



US 20090205105A1

(19) **United States**
(12) **Patent Application Publication**
PINKART

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2009/0205105 A1**
(43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 20, 2009**

(54) **MATING GOLF GLOVE WITH CLUB GRIP METHODS**

Publication Classification

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
A41D 19/00 (2006.01)
A41D 19/02 (2006.01)
A63B 71/14 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.** 2/161.3; 2/169

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

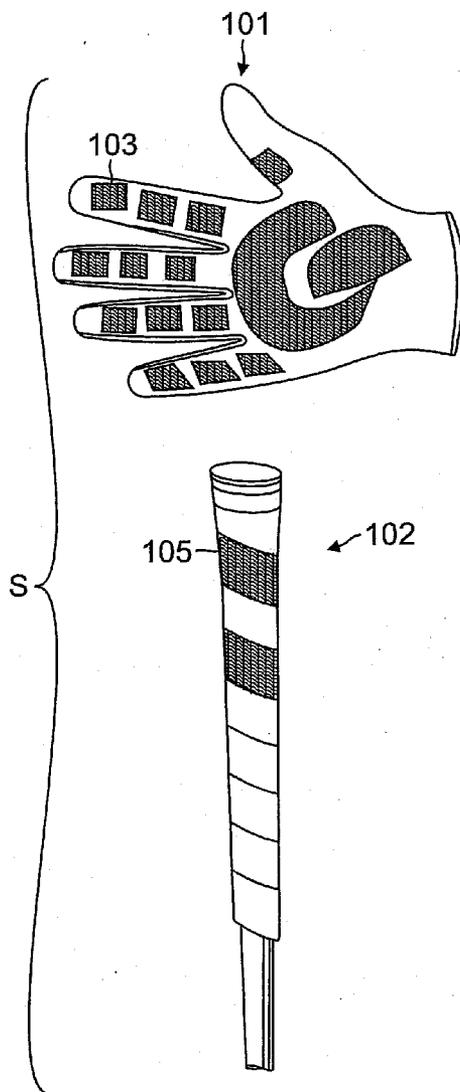
A grip system, apparatus, and methods for golfers with weak hand strength involving: at least one mating glove and a club grip; the mating glove for use in covering a person's hand and for interfacing and mating with the club grip; the mating glove possessing a palm side, a dorsal side, and finger compartments; the mating glove further comprising loops material for mating with complementary hooks material integrated into the club grip; the club grip having a top side, a bottom side, an upper half and a lower half; the club grip further comprising recesses integrated within the club grip for housing the hooks material.

(21) Appl. No.: **12/433,817**

(22) Filed: **Apr. 30, 2009**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 11/352,117, filed on Feb. 9, 2006, now Pat. No. 7,530,898.



