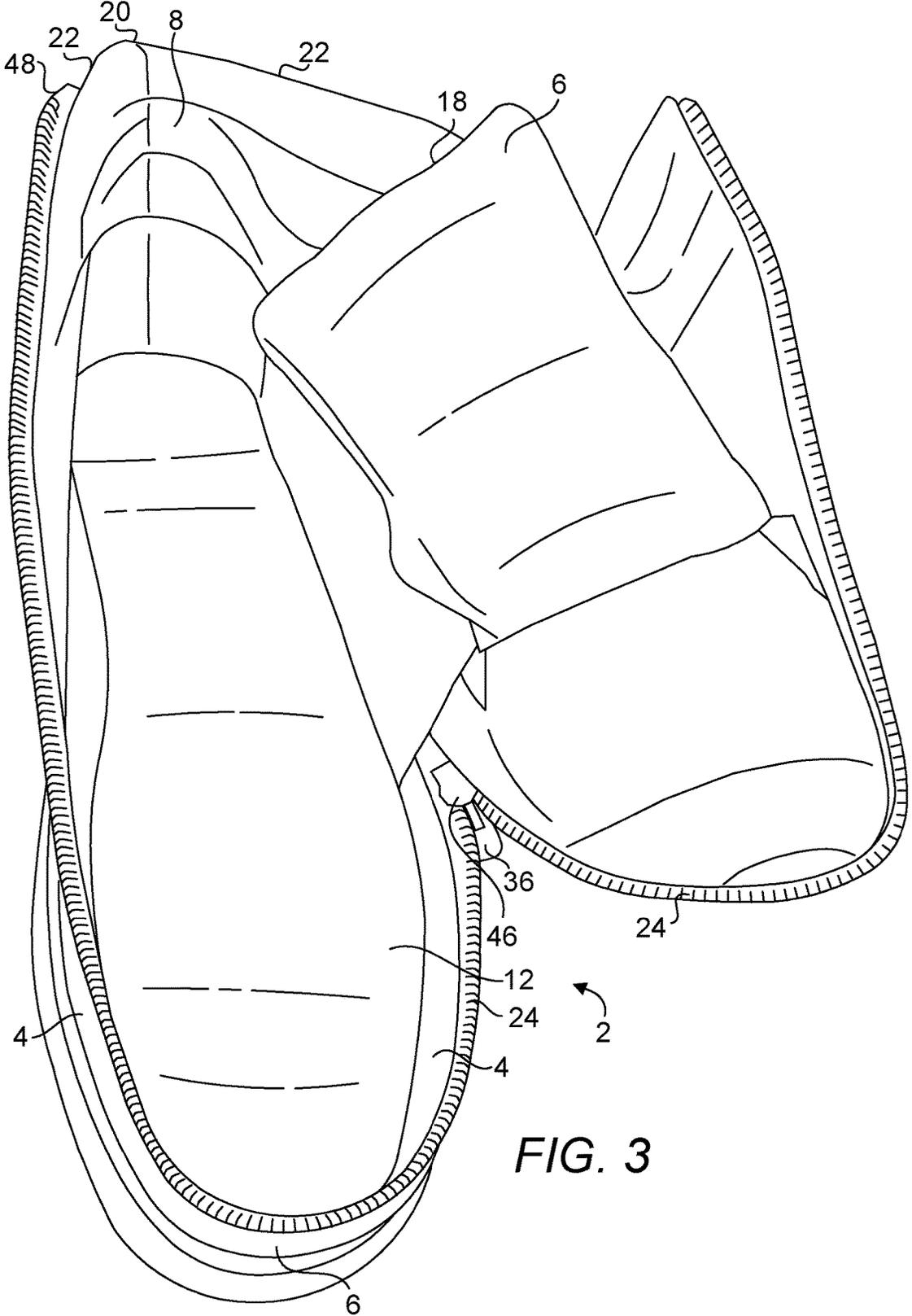
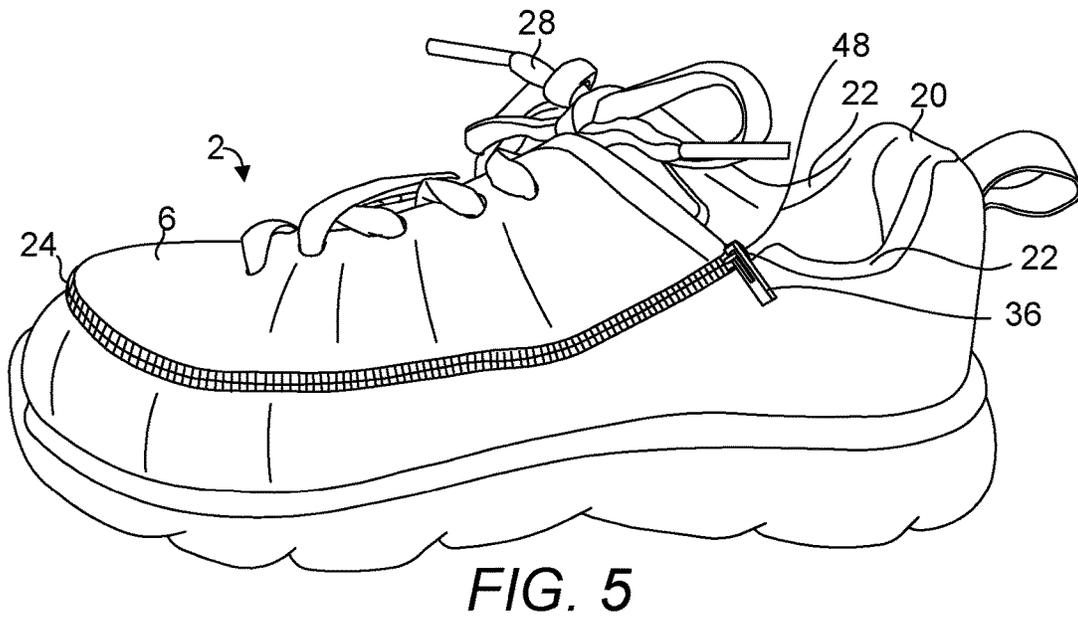
