A bar of soap is held by a pad formed of artificial fibers with open interstices. When the bar is wet, the soap film dripping onto the pad is absorbed by and trapped within the fibers where it dries.
SOAP BAR HOLDER AND METHOD OF SUPPORTING A SOAP BAR

RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] None

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] A. Field of Invention

[0003] This invention pertains to a soap holder that includes a pad made of a special material that collects liquid run-off from a piece of soap. The invention further pertains to a method of supporting a soap bar using the pad.

[0004] B. Description of the Prior Art

[0005] One of the most ubiquitous articles used for general and personal hygiene is the soap bar. This article is used several times a day by virtually everyone. Efforts have been made to replace the soap bar with other, similar products, such as liquid soap, but these efforts have not been fully successful.

[0006] When not in use, soap bars are normally kept in a soap holder that may include a soap dish, a rack or a straight surface. During use the soap bar comes into contact with water. As a result of this contact, a relatively thin outer portion of the soap bar starts dissolving to the point where it forms a thin liquid film. When the washing is complete and the soap bar is placed on a holder as described above, this thin film starts dripping off the soap bar unto the holder where it forms a puddle. The puddle eventually dries to form a relatively hard and unsightly residue (sometimes referred to as ‘soap scum’). If not cleaned up soon, this residue dries and becomes hard and difficult to remove. Moreover, some of this residue sticks to the soap bar as the soap bar is lifted for the next use. This problem is aggravated if the soap bar is used to clean something very dirty because, unless the bar is washed off, some of the dirt stays in the film and the resulting residue.

[0007] To reduce this problem, the holder may be provided with a support lining of some kind that prevents the film form depositing straight on the holder. For example, the liner may be made of a sponge. However, the film from the soap has a high enough viscosity and surface tension so that it forms the puddle on top of the soap. Thus, the residue forms on the sponge rather then the holder—and is still a problem. Moreover, when the soap bar is lifted from the sponge, it is still coated on the bottom with some of the residue.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] Briefly, the present invention provides a soap bar holder that includes a pad. The pad is preferably non-woven and is made of plurality of myriad artificial fibers held together by a suitable binder. The pad is sized and shaped to fit under a typical soap bar, either in a soap dish or on top of other surfaces. Any film from the soap drips down onto the pad and flows into the interstices between the fibers were it dries as the residue. In this manner, the residue forms within the pad itself and is not readily visible. However, after a while, the pad can be washed to remove the residue from the fibers, and is ready to be reused. Moreover, substantially none of the film or residue remains on the pad as a result. The soap can be reused as often as desirable without having any residue on its bottom surface.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0009] FIG. 1 shows a cross-sectional view of a soap dish constructed in accordance with this invention; and

[0010] FIG. 2 shows a cross-sectional view of other types of soap holders in accordance with this invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0011] Referring first to FIG. 1, a soap holder 10 constructed in accordance with this invention includes a soap dish 12 and a pad 14. Soap dish 12 can be made of any known materials including a plastic material or other materials such as glass, ceramic, metal alloys, and so on. The pad 14 is sized and shaped to fill a substantial portion of the dish 12 and, in turn, supports a soap bar 16.

[0012] The pad 14 is preferably a non-woven material such as a matting made of thin artificial fibers (e.g., polyester) forming numerous interstices therebetween, and held together with a suitable binder. The matting may be made using a foaming process and can be formed into a large sheet and then cut into any desirable shape. The pad is preferably between ¼ and ⅛ thick. The inventor has found that a particularly good product that may be used as a pad is a cleaning article that is commercially available from various sources and used as a scrub for skin care. This cleaning article is available, for example under the name of Buf PuF™ from the 3M Company, or under the name of CVS Cleansing Facial Sponge from the CVS pharmacies.

[0013] The article is semi-rigid in the sense that it has more body and retains its shape better than a cotton pad. Its consistency and specific weight are similar to the fibreglass pads used for insulation. fiberglass pads may not be suitable because of the glass fibers that may stick to the soap and gets transferred to a person’s skin.