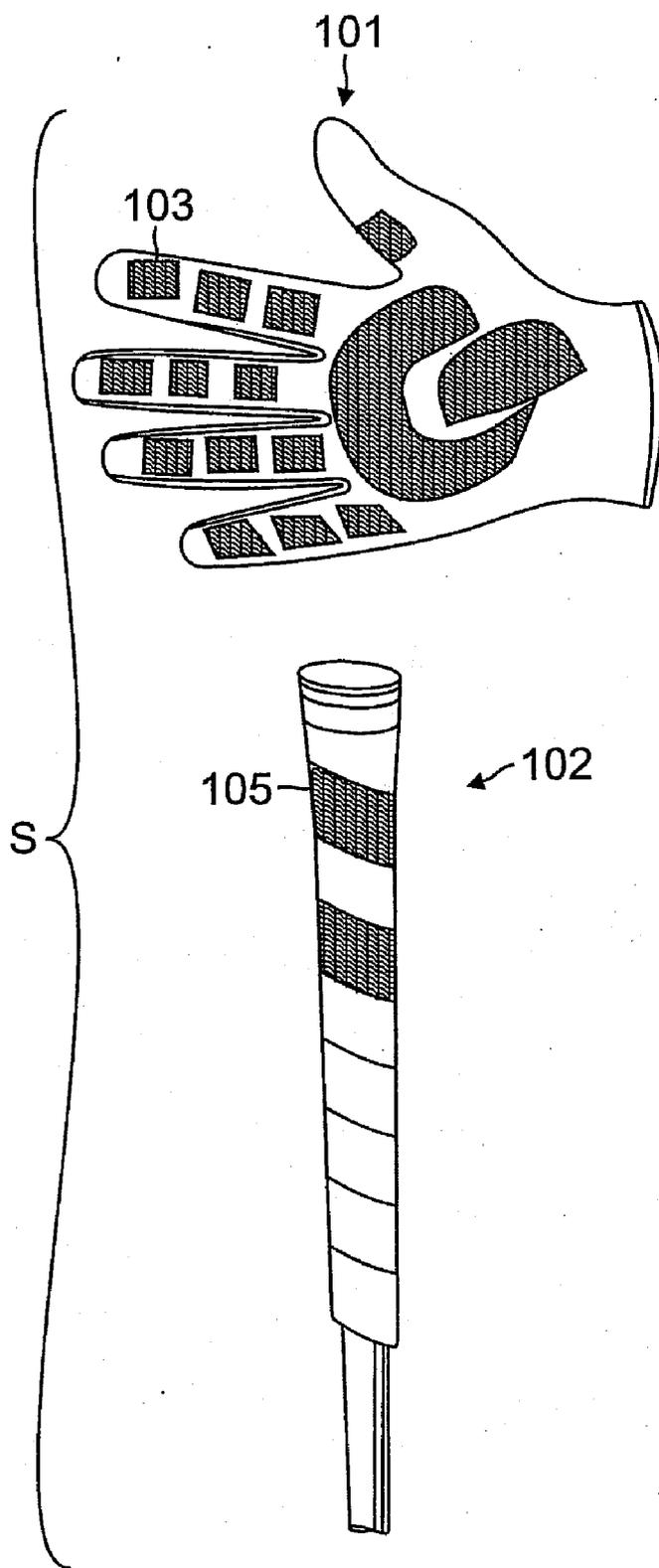


FIG. 1

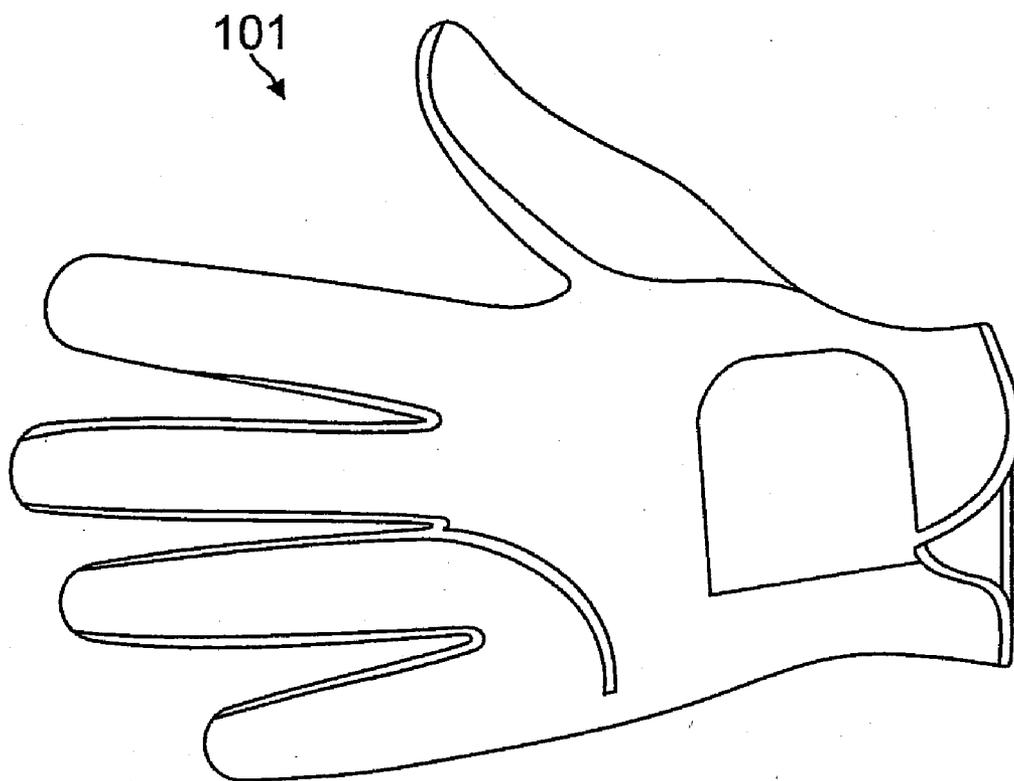


FIG. 2a

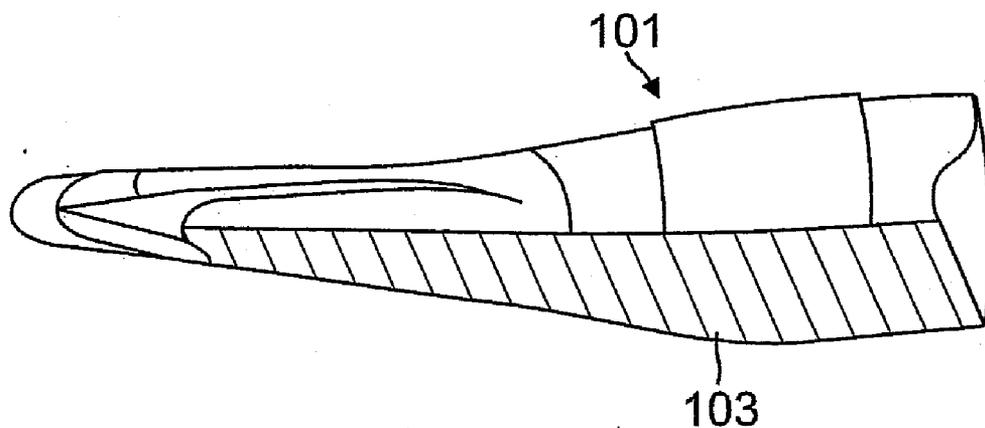


FIG. 2b

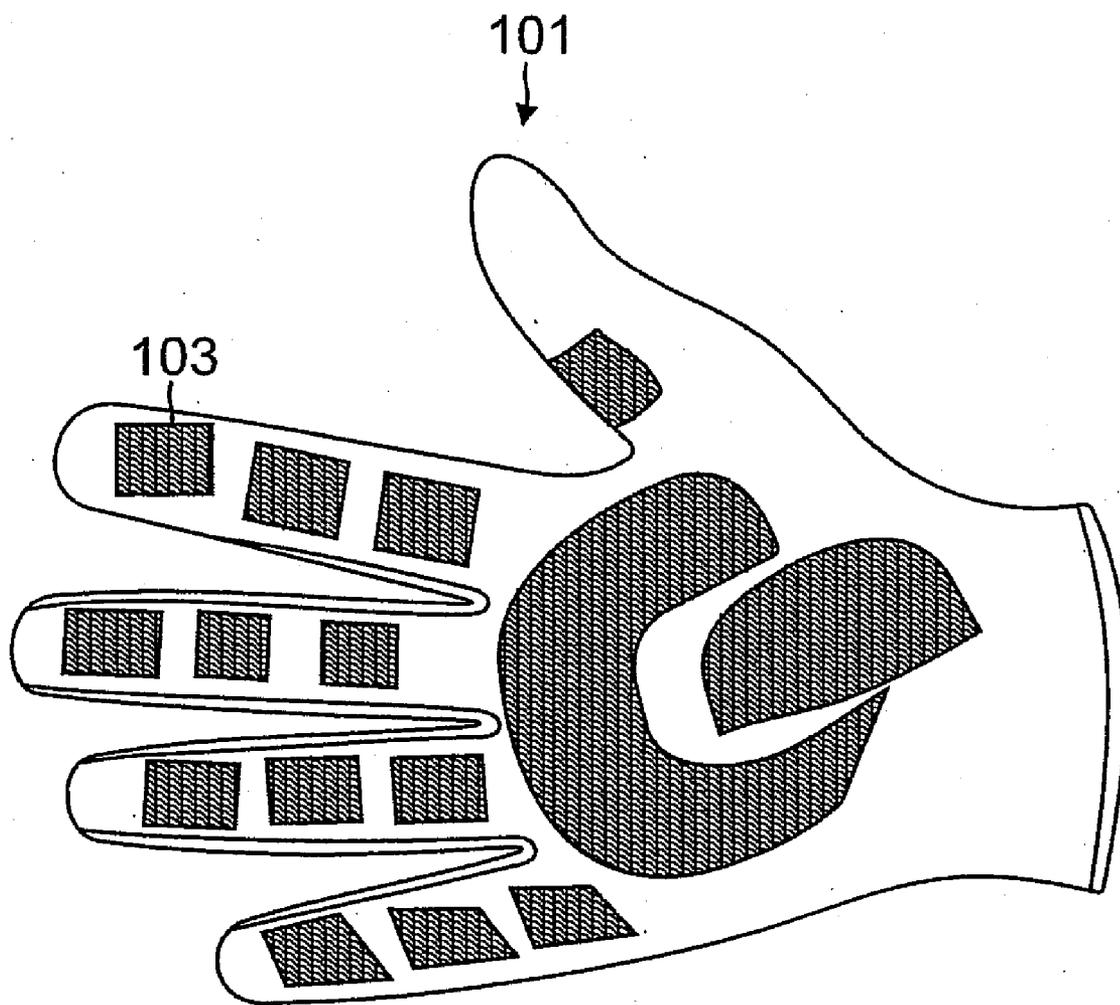


FIG. 2c

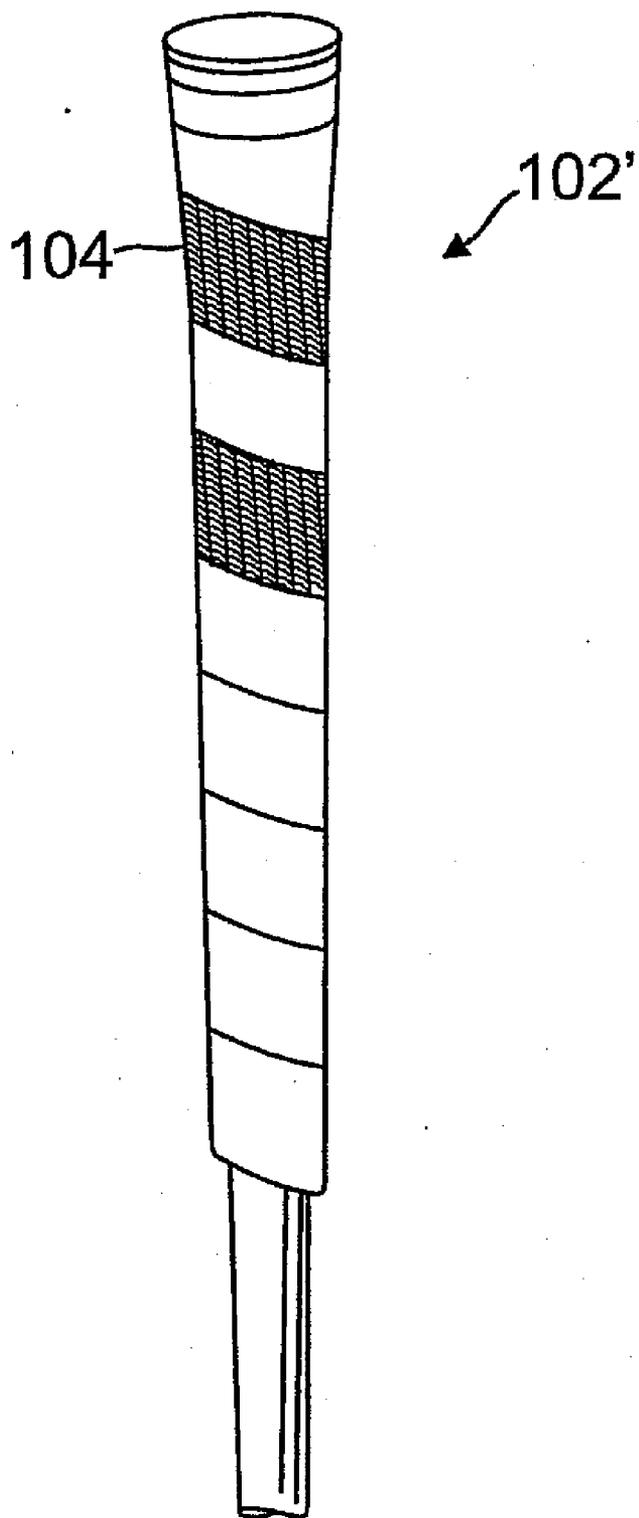


FIG. 3a

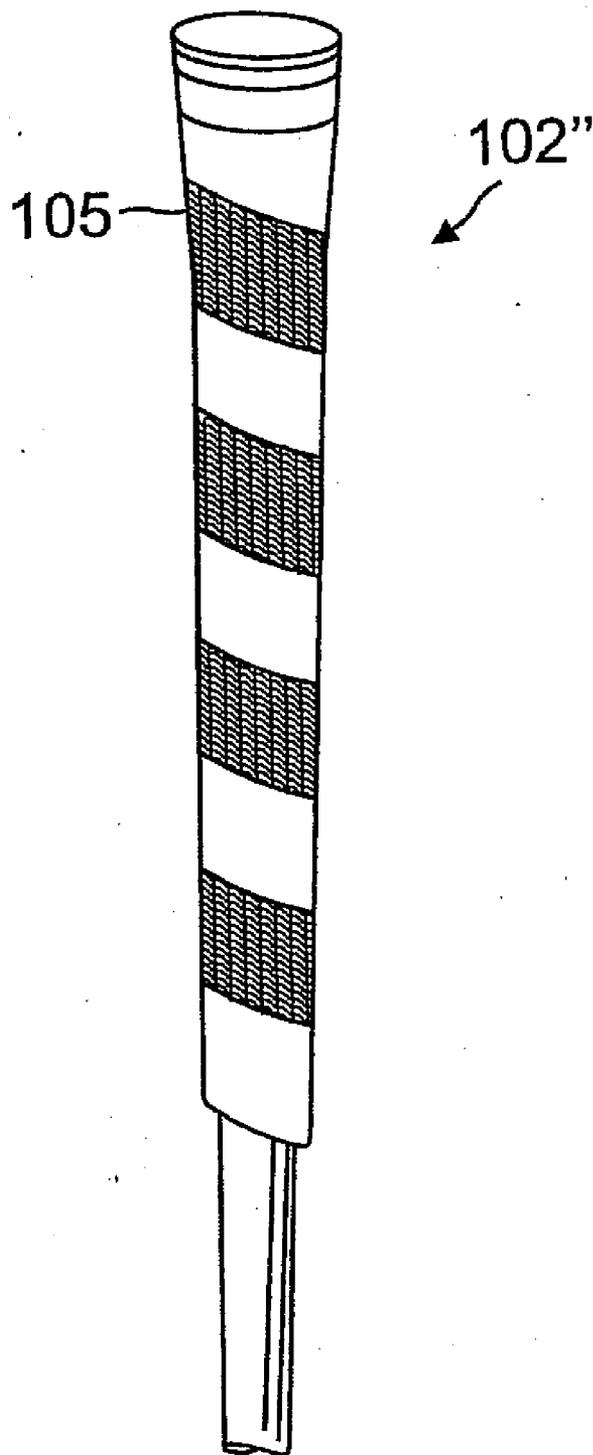


FIG. 3b

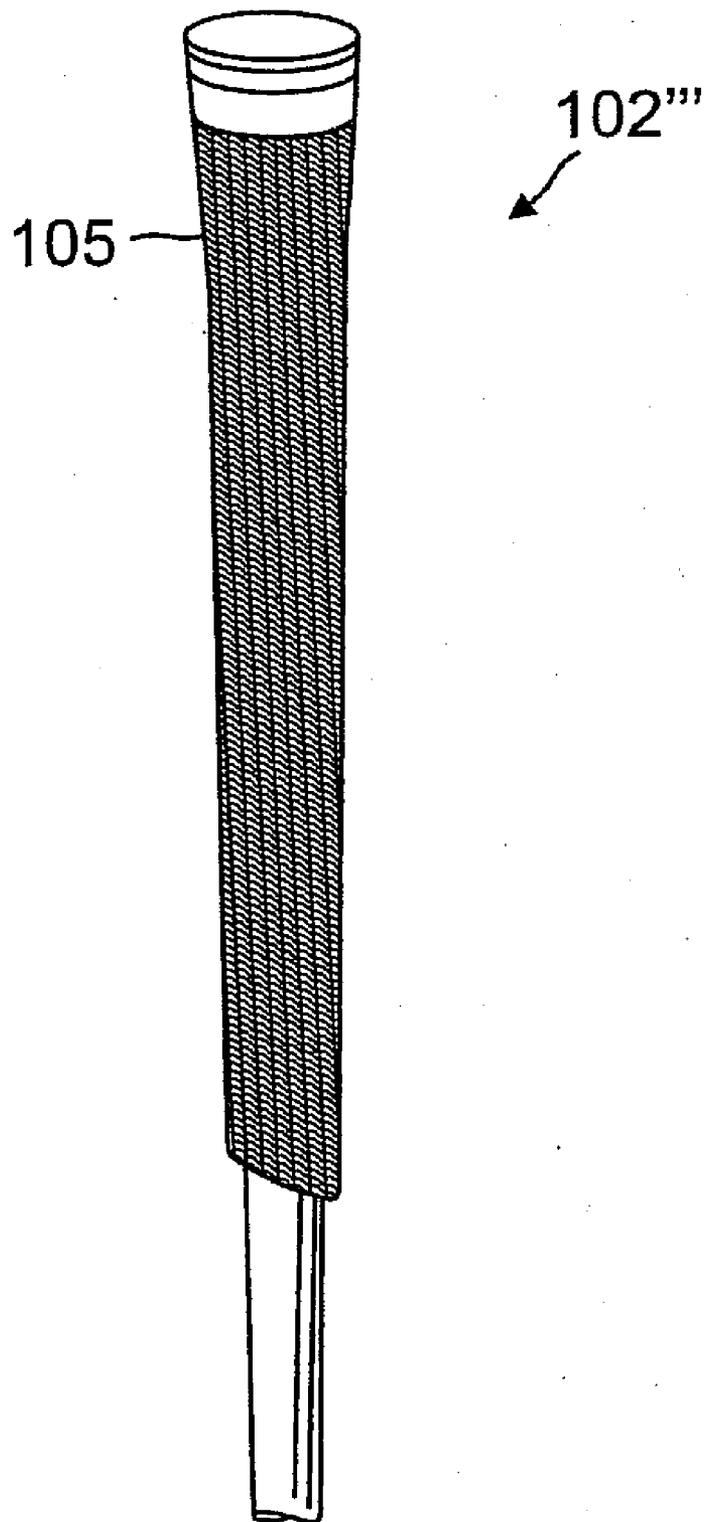


FIG. 3c

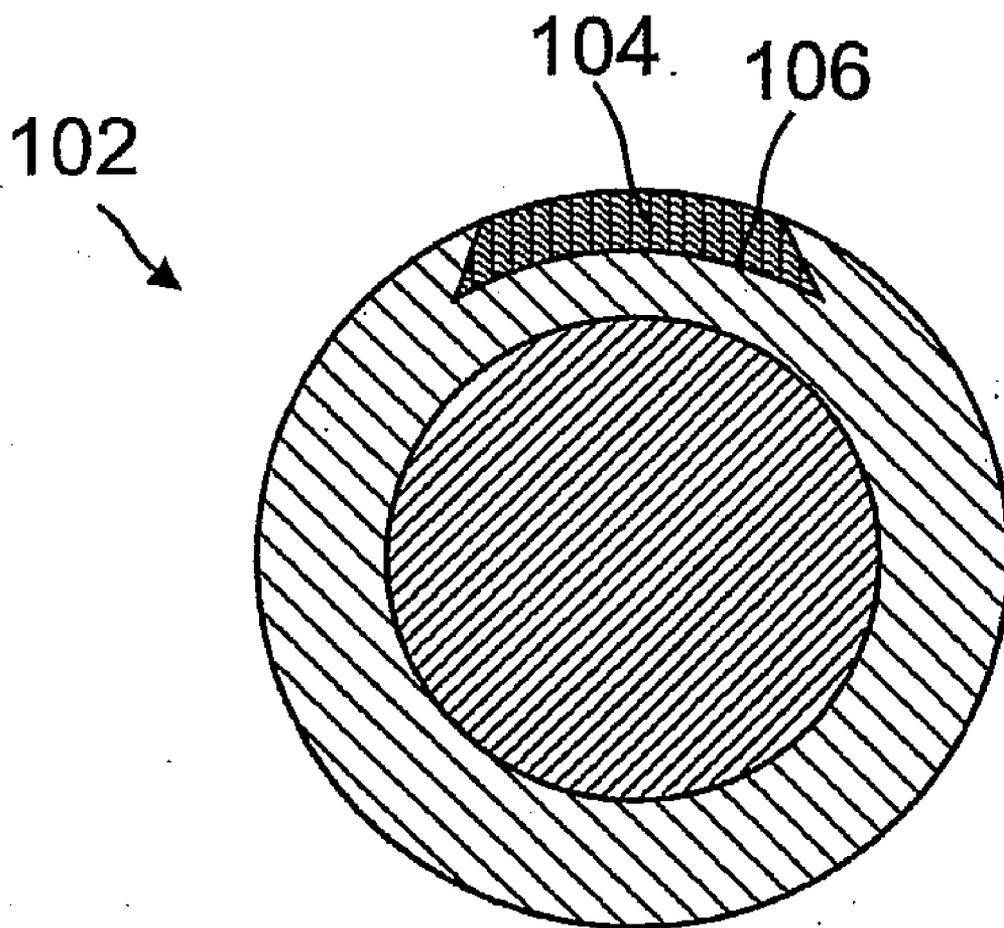


FIG. 4

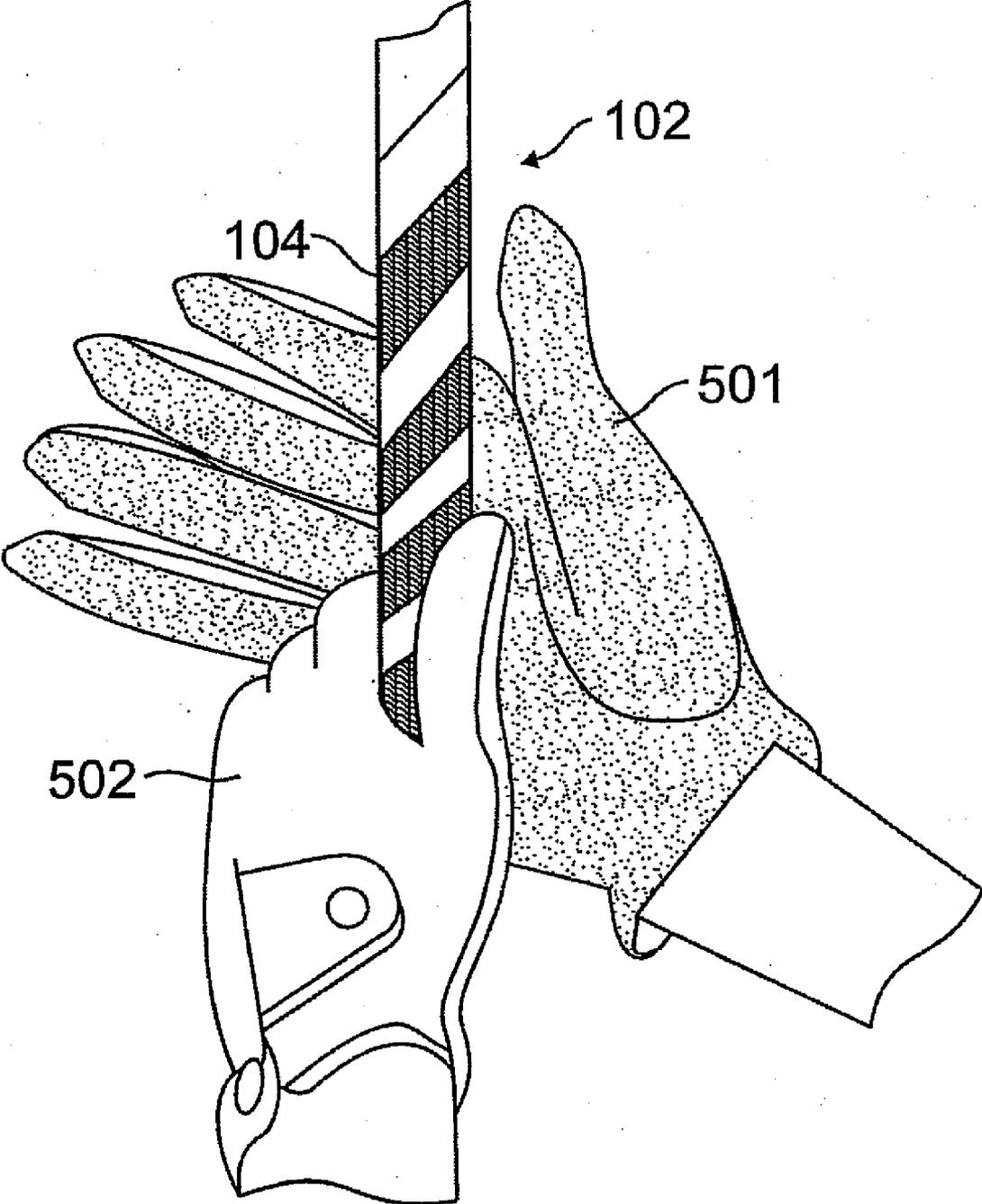


FIG. 5

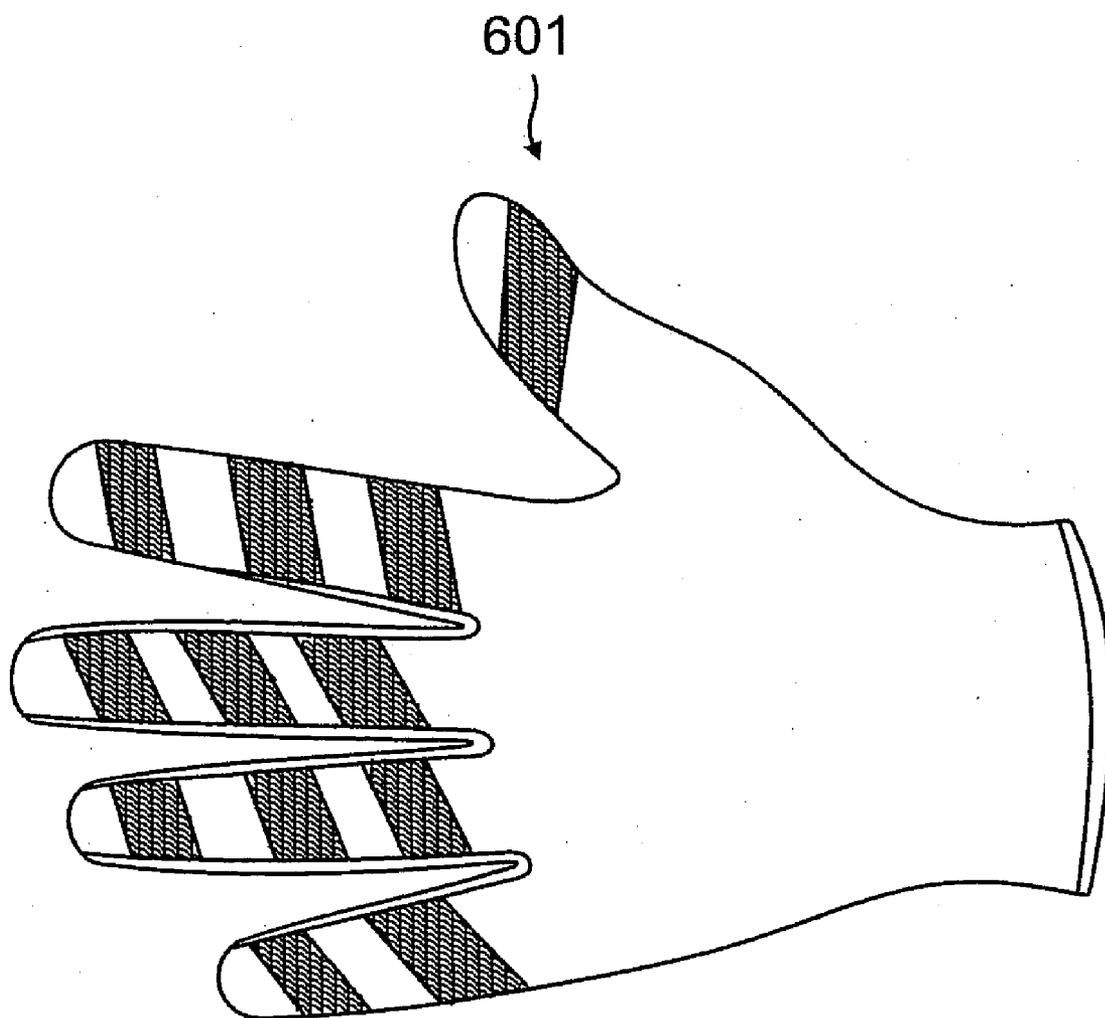


FIG. 6

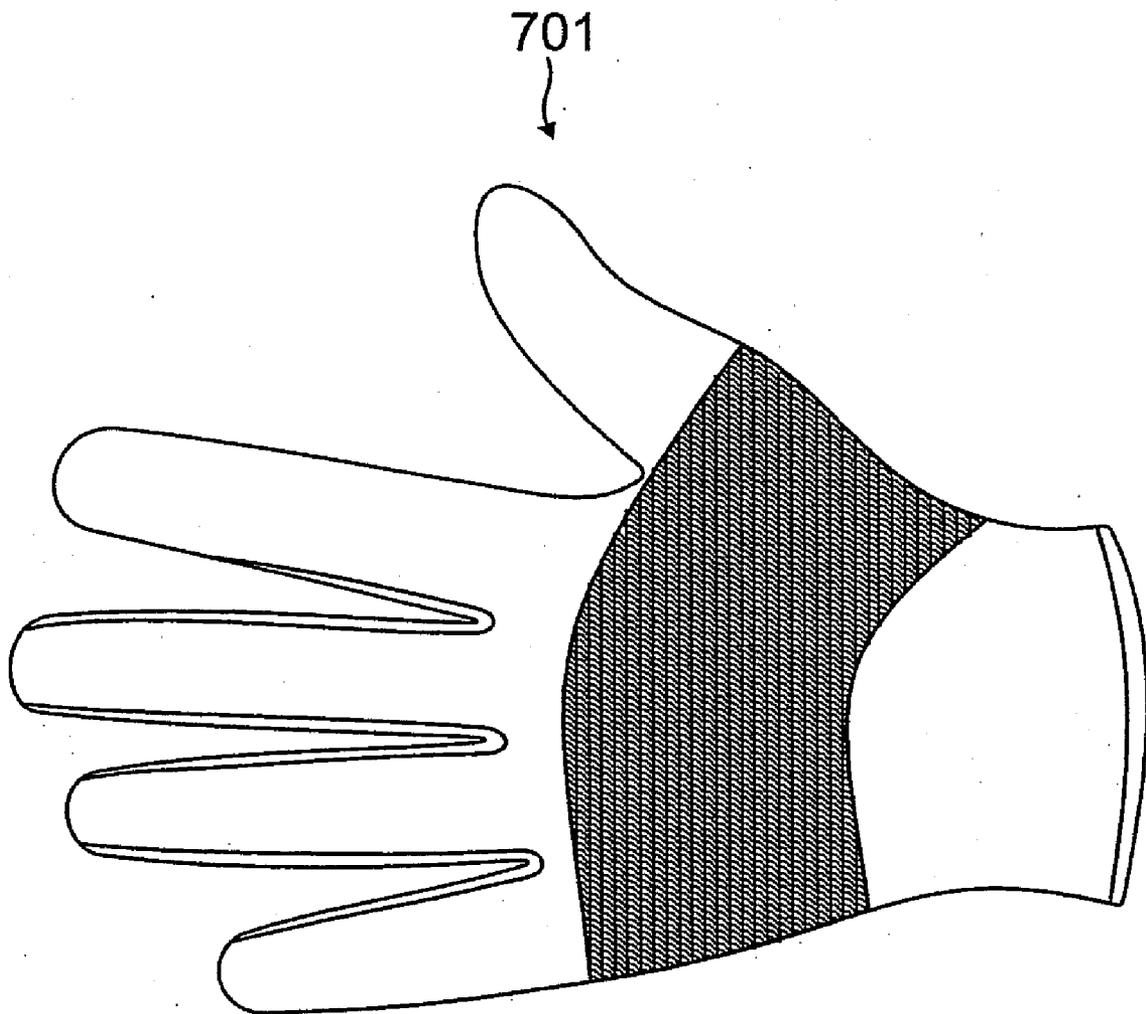


FIG. 7

MATING GOLF GLOVE WITH CLUB GRIP METHODS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

[0001] This document is a continuation application that is related to, and claims priority from, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/352,117, also entitled "Mating Golf Glove with Club Grip Methods," and filed on Feb. 9, 2006, which is commonly owned, and which is hereby incorporated by this reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention technically relates to sporting goods. More particularly, the present invention technically relates to golf equipment. Even more particularly, the present invention technically relates to golf training equipment.

BACKGROUND ART

[0003] Golf requires a certain amount of gripping force with the club to allow swinging action and impact with a golf ball. Golfers who experience a weakened grip due to complications with arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, accretions of hand and wrist injuries, congenital defects, nerve injury, and normal aging