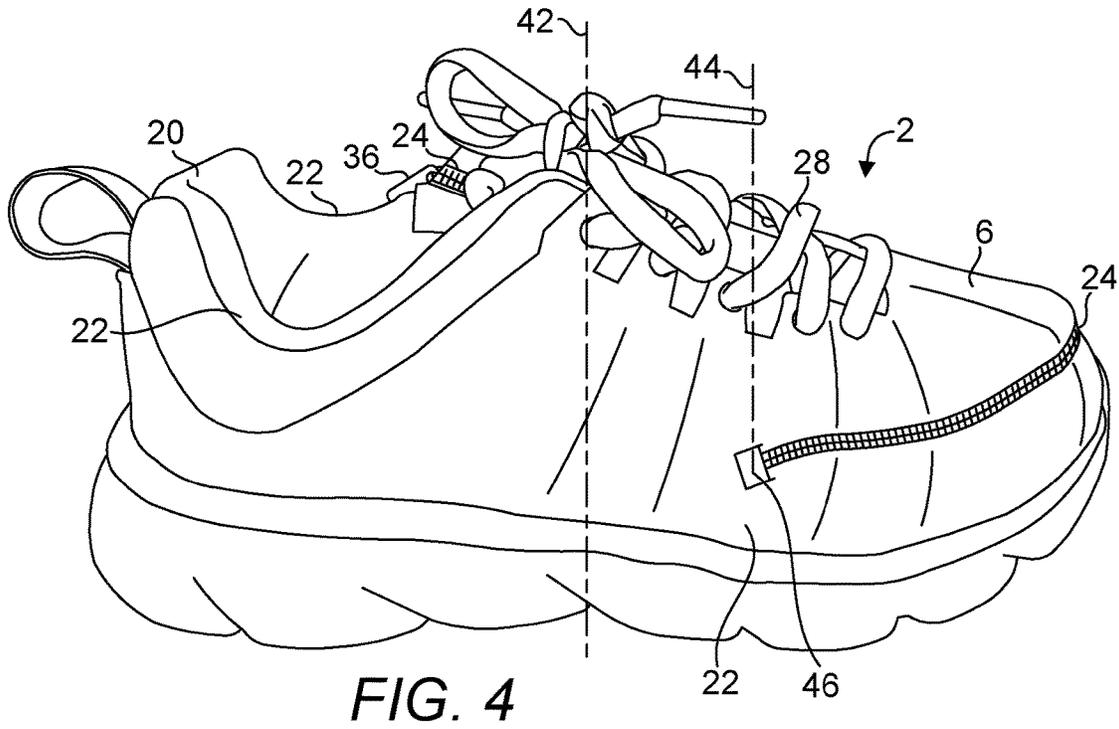


