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(54) **INSULATED UTILITY COVER FOR
ATHLETE'S DRINK CONTAINER**

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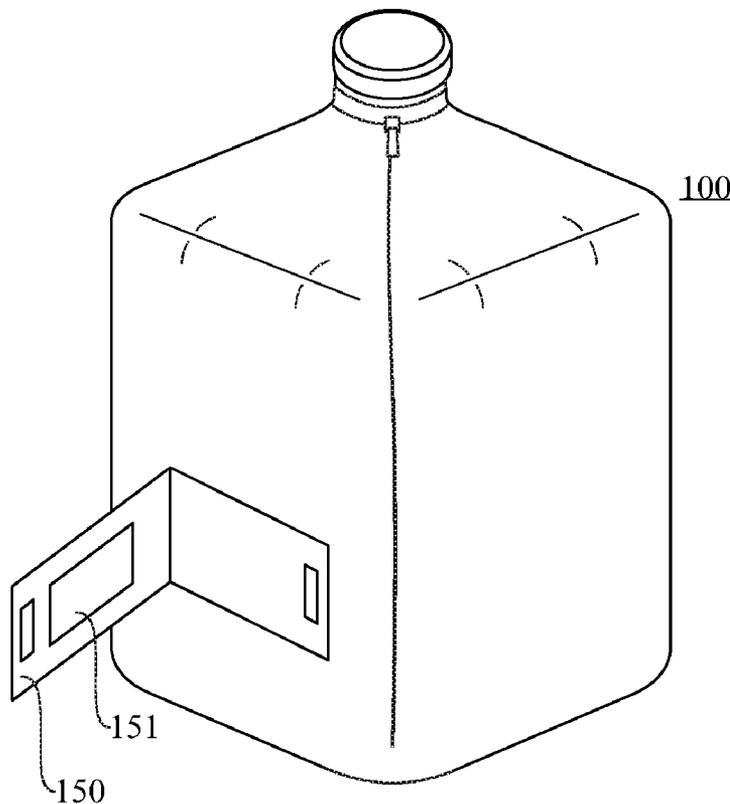
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An insulating and protecting cover for a water bottle or fluid container, where the cover is manufactured from neoprene or a similar insulating and protecting material, and the cover further having at least one pocket or similar compartment incorporated into the cover to store various items, is disclosed. The cover may be manufactured from a single layer of neoprene or as a multi-layer laminate to provide additional insulation as well as enhanced protection from being dropped or hitting other objects. The cover may incorporate a zipper or other similar openable element to permit easy placement of the cover around the bottle, and may incorporate a cutout or other open section to permit easy access to a handle element of the bottle being covered. The cover may be manufactured in a variety of colors or patterns to match the user's apparel or as a fashion statement.