processes lack the sufficient gripping power needed to ensure golf club stability, control, and alignment during swing and impact with the golf ball. For those people who are afflicted with a weakened grip, they may find golf virtually impossible to play. Golfers with weakened hand strength, or golfers who have not been taught a fundamentally sound or technically-correct grip configuration, will often have difficulty squaring the clubface at impact with the golf ball which can lead to twisting of the golf club and club face, thereby producing an inaccurate shot, whereby inaccurate shots veer from the intended trajectory. Furthermore, as a golfer's hands fatigue during a round of golf, play becomes even more difficult and the club may completely slip out of the hands and become airborne creating a serious hazard to people standing nearby.

[0004] The golfing and sporting industries have not adequately addressed the problems encountered by those with weakened hand strength. Furthermore, these industries have not provided effective grip training aids for teaching golfers a technically-correct gripping configuration.

[0005] Although there are many schools of thought regarding the correct grip of the gripping portion of the golf club shaft, golf instruction schools predominately teach two styles of gripping configuration. In the Vardon grip, the little finger of the trailing hand (the hand disposed lower on the club, e.g., the right hand for a right-handed player) is placed between the index and middle finger on the lead hand (the hand disposed higher on the club). The lead-hand thumb should fit in the "lifeline" of the trailing hand. The second technique teaches that the grip should be located in the palm of the hands, thereby avoiding interlocking between the fingers. This second style is referred to as the "Natural Grip."

[0006] Some other attempts have been made to solve these problems in the related art; however, these approaches are cumbersome. Some golfers have resorted to the use of pine tar which only lasts a short time, thereby requiring frequent re-application which tends to transfer pine tar to the clothing, the golf ball, and the equipment, thereby further hindering the player's game. Some grip manufacturers have integrated

enlarged golf grips or raised ridges or dots on the grip surface. However, these changes do not sufficiently solve the aforementioned problems in the related art.

[0007] Unfortunately, the prior art offered in the marketplace has not solved these issues. U.S. Pat. No. 5,742,942 does attempt to enable a person to attain a better grasp of the golf club; however, this product is cumbersome to use. The strap mechanism is difficult and awkward to fasten around a person's hand(s). If a golfer is experiencing bilateral weakness, thereby requiring both hands to be strapped, third party assistance is required. In addition, this product may be embarrassing for some golfers to use in the company of friends, family, or strangers due to its appearance and laborious application.