FIG. 3



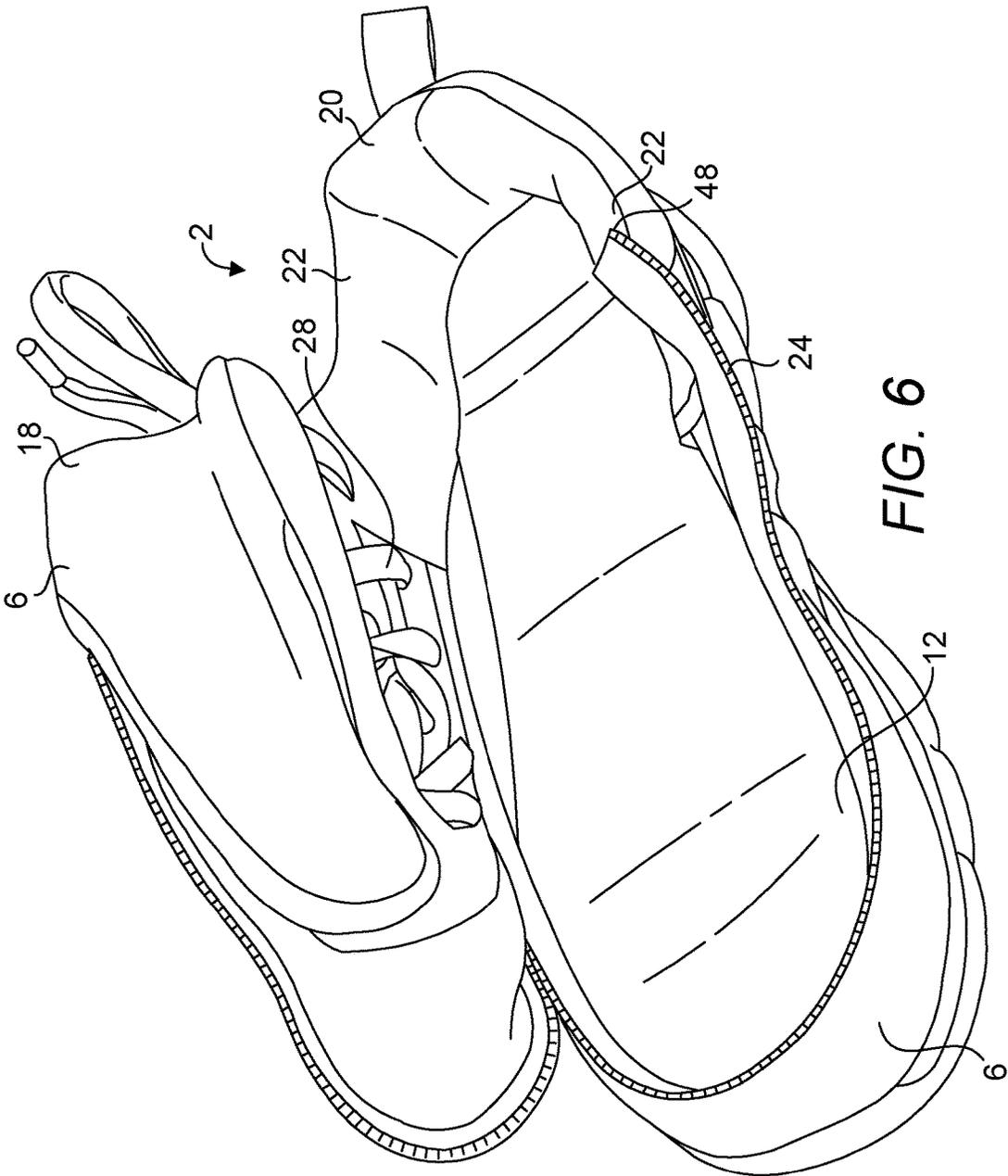


FIG. 6

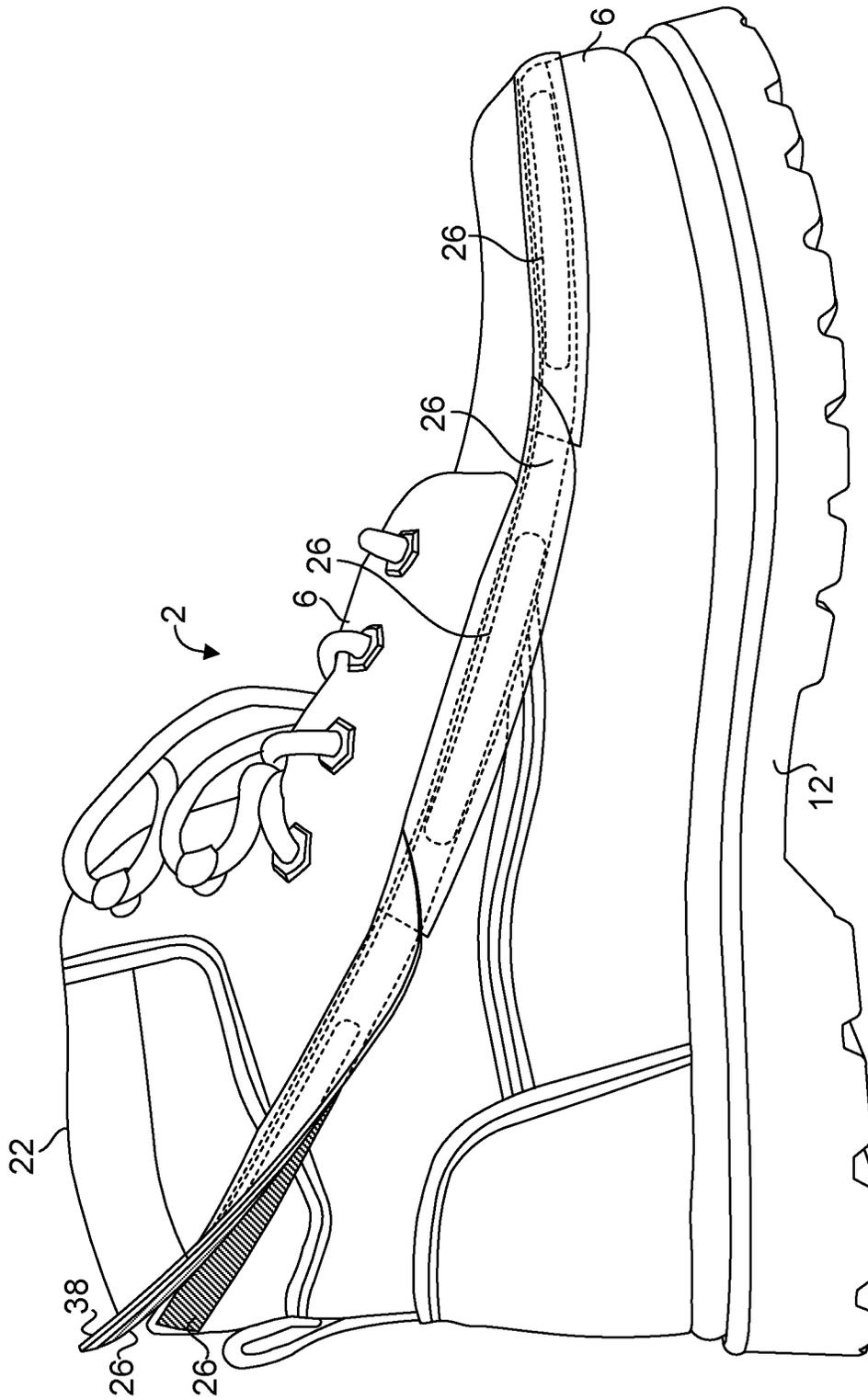


FIG. 7

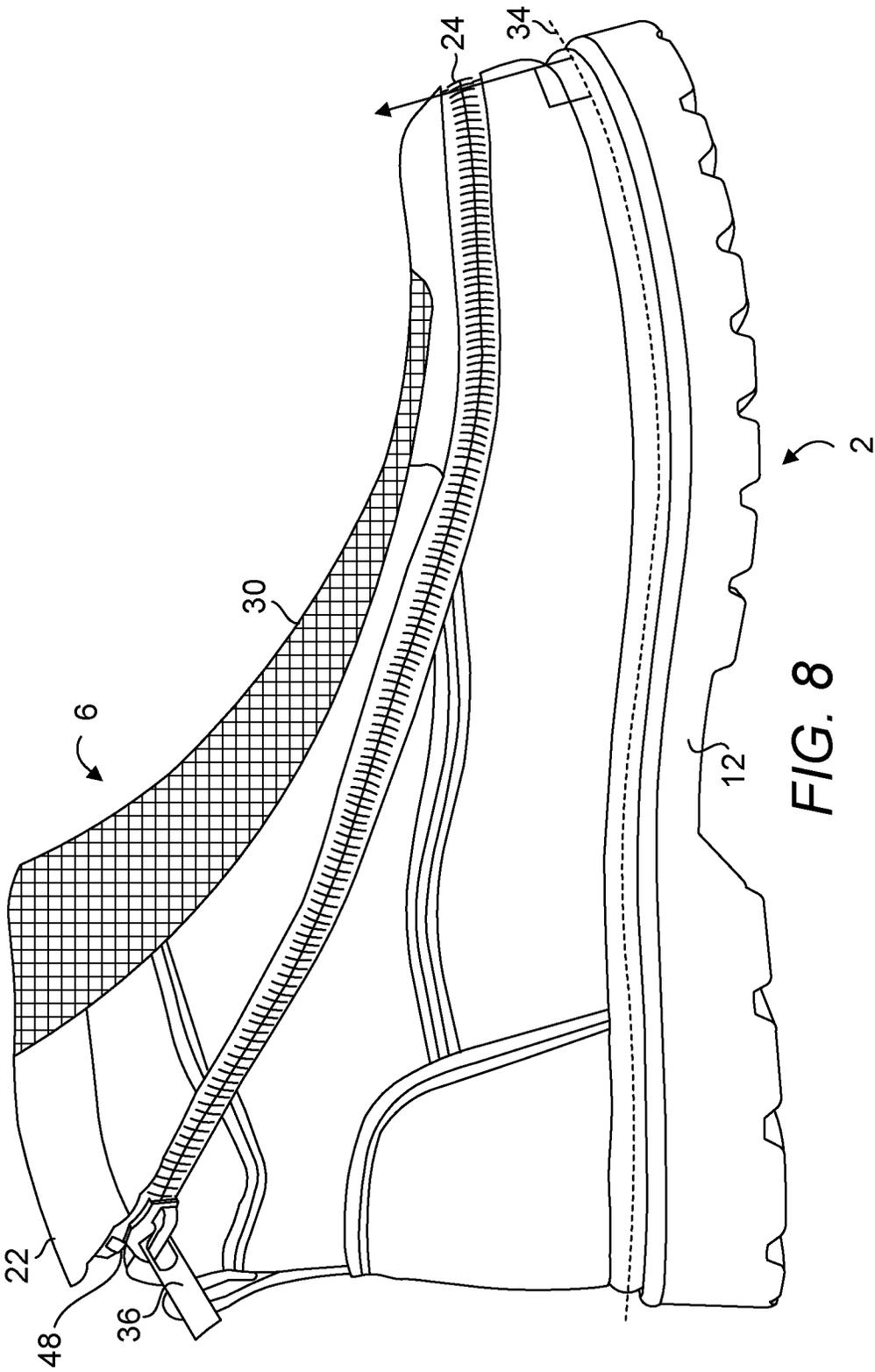


FIG. 8

2

## TOP ACCESSIBLE FOOTWEAR

### PRIORITY CLAIM AND RELATED APPLICATIONS

**[0001]** This non-provisional application claims the benefit of priority from provisional application U.S. Ser. No. 62/629,454 filed on Feb. 12, 2018. Said application is incorporated by reference in its entirety.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

#### 1. The Field of the Invention

**[0002]** The present invention relates to footwear capable to be used in a manner simply by placing a foot in a top-down fashion onto the footwear. More specifically, the present invention is directed to footwear capable to be used in a manner simply by placing a foot in a top-down fashion onto the footwear while the ubiquity of appearance of the footwear is maintained.