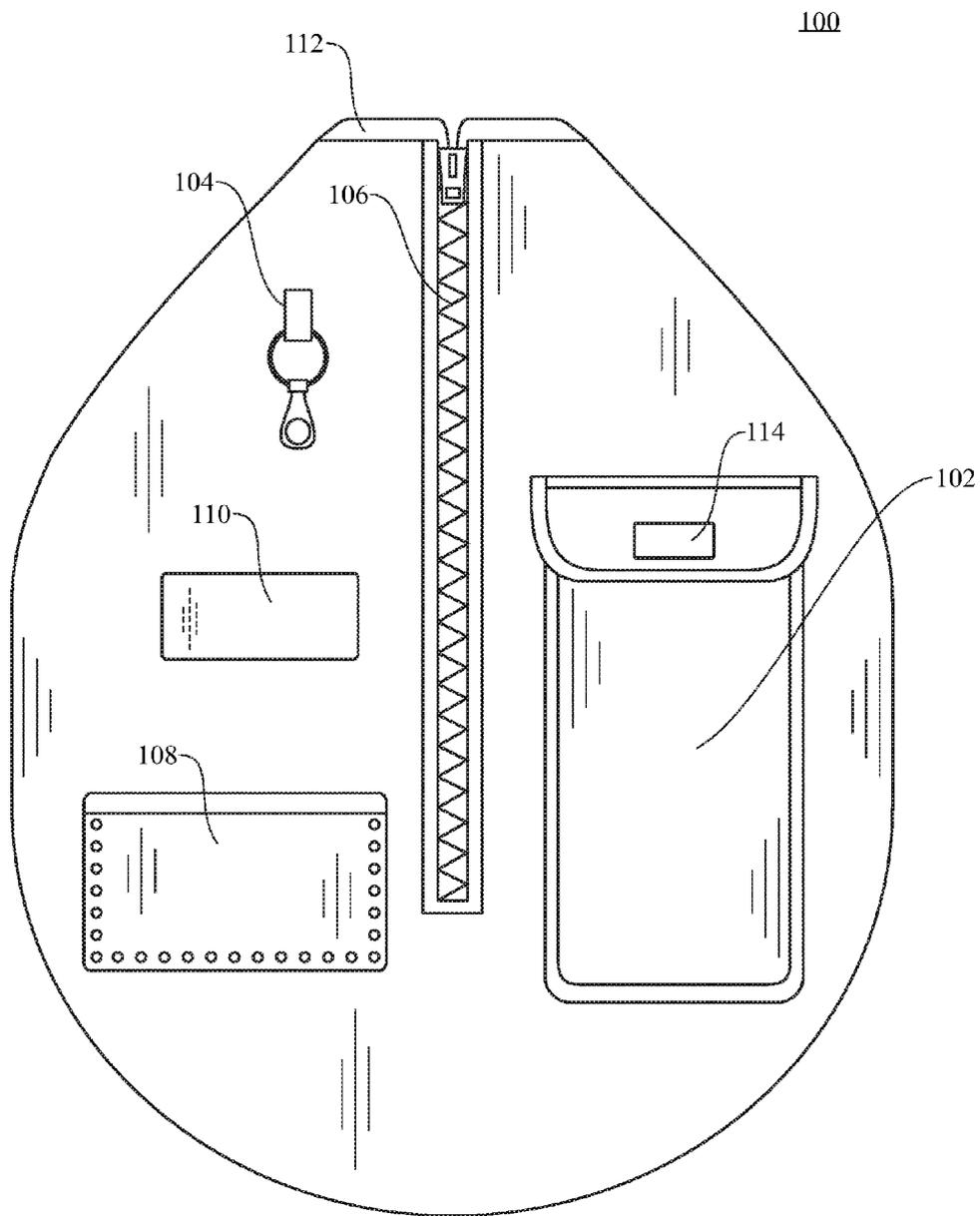


FIG. 1

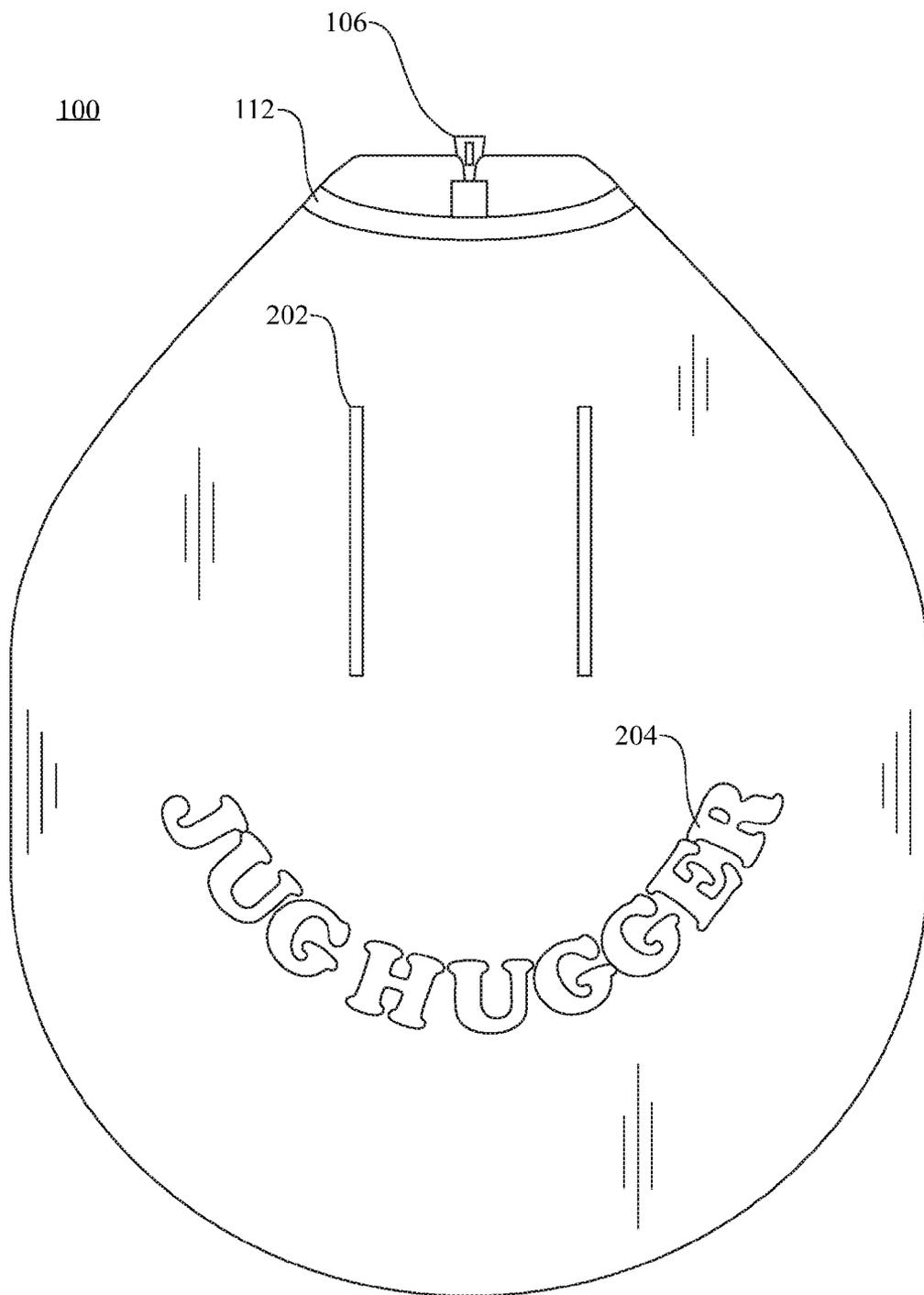


FIG. 2