[0008] Therefore, a long-felt need exists in the golfing industry for a system and/or apparatus that enables golfers and other athletes, with a weakened grip, to grasp a club with the appropriate force as to stabilize the golf club and to avoid club head twisting at impact with the golf ball.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The present invention comprises a specially configured golf glove and gripping portion of a golf club shaft. It can provide the solution to enable a golfer who is handicapped by weakened and insufficient hand-grip strength to play golf. In addition, the present system, apparatus and methods impart a feel that is nearly identical with that of existing golf gloves; and the gripping portion of the golf shaft, with the special features thereof, is not readily noticeable by other golfers.

[0010] An object of the present invention is to provide a system, an apparatus, and methods designed especially for golfers with weakened hand strength to attain a grip with sufficient strength to control the golf club to limit club twisting such that the clubface will be square upon impact with the ball resulting in a more accurate shot which will give the golfer a sense of confidence. This enhanced grip will enable a golfer to strike a golf ball by squaring a clubface upon impact with the ball. The present invention will provide a feel nearly identical with that of a standard golf glove. Moreover, the system and apparatus will be relatively discrete as its enabling features are not readily visible to others.

[0011] A further object of the present invention is to provide a system, an apparatus, and methods for teaching golfers a technically correct grip of a golf club. This is achieved by placing various patterns of hook material or loop material on the glove in order to accommodate a specific golf grip.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] For a better understanding of the present invention, reference is made to the below-referenced accompanying Drawing(s). Reference numbers refer to the same or equivalent parts of the present invention throughout the several figures of the Drawing(s).

[0013] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a glove and grip system, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] FIG. 2a is a top view of a glove, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 2b is a side view of a glove, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 2c is a bottom view of a glove, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 3a is a perspective view of a grip, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0018] FIG. 3*b* is a perspective view of a grip, according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention

[0019] FIG. 3*c* is a perspective view of a grip, according to another embodiment of the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of a grip, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0021] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a glove and grip system in use, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

[0022] FIG. 6 is a bottom view of a glove, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0023] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a glove, according to another embodiment of the present invention.