#### 2. Background Art

**[0003]** Some of the major challenges for the population with degraded mental faculty lie in the inability of them to cope with personal hygiene and everyday chores, including putting on one's shoes. Footwear, e.g., shoes, have been in existence since the beginning of human history. In every example of a shoe, however, the shoe is slipped onto a foot by sliding the foot forwardly upon placing the foot on the shoe, including one that is simplistic in construction, e.g., a "flip-flop," such that the shoe can be secured to the foot. The shoe is removed by sliding the foot rearwardly relative to the shoe. If the shoe is one which offers increased protection, e.g., a laced-up boot and/or shoe constructed of additional parts, e.g., tongues, eyelets and laces woven therethrough, etc., will require that the shoe be manipulated in a manner such that they may be fitted onto one's feet. Persons with degraded mental faculty or those unable to flex their toes properly, e.g., those suffered from brain injuries, strokes, cerebral palsy, do not always have the ability put on their conventional shoe. Further, without help, they may choose to wear no footwear at all and therefore do not receive the benefits of wearing footwear. Yet further, as conventional footwear are difficult to put on, one may opt for footwear that are simpler to put on, e.g., slippers in place of boots which offer enhanced protection to the feet. Yet further, any specialty footwear designed for those with degraded mental faculty can cause unnecessary attention to be drawn to them, making them and those around them uncomfortable. Yet further, one's toes may curl underneath the foot while inside a shoe, leading to extreme discomfort while wearing the footwear. Caregivers may have extreme difficulty trying to make their patients/loved ones feel comfortable while wearing shoes.

**[0004]** French Pat. Pub. No. 2617379 of Rousseau (hereinafter Rousseau) discloses a boot, the rod in the flexible material is composed of two parts laterally fixed to the two lateral edge members of the sole and a tongue fixedly attached to the front edge of the sole, the rapid attachment means being provided to connect in a removable manner and adjustable tongue to the two parts lateral at the front, and the two parts lateral between them, at the back. Rousseau's boot cannot be made to expose its sole in its entirety. Therefore, although Rousseau's boot may be zipper-equipped, it is

incapable in serving segments of the society which require the boot to be completely accessible while maintaining the look and feel of the boot.

**[0005]** There arises a need for footwear that can be readily and convenient used by those with special needs or those with degraded mental faculty and footwear which do not draw attention to those with mental faculty that label them as such.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

**[0006]** In accordance with the present invention, there is provided footwear for covering a foot of a user, the footwear including:

(a) a first side covering for covering a first side of the foot, a second side covering for covering a second side of the foot and a top covering for the covering the top and front of the foot, wherein the first and second side coverings and the top covering form a continuous covering attached to a sole having a periphery, the continuous covering is configured to cover at least a portion of the foot, leaving an opening through which the foot penetrates at an ankle of the user, wherein the opening having a front edge, a first side edge of the first side covering and a second side edge of the second side covering, the front edge connecting the first side edge and the second side edge and each covering including a wall substantially extending at an angle normal to the sole at the periphery;

(b) a resealable seam disposed at a starting point on the first side wall through the wall of the top covering and continuing to an ending point disposed on the second side wall on the second side edge; and

(c) a closure mechanism disposed along at least a portion of the resealable seam, wherein the closure mechanism is configured to allow opening of the resealable seam while the closure mechanism is disposed in a first mode, leaving the sole to be substantially exposed in its entirety and to allow closure of the resealable seam while the closure mechanism is disposed in a second mode, covering and securing the footwear to the foot in its entirety.

**[0007]** In one embodiment, the closure mechanism is a zipper. In one embodiment, the closure mechanism includes a hook and loop pair. The footwear can be a shoe, boot, athletic shoe, tennis shoe, sandal or slipper. In one embodiment, the second side edge is the side of the footwear on which an inside ankle of the foot of the user is located. In another embodiment, the second side edge is the side of the footwear on which an outside ankle of the foot of the user is located. In one embodiment, the top covering includes two portions disposed at an adjustable distance, wherein a decrease in the adjustable distance is configured to further secure the footwear to the foot of the user and an increase in the adjustable distance is configured to further relax the footwear on the foot of the user. In one embodiment, the top covering includes an elastic portion to allow adjustment of the top covering with respect to the instep of the foot of the user.

**[0008]** An object of the present invention is to provide footwear that is accessible by placing one foot from above toward the footwear that is placed upright on a surface such that it can be used by a user with reduced motor skills without requiring the foot to "slip into" the footwear.

**[0009]** Another object of the present invention is to provide footwear that can be secured to a foot by a single action.

**[0010]** Another object of the present invention is to provide footwear that can be secured to a foot by a single action while the appearance of the footwear is maintained to appear ubiquitous and hence avoiding the appearance that the footwear is designed for a user with reduced mental faculty and motor skills.