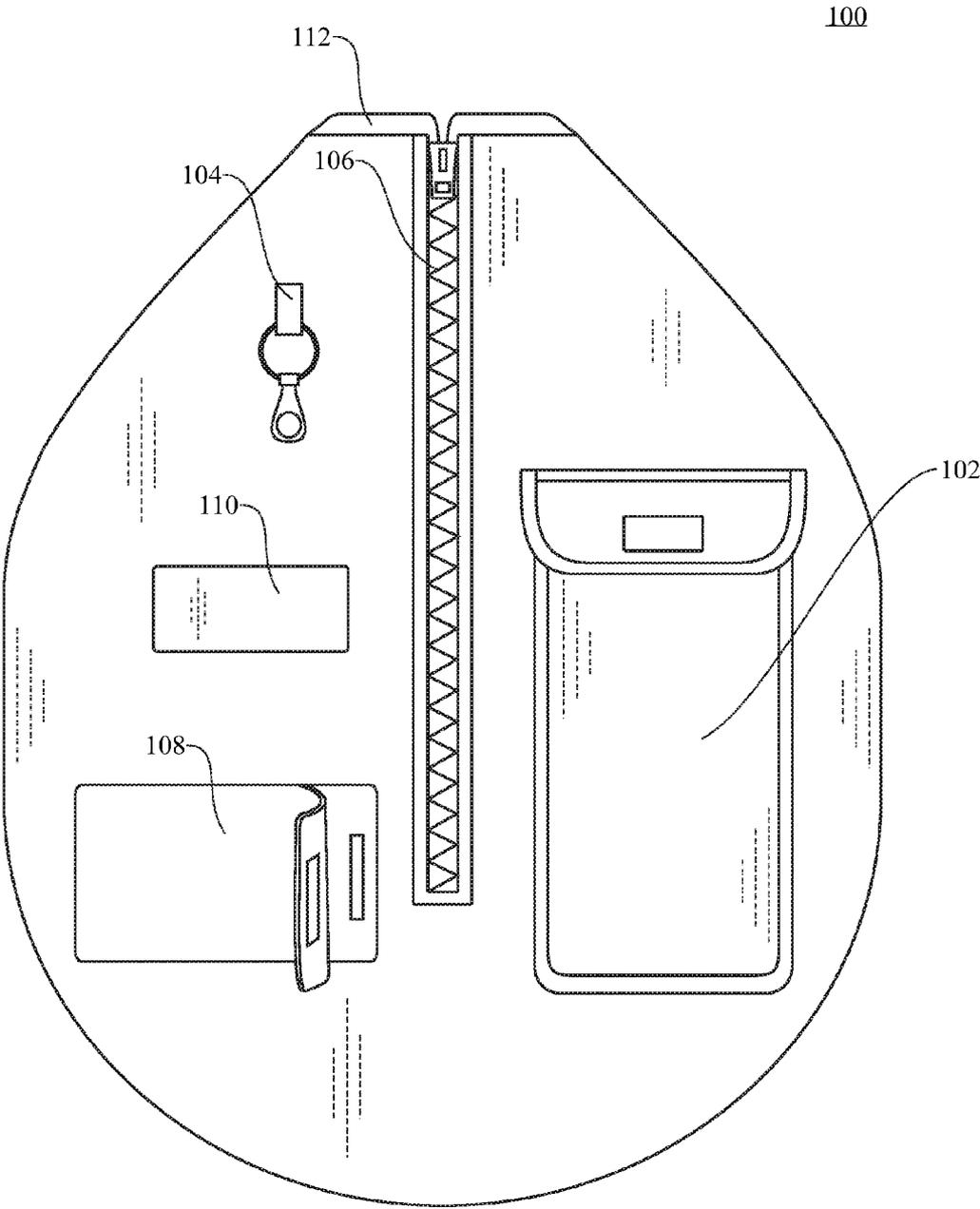


FIG. 3

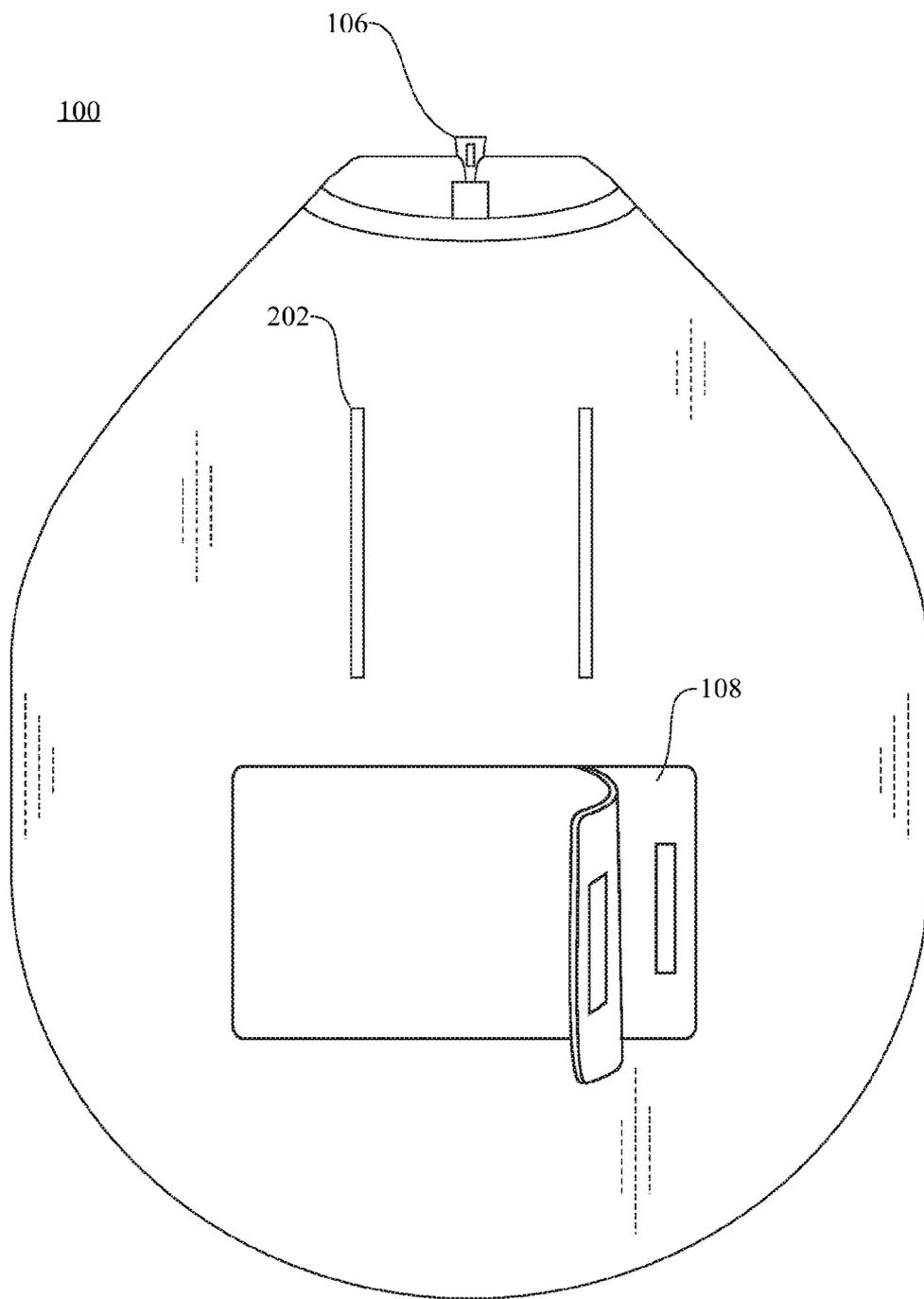
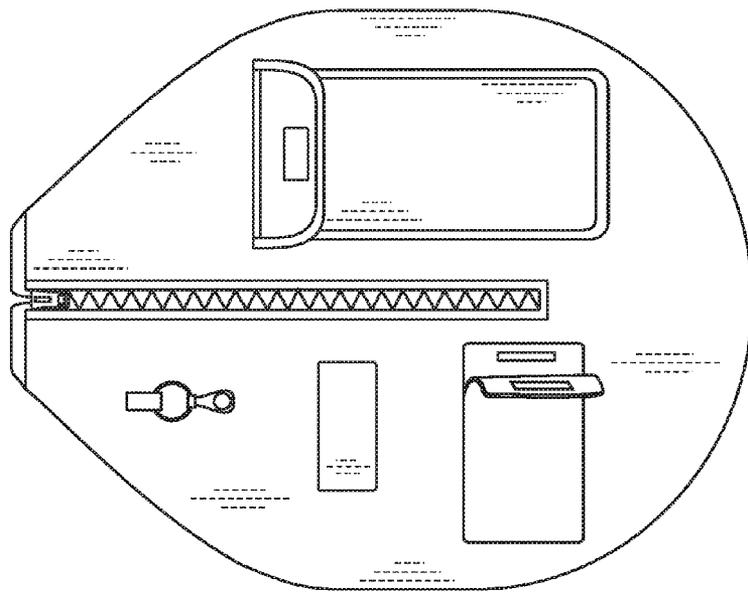