[0014] As discussed above, the present application pertains to the problems associated with wet soap bars, and more particularly with the thin wet film that forms on a soap bar that drips down forming an undesirable puddle, and eventually a hard residue. In the present invention, the soap film drips onto the pad penetrates the interstices formed therein. The portion of the film that is inside the pad dries quickly and the thickness and volume of the pad is selected so that under normal usage (that is, unless the soap bar is exposed to a constant stream of water while it is resting on the pad) no portion of the film flows through and exits the pad unto the dish 12. In this manner the soap film gets trapped inside the pad and is almost invisible.

[0015] Of course, after long-term usage, the pad can get saturated to the point where it can no longer absorb and retain the film. When the pad reaches this stage, it can then be either disposed or can be washed and then reused. Because of its open structure, once washed, the pad will dry very quickly and can be reused, once it is dry.

[0016] The inventor has found that the invention is much more effective in capturing, absorbing and retaining the soap film from a wet soap then pads made of other materials such as a sponge. It is believed that the pad has these superior

characteristics because, sponges that have numerous substantially cavities that are much less permeable to air and the soap film. As a result, when a wet soap bar is placed on a sponge, the soap film drips down onto the surface of the sponge and stays there until it dries, rather then being absorbed into the sponge. The pad 14 presented herein is formed with fibers that form interstices that are open and quickly absorb the soap film. Moreover the interstices allow the air to flow and circulate through the pad easily thereby insuring that the film dries quickly.

[0017] In the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the soap bar 16 and pad 14 are shown as being supported by the dish 12. In other embodiments, as shown for example in FIG. 2, the soap bar 16 and pad 14 are supported by some other surface 18, such as a table, or a sink frame. The surface 18 may be planar, or may have a small indentation for holding the soap 14 and pad 16. In another embodiment, in addition to, or instead of the surface 18, the soap 16 and pad 14 can be stored and supported on a plurality of bars 20. These bars could be made of plastic, wood, metal, etc., and can be part of soap holding and other accessories in a bathroom, in, or adjacent to the sink, or other locations.

[0018] Numerous other modifications may be made to the invention without departing from its scope as defined in the appended claims.

1 claim:
1. A soap holder comprising:
   a pad made of a plurality of fibers arranged to form a plurality of open interstices permeable to air flow, said pad being sized and shaped to hold a soap bar; and a dish sized and shaped to hold said pad;
   wherein said interstices are sized and shaped to absorb a soap film dripping from said soap bar when wet, and to allow said soap film to dry.
2. The soap holder of claim 1 wherein said fibers are non-woven.
3. The soap holder of claim 1 wherein said fibers include polyester.
4. The soap holder of 1 wherein said pad is sized and shaped to hold and absorb the soap film.
5. A soap holder comprising:
   a pad made of a plurality of fibers arranged to form a plurality of open interstices permeable to air flow, said pad being sized and shaped to hold a soap bar; and a surface supporting said pad;
   wherein said interstices are sized and shaped to absorb a soap film dripping from said soap bar when wet, and to allow said soap film to dry.
6. The holder of claim 6 wherein said surface is substantially planar.
7. The holder of claim 6 wherein said surface is defined by a plurality of bars.
8. The holder of claim 6 wherein said fibers include polyester.
9. The holder of claim 6 wherein said pad is between ¼ and 1".
10. A method of holding a soap bar comprising:
   providing a support surface; and
   placing a pad on said support surface to receive said soap bar, said pad being formed of a plurality of fibers forming interstices sized and shaped to absorb a soap film resulting from a wet soap bar placed on said support surface.
11. The method of claim 8 wherein pad is air permeable.
12. The method of claim 8 wherein said support surface is a dish.
13. The method of claim 9 wherein said support surface is a tray.
14. The method of claim 11 wherein said tray includes a plurality of bars.

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