MODE(S) FOR CARRYING-OUT THE INVENTION

[0024] According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a glove and grip system, apparatus, and methods, are used to enable people with weakened hand strength to sufficiently secure a grip of a golf club. The present invention is also used to teach a golfer the correct technique for gripping a golf club. The present invention imparts a “feel” that is nearly identical to that of a golf glove. The present invention configures a golf glove in such a way that the hand, upon which it is to be used, can attain a forceful, grasping, and linking relationship with the golf club grip portion of a golf club shaft during the address and swing of a golf club.

[0025] FIG. 1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of the glove and grip system S, in accordance with the present invention. Grip system S includes at least one glove 101 and a club grip 102. Both the glove 101 and the club grip 102 are adapted to securely mate with each other. Glove 101 comprises a golf glove having a gripping feature. The glove 101 has a palm side, a dorsal side, and finger compartments. The palm side comprises a planar surface which interfaces with the palm of a golfer. The dorsal side comprises a back surface of the glove 101 which interfaces with the back side of a golfer's hand. The finger compartments accommodate a golfer's fingers. The golf glove comprises any suitable material.

[0026] The gripping feature of the glove 101 comprises a fastener, such as a hook-and-loop material (commonly known as Velcro®) disposed on the palm side of the glove 101. In some preferred embodiments where the glove 101 comprises loop material, the loop material will mate with the hook material of the club grip 102. In preferred embodiments, wherein the glove 101 comprises the hook material, the hook material will mate with the loop material of the club grip 102.

[0027] FIGS. 2*a-c* further illustrate the glove 101. The glove 101 comprises the loop material 103, e.g., being sewn thereto. Since the interface is disposed between the palm side of the glove 101 with the grip 102, the only side of the glove 101 which will have the loop material or the hook material is the palm side. The fasteners, e.g., loop material or the hook material may be affixed to the glove by a technique, such as sewing or adhering; and such fasteners may be used to retrofit the glove 101.

[0028] Since many golf instructors may beg to differ as to the proper methods of gripping a golf club, various patterns of fasteners, e.g., loop material or hook material, may be used in order to facilitate these different types of grips. Perhaps the most popular type of grip is the “Vardon” style grip. The Vardon style grip places the club grip in the fingers of a user rather than the palm. When using a Vardon grip, the user may employ the glove 601 of the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 6.

Alternatively, if a user prefers a “Natural” grip, the user may place the club grip in the palms with a “10-finger grip”. This glove 701 of the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 7 is shown. Other types of golf grips, whether they use interlocking fingers, etc., may be taught using accommodating patterns of loop material or hook material affixed to the glove 101. For this reason, a panoply of different embodiments for the glove 101 are encompassed by the present invention.

[0029] FIG. 3*a-c* illustrate alternate preferred embodiments of the club grips 102', 102'', and 102'''. Golf club grips abound in many different styles and comprise a panoply of materials. Materials, such as polymers, e.g., ethylene propylene diene monomer (epdm), leather, e.g., cowhide, calfskin, mammal, amphibious, reptile, and any other animal skins, rubber (natural or synthetic), cotton, various types of cord (such as “classic”, “GX”, or “tour wrap”), or granulated cork are all adaptable for use with the present invention. For this reason, the materials used for fabricating the club grips 102', 102'', 102''' may comprise any suitable material. Moreover, other characteristics or components of a grip which may be integrated such as small holes, grooves, or ridges may also be incorporated with the present invention. However, small holes, grooves, or ridges are strictly optional for use with the present invention.

[0030] The club grips 102, 102', 102'', 102''', in some preferred embodiments, are specially engineered, die-cast molded rubber golf club grips having integrated hook material 104 (or loop material in some preferred embodiments) around the club grips 102, 102', 102'', 102'''. In the illustrated preferred embodiment, recesses are used to accommodate the hook material or the loop material for flush disposition with the surface of the club grip 102, 102', 102'', 102'''. The purpose of the recesses is to obscure the view of the hook material or the loop material on the club grips 102, 102', 102'', 102'''. The primary reason for obscuring the view of the hook material or the loop material is to alleviate any insecurity or conflicting emotions of a golfer when playing or practicing with other golfers. Another reason is that the recesses may be more comfortable to the touch for some golfers. The use of recesses is preferred, but not specifically required by the present invention. In other words, some embodiments may incorporate the recesses and others may not.

[0031] Turning now to FIGS. 3*a-c* in the first embodiment, only the top portion of the club grips 102, 102', 102'', 102''' incorporate the hook material 104. Since most golfers only use one glove for the hand on the upper portion of the club grip 102, 102'', the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 3*a* will probably be the embodiment most often used.

[0032] FIG. 3*b* and FIG. 5 illustrate an alternative preferred embodiment of the club grip 102'' of the present invention. In this bilateral embodiment, two gloves 501, 502 are used. Although this is unorthodox for most golfers, it may help those golfers with weakened hand strength. Since this bilateral embodiment is meant to be used with gloves 501, 502 on both hands, the club grip 102'' integrates the hook material 104 (and the loop material in some preferred embodiments) in alternate spiraling rows down the entire length of the club grip 102''.

[0033] FIG. 3*c* illustrates another preferred bilateral embodiment of the club grip 102'''. In this bilateral embodiment both gloves 501, 502 are used. Unlike club grip 102'', club grip 102''' integrates the hook material 104 throughout the entire surface area of the club grip 102'''.

[0034] FIG. 4 illustrates a cross sectional view of a club grip 102. In preferred embodiments where the club grip 102 is recessed, the club grip 102 is recessed in such a way such that the hook material (or the loop material in some preferred embodiments) is flush with the grip surface. The hooks or loops material are embedded within the recess 106. This method of integrating the hook material (or loop material in some preferred embodiments) is preferable, because it is less noticeable to the naked eye. This recessed design is also more comfortable to the touch.

[0035] That numerous changes may be made in embodiments described herein will be apparent without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Further, features of the embodiments shown in the various figures may be employed with the embodiments of the other figures. Therefore, the scope of the invention is to be determined by the terminology of the following claims and the legal equivalents thereof. As such, the invention taught herein by specific examples is limited only by the scope of the claims.

[0036] Information as herein shown and described in detail is fully capable of attaining the above-described object of the invention, the presently preferred embodiment of the invention, and is, thus, representative of the subject matter which is broadly contemplated by the present invention. The scope of the present invention fully encompasses other embodiments which may become obvious to those skilled in the art, and is to be limited, accordingly, by nothing other than the appended claims, wherein reference to an element in the singular is not intended to mean "one and only one" unless explicitly so stated, but rather "one or more." All structural and functional equivalents to the elements of the above-described preferred embodiment and additional embodiments that are known to those of ordinary skill in the art are hereby expressly incorporated by reference and are intended to be encompassed by the present claims.

[0037] Moreover, no requirement exists for a device or method to address each and every problem sought to be resolved by the present invention, for such to be encompassed by the present claims. Furthermore, no element, component, or method step in the present disclosure is intended to be dedicated to the public regardless of whether the element, component, or method step is explicitly recited in the claims. However, that various changes and modifications in form, material, and fabrication material detail may be made, without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims, should be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. No claim herein is to be construed under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph, unless the element is expressly recited using the phrase "means for."