FIG. 4



100

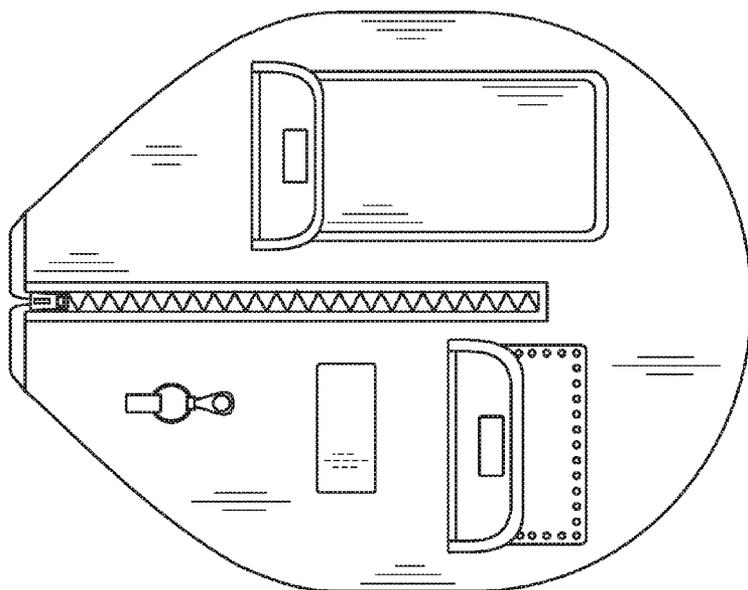


FIG. 5

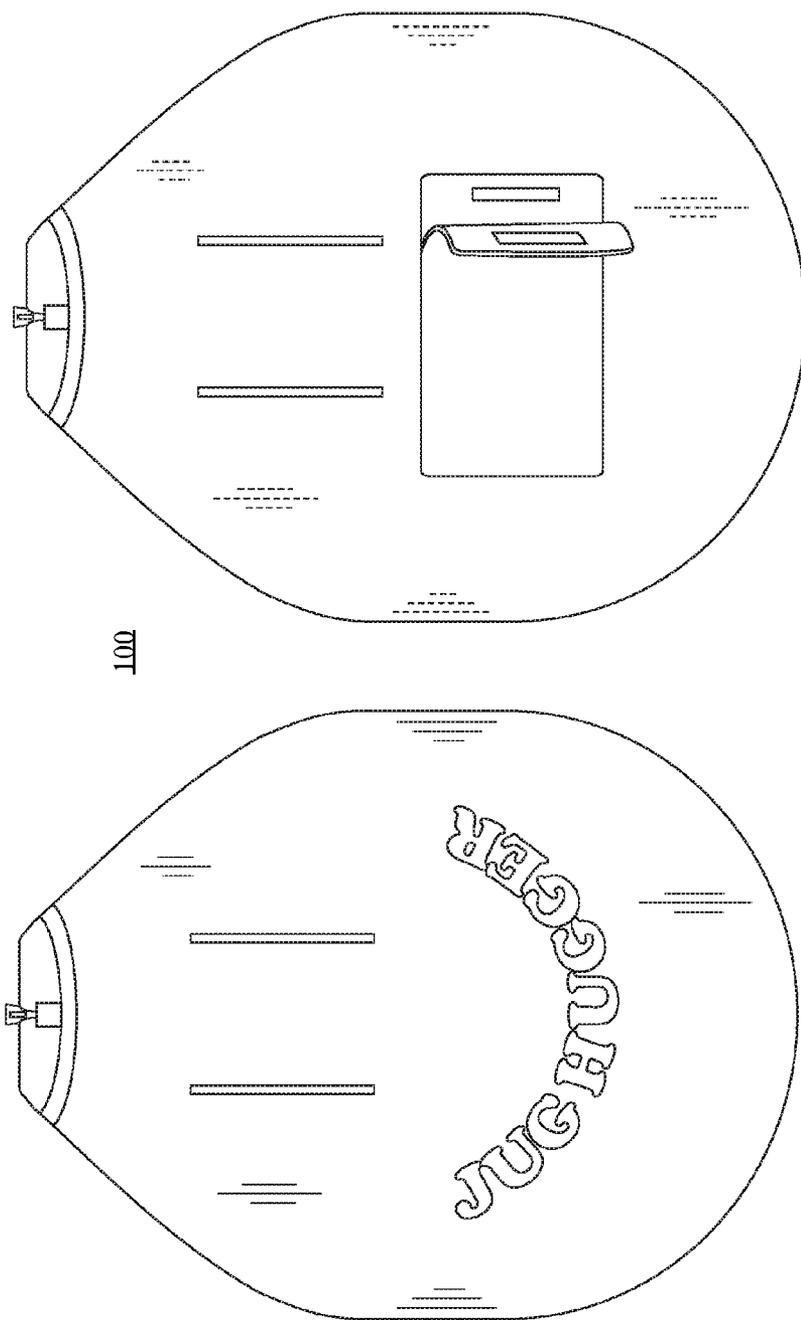


FIG. 6

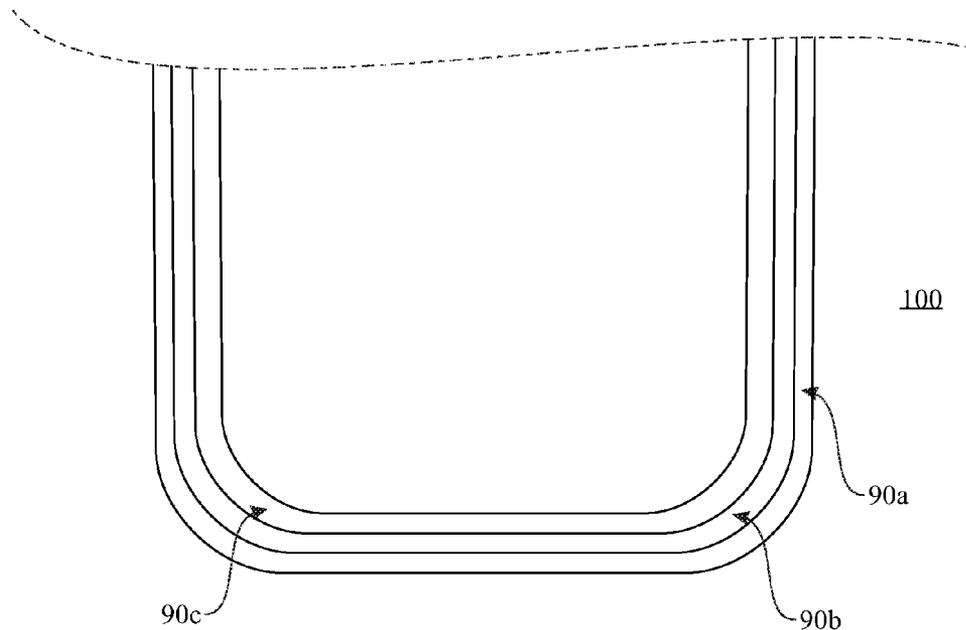


FIG. 7A

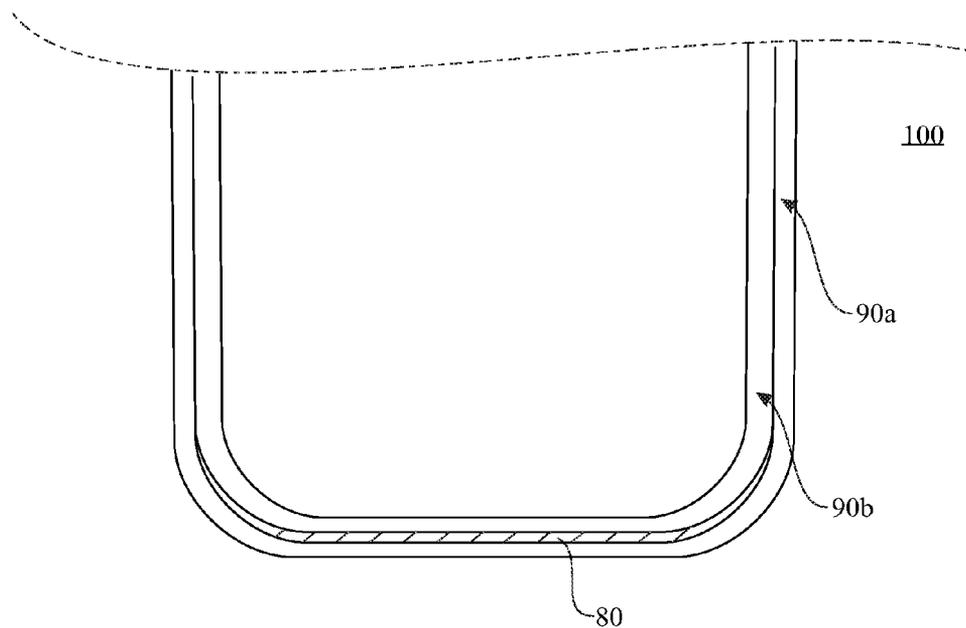


FIG. 7B

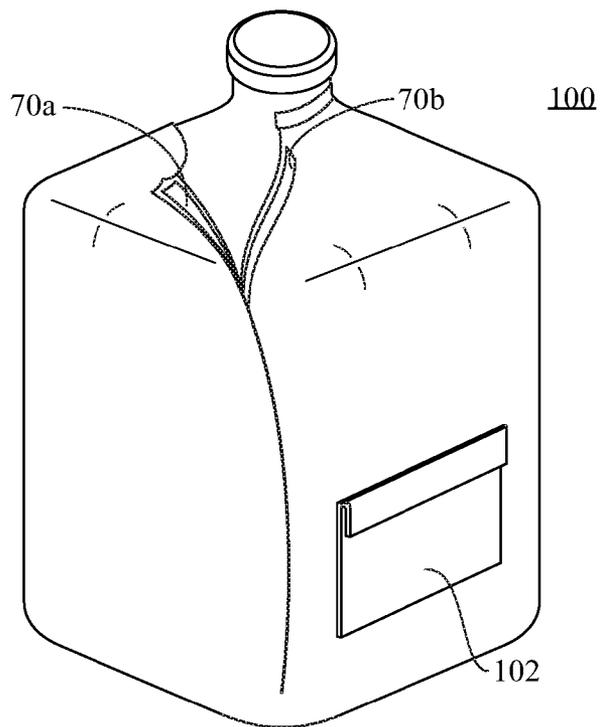


FIG. 8

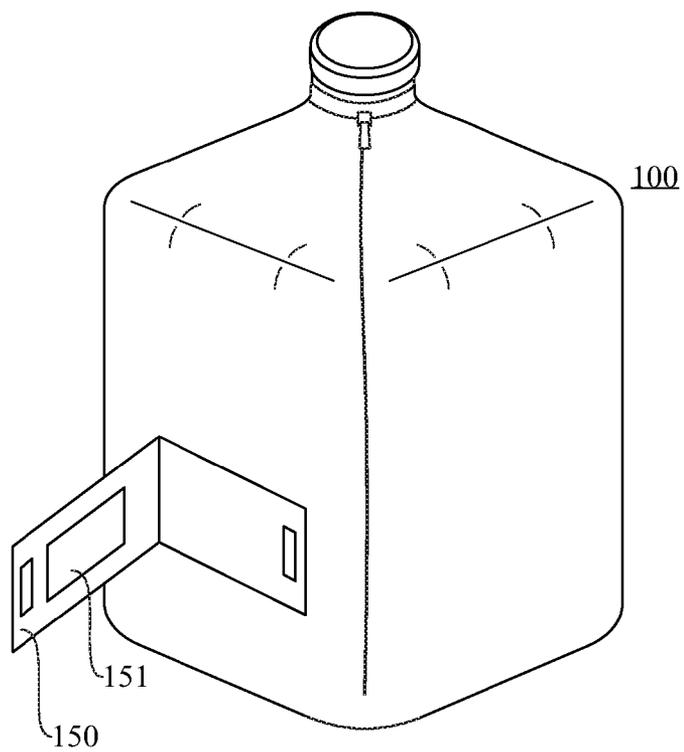


FIG. 9

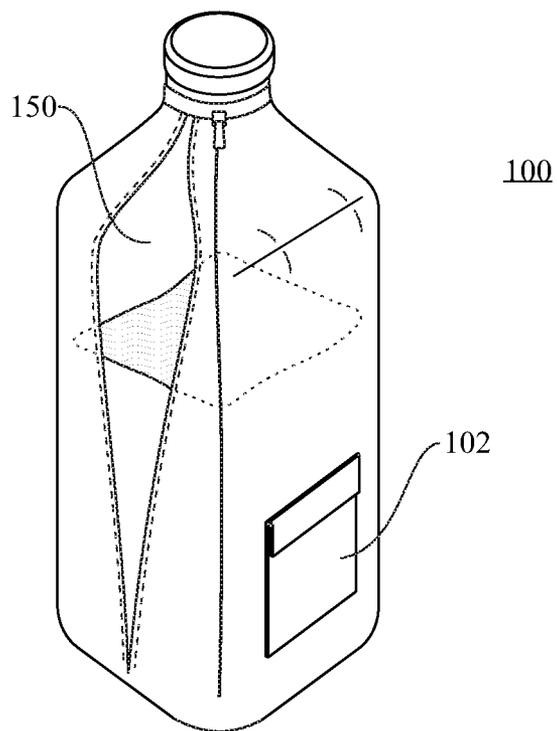


FIG. 10A

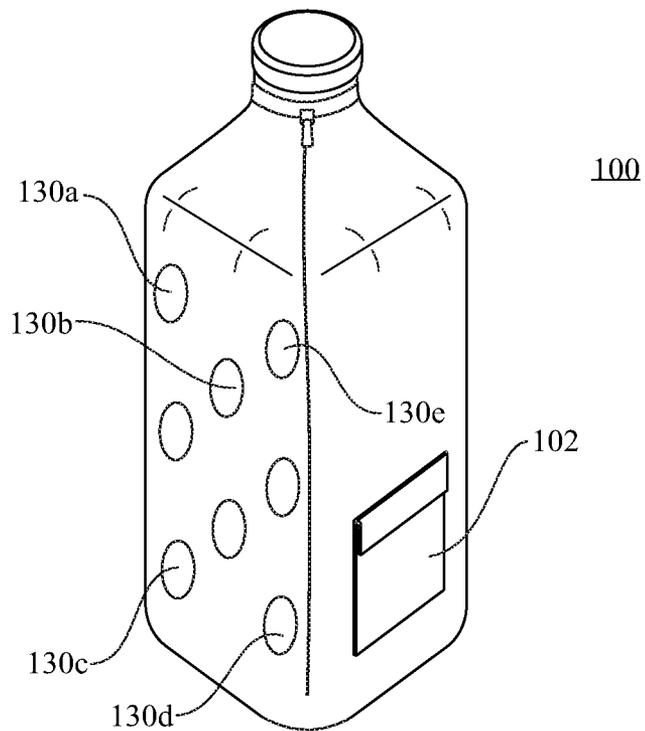


FIG. 10B

INSULATED UTILITY COVER FOR ATHLETE'S DRINK CONTAINER

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

[0001] This application claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 62/181,930, filed on Jun. 19, 2015, the contents of which are incorporated by reference herein in its entirety as if set forth in full.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention generally relates to insulating devices for fluid containers, and more specifically relates to insulating utility covers for an athlete's drink container. In one core embodiment, the insulating cover substantially covers the exterior surface of the drink container with an insulating material such as neoprene, and further incorporates a zipper or similar openable element to allow for ease of use, along with at least one pocket or compartment