**[0011]** Another object of the present invention is to provide footwear that is easy to use such that it is useful for one with reduced mental faculty and motor skills.

**[0012]** Whereas there may be many embodiments of the present invention, each embodiment may meet one or more of the foregoing recited objects in any combination. It is not intended that each embodiment will necessarily meet each objective. Thus, having broadly outlined the more important features of the present invention in order that the detailed description thereof may be better understood, and that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated, there are, of course, additional features of the present invention that will be described herein and will form a part of the subject matter of this specification.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0013]** In order that the manner in which the above-recited and other advantages and objects of the invention are obtained, a more particular description of the invention briefly described above will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings. Understanding that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are not therefore to be considered to be limiting of its scope, the invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

**[0014]** FIG. 1 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam.

**[0015]** FIG. 2 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam.

**[0016]** FIG. 3 is a top front view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam.

**[0017]** FIG. 4 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam.

**[0018]** FIG. 5 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam.

**[0019]** FIG. 6 is a top front view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam.

**[0020]** FIG. 7 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a hook and loop elements-equipped resealable seam.

**[0021]** FIG. 8 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam and elastic top covering.

#### PARTS LIST

**[0022]** 2—footwear  
**[0023]** 4—side covering  
**[0024]** 6—top covering  
**[0025]** 8—rear covering  
**[0026]** 10—resealable seam  
**[0027]** 12—sole  
**[0028]** 14—periphery of sole  
**[0029]** 16—opening of footwear

**[0030]** 18—front edge  
**[0031]** 20—rear edge  
**[0032]** 22—side edge  
**[0033]** 24—closure mechanism, e.g., zipper  
**[0034]** 26—hook and loop elements  
**[0035]** 28—lace  
**[0036]** 30—elastic material  
**[0037]** 32—leg  
**[0038]** 34—plane representing a top surface of the sole  
**[0039]** 36—pull tab  
**[0040]** 38—flap  
**[0041]** 40—eyelet  
**[0042]** 42—longitudinal median of footwear  
**[0043]** 44—longitudinal position of ending point of resealable seam  
**[0044]** 46—starting point of resealable seam or closure mechanism  
**[0045]** 48—ending point of resealable seam or closure mechanism

#### PARTICULAR ADVANTAGES OF THE INVENTION

**[0046]** The present footwear allows access of it from the top, making it convenient for those with limited cognitive and motor skills to put the footwear on or for those assisting others in putting the footwear on. The present footwear is constructed in a manner logical for use with just one hand. A user's eye is immediately drawn to a closure mechanism that needs to be opened or closed. In one embodiment, a user's eye is immediately drawn to a ubiquitous zipper that needs either to be closed/zipped or opened/unzipped.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

**[0047]** The term “about” is used herein to mean approximately, roughly, around, or in the region of. When the term “about” is used in conjunction with a numerical range, it modifies that range by extending the boundaries above and below the numerical values set forth. In general, the term “about” is used herein to modify a numerical value above and below the stated value by a variance of 20 percent up or down (higher or lower).

**[0048]** FIG. 1 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear 2 with a zipper-equipped resealable seam 10. FIG. 2 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear 2 with a zipper-equipped resealable seam 10. FIG. 3 is a top front view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear 2 with a zipper-equipped resealable seam 10. Shown in each of FIGS. 1-3 is a boot of a pair of boots, i.e., footwear with a side covering 4 that covers essentially the entire ankle of its wearer. The footwear includes a first side covering 4 for covering a first side of the foot, a second side covering 4 for covering a second side of the foot, a top covering 6 for the covering the top and front of the foot and a rear covering 8 for covering the rear of the foot. The first and second side coverings 4, top covering 6 and rear covering 8 form a continuous covering attached to a sole 12 having a periphery 14, the continuous covering is configured to cover the foot, leaving an opening 16 through which the foot penetrates at an ankle of the user, wherein the opening 16 having a front edge 18, a rear edge 20, a first side edge 22 of the first side covering 4 and a second side edge 22 of the second side covering 4. Each of the first side edge

22 and second side edge 22 connects one end of the front edge 18 and one end of the rear edge 20 and each of the coverings 4, 6, 8 includes a wall substantially extending at an angle normal to the sole 12 at the periphery 14. Note that the plane 34 representing a top surface of the sole is disposed at an angle that is substantially normal to the front wall of the top covering at the front end of boot. The footwear further includes a resealable seam 10 disposed at a starting point 46 on the first side wall through the wall of the top covering 6 and continuing to an ending point 48 disposed on the second side wall on the second side edge 4. The footwear further includes a closure mechanism 24 disposed along at least a portion of the resealable seam 10, wherein the closure mechanism 24 is configured to allow opening of the resealable seam 10 while the closure mechanism 24 is disposed in a first mode, leaving the sole to be substantially exposed in its entirety and to allow closure of the resealable seam 10 while the closure mechanism 24 is disposed in a second mode, covering and securing the footwear to the foot in its entirety. The open sole 12 allows the user to simply place his or her foot inside the shoe, rather than sliding the foot into a footwear, risking the toes curling underneath the foot. The closure mechanism 24 can be reapplied to firmly secure the shoe to the foot, allowing the user to maintain comfort while still being able to wear stylish and attractive footwear. A present footwear essentially features a closure mechanism 24 which starts at a side edge 22 of the opening of the shoe, running down a side covering on an angle toward the toe area, around the instep, then around the toe area and over the second half of the shoe for firm securement. The zipper 24 allows the interior of the shoe to become exposed when unzipped, offering a way for a user who cannot flex his or her toes when slipping on a shoe to apply his or her shoes comfortably, conveniently, and securely. As such, the present footwear effectively eliminates the worry of pain occurring while wearing shoes, leading to further injury and improperly-growing toenails, etc. Note that a pull tab 36 that is attached to a slider, is provided for each zipper to facilitate the use of the zipper.