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

[0038] The present invention industrially applies to sporting goods. More particularly, the present invention industrially applies to golf equipment. Even more particularly, the present invention industrially applies to golf training equipment.

What is claimed:

- 1. A method of fabricating a grip system, the method comprising the steps of:
 - providing at least one mating glove; and
 - providing a grip,
 the at least one mating glove providing step comprising providing the at least one mating glove for accommo-

dating at least one user's hand and for interfacing and mating with the grip, the at least one mating glove providing step comprising providing a palm side, providing a dorsal side, and providing a plurality of finger compartments, the at least one mating glove providing step further comprising providing a hook and loop fastener material,

the grip providing step comprising providing a top side, providing a bottom side, providing an upper half, providing a lower half, and providing at least one recess, the grip providing step further comprising providing a complementary hook and loop fastener material flushly disposed in the at least one recess, and the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material providing step comprising providing the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material as being attachable and detachable in relation to the grip complementary hook and loop fastener material in a discreet visually obscured manner.

- 2. A method, as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one recess providing step comprises providing a spiraling configuration, and wherein the complementary hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the complementary hook and loop fastener material as being flushly disposable in the at least one recess in the spiraling configuration.
- 3. A method, as recited in claim 1, wherein the hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the hook and loop fastener material as being integrated into at least one element selected from a group consisting essentially of the plurality of finger compartments and the palm side.
- 4. A method, as recited in claim 1, wherein the grip providing step comprises providing rubber.
- 5. A method, as recited in claim 1, wherein the complementary hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the complementary hook and loop fastener material being extended through at least one location selected from a group consisting essentially of the grip upper half and the grip lower half.

6. A method of fabricating an instructional grip system, the method comprising the steps of:

- providing at least one mating glove; and
 - providing a club grip,
- the at least one mating glove providing step comprising providing the at least one mating glove for accommodating at least one user's hand and for interfacing and mating with the club grip, the at least one mating glove providing step comprising providing a palm side, providing a dorsal side, and providing a plurality of finger compartments, the at least one mating glove providing step further comprising providing a hook and loop fastener material,

the club grip providing step comprising providing a top side, providing a bottom side, providing an upper half, providing a lower half, and providing at least one recess, the club grip providing step further comprising providing a complementary hook and loop fastener material being flushly disposable in the at least one recess, and the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material providing step comprising providing the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material as being attachable and detachable in relation to the club grip

complementary hook and loop fastener material in a discreet visually obscured manner under instructional conditions.

7. A method, as recited in claim 6, wherein the hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the hook and loop fastener material being integrated into the plurality of finger compartments for facilitating training at least one grip selected from a group consisting essentially of a Vardon-style nine-finger grip and a Vardon-style ten-finger grip.

8. A method, as recited in claim 6, wherein the hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the hook and loop fastener material being integrated into the palm side for facilitating training at least one grip selected from a group consisting essentially of a natural-style nine-finger grip and a natural-style ten-finger grip.

9. A method, as recited in claim 6, wherein the complementary hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the complementary hook and loop fastener material being extended through at least one location selected from a group consisting essentially of the grip upper half and the grip lower half.

10. A method, as recited in claim 6,

wherein the at least one recess providing step comprises providing a spiraling configuration, and

wherein the complementary hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the complementary hook and loop fastener material being flushly disposable in the at least one recess in the spiraling configuration.

11. A method of fabricating a grip system for training a user having weak hand strength, the method comprising the steps of:

providing at least one mating glove; and

providing a grip,

the at least one mating glove providing step comprising providing the at least one mating glove for accommodating at least one user's hand and for interfacing and mating with the grip, the at least one mating glove providing step comprising providing a palm side, providing a dorsal side, and providing a plurality of finger compartments, the mating glove providing step further comprising providing a hook and loop fastener material,

the grip providing step comprising providing a top side, providing a bottom side, providing an upper half, providing a lower half, and providing at least one recess, the grip providing step further comprising providing a complementary hook and loop fastener material being flushly disposable in the at least one recess, and

the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material providing step comprising providing the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material as being attachable and detachable in relation to the grip complementary hook and loop fastener material in a discreet visually obscured manner under training conditions.

12. A method, as recited in claim 1,

wherein the at least one recess providing step comprises providing a spiraling configuration,

wherein the complementary hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the complementary hook and loop fastener material being flushly disposable in the at least one recess in the spiraling configuration,

wherein the hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the hook and loop fastener material being integrated into at least one element selected from a group consisting essentially of the plurality of finger compartments and the palm side, and

wherein the complementary hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the complementary hook and loop fastener material being extended through at least one location selected from a group consisting essentially of the grip upper half and the grip lower half.

13. A method, as recited in claim 6,

wherein the hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the hook and loop fastener material being integrated into the plurality of finger compartments for facilitating training at least one club grip selected from a group consisting essentially of a Vardon-style nine-finger grip and a Vardon-style ten-finger grip,

wherein the hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the hook and loop fastener material being integrated into the palm side for facilitating training at least one club grip selected from a group consisting essentially of a natural-style nine-finger grip and a natural-style ten-finger grip,

wherein the complementary hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the complementary hook and loop fastener material being extended through at least one location selected from a group consisting essentially of the club grip upper half and the club grip lower half,

wherein the at least one recess providing step comprises providing a spiraling configuration, and

wherein the complementary hook and loop fastener material providing step comprises providing the complementary hook and loop fastener material being flushly disposable in the at least one recess in the spiraling configuration.

14. A method of using a grip system, the method comprising the steps of:

providing at least one mating glove;

providing a grip,

the at least one mating glove providing step comprising providing the at least one mating glove for accommodating at least one user's hand and for interfacing and mating with the grip, the at least one mating glove providing step comprising providing a palm side, providing a dorsal side, and providing a plurality of finger compartments, the at least one mating glove providing step further comprising providing a hook and loop fastener material,

the grip providing step comprising providing a top side, providing a bottom side, providing an upper half, providing a lower half, and providing at least one recess, the grip providing step further comprising providing a complementary hook and loop fastener material flushly disposed in the at least one recess, and

the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material providing step comprising providing the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material as being attachable and detachable in relation to the grip complementary hook and loop fastener material in a discreet visually obscured manner; and

placing the at least one mating glove on the grip by attaching the at least one mating glove hook and loop fastener material to the grip complementary hook and loop fastener material.

15. A method, as recited in claim **14**, further comprising the step of placing the at least one mating glove on at least one hand of a user.

16. A method, as recited in claim **15**, further comprising the step of swinging the at least one mating glove being attached on the grip.

17. A method, as recited in claim **15**, further comprising the step of training a user by way of the grip system.

18. A method, as recited in claim **17**,
wherein the training step comprises training the user in swinging a golf club, and
wherein the grip comprises a golf club grip.

19. A method, as recited in claim **17**, wherein the training step comprises training the user in strengthening at least one weakened hand.

20. A method, as recited in claim **14**, further comprising the steps of:

placing the at least one mating glove on at least one hand of a user;

swinging the at least one mating glove being attached on the grip; and

training a user by way of the grip system,

wherein the training step comprises training the user in swinging a golf club,

wherein the grip comprises a golf club grip, and

wherein the training step comprises training the user in strengthening at least one weakened hand.

* * * * *