in which the user may store various items such as a smartphone or set of keys. The insulating cover may also incorporate a cutout or open section to allow for ready access to a handle on the container and/or to allow for viewing of the container contents. The insulating cover may also be manufactured using a single layer of insulating material or as a multi-layer laminate to provide additional insulation as well as enhanced protection of the container from inadvertent impacts.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Gym enthusiasts often take a water bottle to the gym so that they have ready access to water, or another desired fluid replenishment, and to help with maintaining hydration during a workout. Using a standard over the counter water bottle may end up causing confusion as to whose water bottle is whose, where multiple athletes may have similar or the same water bottle. Moreover, for a typical workout session, which can last an hour or more, the cold water or fluid replenishment will warm up during the time of the workout, such that by the end of the workout, the water or fluid is no longer a refreshing cold temperature, but has now likely reached room temperature.

[0004] In many gyms, where the room temperature may be, or may reach elevated temperatures, the user's water bottle may also sweat causing water puddles to form where the bottle was placed on the floor or table or bench. The sweat on a water bottle also makes it more difficult to open the bottle or container.

[0005] Further, athletes often keep their smartphone, a set of keys, a locker key, and/or a security card with them during the workout. Keeping these items together or safe during a workout, which may entail moving from station to station or between different machines may be cumbersome, and often results in one or more personal items being left behind. It would be easier to have one location or container to hold and protect any and all of such items that the athlete has with him or her during a workout or exercise session such that as the athlete moves between stations or machines all of his or her belongings stay together and with the athlete.

[0006] Prior art devices have been created in an attempt to address certain of these problems and issues. One example are the standard koozies used to insulate a water bottle. However, such insulating covers do not fully address the

above noted problems including the need to be able to store certain items with or on the insulating cover.