[0049] In one embodiment, the second side edge is the side of the footwear on which an inside ankle of the foot of the user or wearer is located. In another embodiment, the second side edge is the side of the footwear on which an outside ankle of the foot of the user is located. In other words, an inside ankle-accessible footwear is shown although the starting point 46 of the zipper may also be disposed on the opposite half of the boot to allow access to the outside ankle. It shall be noted that, while unzipped, the sole 12 is exposed in its entirety. Contrast this with Rousseau's closure mechanism which does not trace a seam that allows the entirety of its sole to be exposed in any position with a flap protruding into the vertical space over its sole at one end of the seam and presents itself in the space above the sole as a barrier to direct access from the space above the sole. Further, Rousseau's closure mechanism does not trace a seam that is disposed along the top of a substantially vertical wall of the top covering, rendering it incapable of allowing a full vertical access to the sole. It shall be noted that, in a present footwear, the resealable seam starts on a first side covering 4 and terminates on a second side covering 4 at a side edge at an opening that encircles one's ankle, instead of a front edge of the opening as shown in Rousseau.

[0050] FIG. 4 is a top front view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable

seam. FIG. 5 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam. FIG. 6 is a top front view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam. Here, the footwear is a child's sneaker. It can be shown that a zippered resealable seam can be applied to any footwear with high or low-cut side coverings with a top covering. The footwear can be a shoe, sneaker, boot, athletic shoe, tennis shoe, sandal or slipper although only a boot and a sneaker are disclosed herein. In the embodiments shown in FIGS. 1-6, the top covering includes two portions disposed at an adjustable distance. One common means of adjusting the distance is by disposing eyelets 40 on these portions and using a lace 28 that weaves through these eyelets to bring these portions closer together by pulling on the lace or to allow the portions to spread further apart by relaxing the lace 28. The top covering need not be adjustable. It may be constructed to suitable size and shape to suit a particular foot although an ability to accommodate a physiological change in a foot will allow the top covering to be adjusted to suit those changes to make for an improved fit. Note that the ending point of the resealable seam is preferably disposed forward of the longitudinal median 42 of the footwear at position 44 such that there remains sufficient connecting material that holds the top covering 6 to a side covering 4 in order to maintain a top covering 6 that has sufficient structural integrity to appear as a flap.

[0051] In one embodiment, the closure mechanism 24 is a zipper. In one embodiment, the closure mechanism includes a hook and loop pair as shown in FIG. 7. FIG. 7 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a hook and loop elements-equipped resealable seam. The complementary portions of the hook and loop elements are disposed on both sides along the length of the resealable seam. Each of the hook and loop elements is preferably disposed in a continuous fashion such that the skill level required to use the hook and loop elements is easily available to those with degraded mental faculty and physical challenges. However, the elements may be segmented into flaps 38 onto which one of the hook and loop elements 26 is disposed as shown in FIG. 7 to facilitate separation of the hook and loop elements from one another when a pulling force is applied to a flap 38. Each flap 38 represents an overlap that obscure the resealable seam and if each is constructed from a material similar to the general material and color of the footwear, the resealable seam can be blended in with the footwear, making the resealable less conspicuous or noticeable.

[0052] FIG. 8 is a side view of one embodiment of a top accessible footwear with a zipper-equipped resealable seam and elastic top covering. In one embodiment, the top covering includes an elastic portion 30 to allow adjustment of the top covering with respect to the instep of the foot of the user. Note that, in this embodiment, there are no extraneous laces or other parts to get inadvertently loosened as the elastic portion is essentially a fabric, e.g., nylon, LYCRA®, etc., which is lightweight and elastic, therefore capable of some adjustment to its user.

[0053] It is also conceivable to provide a closure mechanism including a plurality of complementary eyelet-button pairs distributed along the resealable seam to aid in the removal and closure of the top covering although such pairs will not allow one single continuous motion when sealing or

unsealing the seam. Each footwear style may be available in numerous colors, sizes and designs.

**[0054]** A present footwear may be constructed from a conventional footwear. First, a cut is made to result in a seam. In order to make this seam resealable, a closure mechanism is attached along the seam. If a zipper is used, a longitudinal side of the zipper is attached, e.g., via stitching, to a side of the seam. If hook-and-loop elements are used, one or more hook or loop-equipped flaps are first attached to one side of the seam. Materials complimentary to the hook-and-loop elements of the flaps are then attached to the opposite side of the seam. A present footwear may alternatively be constructed from coverings already sized properly such that the final cutting step is not required to form the seam. Again, upon forming the seam, a closure mechanism is applied to make the seam resealable.