[0007] Accordingly, it would be useful to have a practical device that an athlete could use at the gym or during an exercise session that could (1) act as an insulating cover for a water bottle or fluid container, similar to a koozie, (2) act as a protective layer around the water bottle, to protect the bottle from damage due to inadvertent impacts, (3) provide at least one pocket or sleeve to hold a smartphone or set of keys or security card, and (4) be manufactured with different colors or design schemes or indicia to allow users to have a unique identifier for their particular water bottle and stored items. Ideally, the cover would be flexible, dirt and scuff resistant, be machine washable, and would come in different sizes and shapes so that the covers could be used with different size fluid or drink containers.

[0008] Such an insulating water bottle cover configuration does not appear to have been fully designed, developed, or commercialized. While certain of these problems may be addressed by one or more examples of the prior art, a complete solution to all of these problems does not appear to have been specifically designed or used in the relevant prior art.

SUMMARY OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The present invention overcomes the disadvantages of the prior art and fulfills the needs described above by providing an insulating cover for a fluid or drink container, comprising a cover shaped to envelope a fluid or drink container; at least one pocket formed on the outside of said cover, wherein at least one of said at least one pocket is sized to fit a wireless device; a zipper element incorporated along one side of said cover to allow for easy placement and removal of the fluid container from said cover; and a cutout section incorporated along one side of said cover to allow access to a handle formed on the fluid container; wherein said cover is manufactured from an insulating material thereby providing thermal insulation characteristics to maintain the temperature of any fluid contained within said fluid container.

[0010] Another preferred aspect of the invention is the insulating cover for a fluid container, as described above, and further comprising at least one see-through section incorporated within said flexible cover to allow a user to see any contents of said fluid container.

[0011] Another preferred aspect of the invention is the insulating cover for a fluid container, as described above, wherein said neoprene material is approximately between 2 millimeters and 5 millimeters thick.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL DRAWINGS

[0012] To easily identify the discussion of any particular element or act, the most significant digit or digits in a reference number refer to the figure number in which that element is first introduced.

[0013] FIG. 1 is a front view of an embodiment of the inventive insulating cover for drink containers showing certain features of the cover.

[0014] FIG. 2 is a back view of an embodiment of the inventive insulating cover for drink containers showing the handle slot.

[0015] FIG. 3 is a front view of another embodiment of the inventive insulating cover for drink containers showing an openable pocket.

[0016] FIG. 4 is a back view of an embodiment of the inventive insulating cover for drink containers showing an additional pocket element.

[0017] FIG. 5 shows the front view of two different embodiments of the inventive insulating cover for drink containers having different pocket features.

[0018] FIG. 6 shows the back views of two embodiments of the inventive insulating cover for drink containers having different pocket features.

[0019] FIG. 7A shows a cross-sectional view of one side of an embodiment of the inventive insulating cover having three layers of material for added impact protection and insulation.

[0020] FIG. 7B shows a cross-sectional view of the bottom of an embodiment of the inventive insulating cover having two layers of material, along with a semi-rigid bottom section for added impact protection.

[0021] FIG. 8 shows a back view of an embodiment of the inventive insulating cover for drink containers showing an alternative closure mechanism of overlapping flaps and using Velcro™ to attach the flaps to each other.

[0022] FIG. 9 shows a perspective view of an embodiment of the inventive insulation cover for drink containers showing a pocket having an outer flap section to hold identification information.

[0023] FIG. 10A shows a back view of an embodiment of the inventive insulating cover for a half-gallon sized drink container and showing a see-through section to allow inspection of the container contents.

[0024] FIG. 10B shows another embodiment of the inventive insulating cover for a half-gallon sized drink container incorporating a plurality of see-through sections to allow inspection of the container contents.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF CERTAIN EMBODIMENTS

[0025] The inventive insulating and utility cover for an athlete's drink container or water bottle is described in the following paragraphs and accompanying figures. More particularly, with reference to FIGS. 1 through 10B, different embodiments of the insulating cover 100 are shown incorporating several features or elements that make the insulating utility cover 100 useful, unique, and highly innovative.

[0026] In one embodiment, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the insulating, flexible utility cover 100 is shaped to fit snugly over a one-gallon plastic water container or water jug. The cover 100 is designed to cover the majority of the water container to provide the greatest insulation capability. Accordingly, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the cover 100 has a narrower neck 112 region as compared to the middle and bottom sections of the cover 100.

[0027] As also shown in FIGS. 1 through 6, the insulating cover 100 should be manufactured from an insulating material such as neoprene, insulating foam, or another heat transfer resistant material. In addition to neoprene, another usable material may be closed-cell insulating foam.

[0028] Standard thickness neoprene is 2 mm to 4 mm, with the embodiment shown having a thickness of 3 mm. The use of a material such as neoprene also provides an additional feature to the inventive cover 100 in that it provides some protection to the water container from inadvertent impacts or

simply being dropped. Such impact protection is increased with use of thicker neoprene, such as 4 mm to 6 mm.

[0029] In another embodiment, shown in FIGS. 7A and 7B, the inventive insulating cover 100 could be manufactured have two or more layers or laminates 90a, 90b, 90c to (1) further improve insulation or heat transfer performance, and (2) improve impact protection for the container. The different layers or laminates should be flexible enough to allow for slight movement or distortion of the respective layers as the cover 100 is fit around the drink container. The enhanced impact protection through use of multiple layers of the insulating material would be especially useful on the bottom section and side sections of the cover 100, as shown in FIG. 7A.

[0030] In a further embodiment, impact protection to the container can be enhanced through use of a semi-rigid, or rigid bottom section or layer 80 as shown in FIG. 7B. Such a bottom section could be positioned inside the neoprene material or positioned between two layers of the neoprene 90a, 90b. Obviously with the inclusion of a rigid or semi-rigid bottom section, the insulating cover is less flexible, but does substantially help with impact protection.