**[0055]** The detailed description refers to the accompanying drawings that show, by way of illustration, specific aspects and embodiments in which the present disclosed embodiments may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice aspects of the present invention. Other embodiments may be utilized, and changes may be made without departing from the scope of the disclosed embodiments. The various embodiments can be combined with one or more other embodiments to form new embodiments. The detailed description is, therefore, not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined only by the appended claims, with the full scope of equivalents to which they may be entitled. It will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that any arrangement that is calculated to achieve the same purpose may be substituted for the specific embodiments shown. This application is intended to cover any adaptations or variations of embodiments of the present invention. It is to be understood that the above description is intended to be illustrative, and not restrictive, and that the phraseology or terminology employed herein is for the purpose of description and not of limitation. Combinations of the above embodiments and other embodiments will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon studying the above description. The scope of the present disclosed embodiments includes any other applications in which embodiments of the above structures and fabrication methods are used. The scope of the embodiments should be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with the full scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled.

What is claimed herein is:

1. A footwear for covering a foot of a user, said footwear comprising:

- (a) a first side covering for covering a first side of the foot, a second side covering for covering a second side of the foot and a top covering for covering the top and front of the foot, wherein said first and second side coverings and said top covering form a continuous covering attached to a sole having a periphery, said continuous covering is configured to cover at least a portion of the foot, leaving an opening through which the foot penetrates at an ankle of the user, wherein said opening having a front edge, a first side edge of said first side covering and a second side edge of said second side covering, said front edge connecting said first side edge and said second side edge and each said covering

- comprising a wall substantially extending at an angle normal to said sole at said periphery;
  - (b) a seam disposed at a starting point on said first side wall through said wall of said top covering and continuing to an ending point disposed on said second side wall on said second side edge; and
  - (c) a closure mechanism disposed along at least a portion of said seam, wherein said closure mechanism is configured to allow opening of said seam while said closure mechanism is disposed in a first mode, leaving the sole to be substantially exposed in its entirety and to allow closure of said seam while said closure mechanism is disposed in a second mode, covering and securing said footwear to the foot in its entirety.
2. The footwear of claim 1, wherein said closure mechanism is a zipper.
  3. The footwear of claim 1, wherein said closure mechanism comprises a hook and loop pair.
  4. The footwear of claim 1, wherein said footwear is selected from the group consisting of a shoe, boot, athletic shoe, tennis shoe, sandal and slipper.
  5. The footwear of claim 1, wherein said second side edge is the side of said footwear on which an inside ankle of the foot of the user is located.
  6. The footwear of claim 1, wherein said second side edge is the side of said footwear on which an outside ankle of the foot of the user is located.
  7. The footwear of claim 1, wherein said top covering is configured to be adjustable.
  8. The footwear of claim 7, wherein said top covering comprises two portions disposed at an adjustable distance, wherein a decrease in said adjustable distance is configured to further secure said footwear to the foot of the user and an increase in said adjustable distance is configured to further relax said footwear on the foot of the user.
  9. The footwear of claim 7, wherein said top covering comprises an elastic portion to allow adjustment of said top covering with respect to the instep of the foot of the user.
  10. A footwear for covering a foot of a user, said footwear comprising:

- (a) a first side covering for covering a first side of the foot, a second side covering for covering a second side of the foot and an adjustable top covering for covering the top and front of the foot, wherein said first and second side coverings and said top covering form a continuous covering attached to a sole having a periphery, said continuous covering is configured to cover at least a portion of the foot, leaving an opening through which the foot penetrates at an ankle of the user, wherein said opening having a front edge, a first side edge of said first side covering and a second side edge of said second side covering, said front edge connecting said first side edge and said second side edge and each said covering comprising a wall substantially extending at an angle normal to said sole at said periphery;
- (b) a seam disposed at a starting point on said first side wall through said wall of said top covering and continuing to an ending point disposed on said second side wall on said second side edge; and
- (c) a closure mechanism disposed along at least a portion of said seam, wherein said closure mechanism is configured to allow opening of said seam while said closure mechanism is disposed in a first mode, leaving the sole to be substantially exposed in its entirety and

to allow closure of said seam while said closure mechanism is disposed in a second mode, covering and securing said footwear to the foot in its entirety.

**11.** The footwear of claim **10**, wherein said closure mechanism is a zipper.

**12.** The footwear of claim **10**, wherein said closure mechanism comprises a hook and loop pair.

**13.** The footwear of claim **10**, wherein said footwear is selected from the group consisting of a shoe, boot, athletic shoe, tennis shoe, sandal and slipper.

**14.** The footwear of claim **10**, wherein said second side edge is the side of said footwear on which an inside ankle of the foot of the user is located.

**15.** The footwear of claim **10**, wherein said second side edge is the side of said footwear on which an outside ankle of the foot of the user is located.

**16.** The footwear of claim **10**, wherein said top covering comprises two portions disposed at an adjustable distance, wherein a decrease in said adjustable distance is configured to further secure said footwear to the foot of the user and an increase in said adjustable distance is configured to further relax said footwear on the foot of the user.

**17.** The footwear of claim **10**, wherein said top covering comprises an elastic portion to allow adjustment of said top covering with respect to the instep of the foot of the user.

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