[0031] To allow for ease of use in putting the cover 100 over the bottle to be insulated, or in removing the cover 100 from the bottle, a zipper 106 is incorporated along one side or edge of the cover 100, as shown in FIGS. 1, 3, and 5. The zipper 106 is preferably manufactured from a moisture resistant material such as thermoplastic or polycarbonate. Such materials are resistant to rust that could occur with exposure to moisture and sweat. In an alternative embodiment, connecting elements other than a zipper could be used with substantially equal utility. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 8, the cover 100 could be manufactured with slightly overlapping side flaps 70a, 70b that use a hook and loop textile material (such as Velcro™) to firmly attach one of the overlapping flaps 70a to the other 70b. Other connecting elements could include magnetic elements embedded within side flaps of the cover 100, or snap or button elements similarly embedded in side flaps 70a, 70b.

[0032] As also shown in FIG. 1, the inventive insulating cover 100 is designed to provide other utility features for use by athletes, including having a plurality of compartments or pockets to store or hold everyday items often taken into the gym or exercise area.

[0033] In the embodiment shown in FIGS. 1 through 6, a closeable pocket 102 is provided, which may be sized to fit a smart phone such as an iPhone or Android device. The pocket 102 may have a closeable flap with a releasable closure element 114. Examples of closure elements 114 include hook and loop fabric materials such as Velcro™, or magnets, snaps or buttons.

[0034] Other pockets, including as shown in FIGS. 1 and 3, pocket 108 may be incorporated into the insulating cover 100. As shown, pocket 108 may be sized to snugly hold a security card (such as a door key used at a hotel or for entry into an exercise area), a credit card, or even cash. Because the cover 100 is manufactured from a neoprene/waterproof material, and the pocket 108 is located on the outside of the cover 100, any paper, including cash that is stored in the pocket 108 or the closeable pocket 102 would be protected from moisture or water. The pocket 108 may be a solid material, as shown in FIG. 1, or alternatively the pocket could be formed from an elastic mesh material. Using such

a mesh material would allow the user to see what item or items are held in the pocket 108.

[0035] In a further refined embodiment of the design of one or more pockets 108 incorporated into the insulating cover 100, the pocket may be formed such that an outer section 150 may fold away from the cover exterior, as shown in FIG. 9, and thereby provide an additional location to store the athlete's identification information such as the owner's name, and relevant contact information, or store a driver's license, or other form of identification. In another embodiment, also shown in FIG. 9, the fold away section 150 of a pocket 108 may have an internal clear pocket 151 so that the athlete's identification information is readily viewable when the fold away pocket 150 is opened. While FIGS. 1 and 3 shows pocket 102 having a closeable flap, such a top flap may be readily incorporated into any or all of the other pockets, including pocket 108 as shown in FIG. 5.

[0036] As also shown in FIGS. 1 and 3, the insulating cover 100 may have a releasable clip or latch element 104 that can be used to engage and hold a set of keys, a key chain or fob, a single key, or even a small towel.

[0037] In the FIGS. 1 and 3 embodiments, an elastic strap 110 may also be included on the outside of the insulating cover 100 and just below the releasable clip 104 to hold the keys in place. Including such an elastic strap to hold the keys from swinging around helps to keep the keys from possibly scratching or tearing the insulating cover 100. Moreover, the elastic strap 110 can also hold many other items that would fit under the strap 110, including a writing utensil such as a pen or pencil, or a brush or comb, or even various tools that may be useful in the gym, such as an Allen-wrench or a pin for a Universal weight machine.

[0038] While each of these features and components are shown incorporated along one side of the cover 100, each such component could be placed along any side of the cover 100, or indeed on more than one side of the cover 100. For example, as shown in FIG. 4, pocket 108 with a fold away section or layer 150 may be placed on a different side than the other pockets 102.

[0039] FIG. 2 shows the reverse or back side of an embodiment of the insulating cover 100. As depicted in FIG. 2, the cover 100 may have a slot, cutout, or set of slits within the cover 100 to allow ready access to a handle that is typically formed in a gallon or half-gallon size water container. The handle slot 202 shown has two slits that allows the athlete to grasp the handle of the water container, yet with the handle slot 202 being fully enclosed, with just two slits used, the insulating cover 100 provides essentially complete coverage of the water cover 100 to maintain maximum insulating performance.

[0040] In another embodiment, not shown, the cover 100 may be manufactured with a cutout to allow the water container handle to be more fully exposed and be readily grasped. With such a cutout, the athlete may also be able to see a segment of the container and to determine the level of fluid within the container.

[0041] As also shown in FIGS. 2 and 4, the insulating cover 100 may include certain design indicia 204 or markings that allow the athlete to readily identify her or his fluid container over those of other athletes. The design indicia 204 could be a company logo or brand, a team logo or design, a club's logo or brand, or even the athlete's name, or any form of advertising or marketing. The options for design indicia 204 are essentially limitless.

[0042] While various design indicia 204 may be used to distinguish a cover 100 from other covers, as shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, the insulating cover 100 may also be manufactured in most any color or indeed in any combination of colors. Again the options for color variations and designs is essentially limitless.

[0043] In addition to including design indicia 204 on the exterior of the cover 100, the cover could also be manufactured with a clear or see-through section 130, as shown in FIG. 10A, so that, similar to the above described cutout, the see-through section allows the athlete to readily see how much water or other fluid is in his or her container. As shown in FIG. 10A, this embodiment is distinct from having a cutout in the location of the container handle. In this configuration, the see-through section is not a cutout, but is fully incorporated into the cover 100, thereby allowing the user to view the container fluid contents. An alternative, but similar design that helps to maintain the insulating capability of the cover 100, could instead of a single see-through section, include a plurality of cut-outs (as shown in FIG. 10B) 130a, 130b, 130c, 130d (and so on) strategically placed along one or more sides to allow the user to readily observe the level of the fluid within the container.

[0044] As noted above, different embodiment colors, or combination of colors or designs may be used to customize or individualize the cover. While the embodiments shown in FIGS. 1 through 6 and 9 are sized to accommodate a gallon sized water or drink container, the inventive insulating cover 100 may also be sized or shaped to be used with smaller or larger drink containers. Such alternative cover sizes could be for a 1/2 gallon plastic container as shown in FIGS. 10A and 10B. Whatever the drink container shape or size, the insulating cover 100 could be readily manufactured to flexibly and snugly fit and insulate the drink container. Obviously there is a limit to having a bottle too small and not being able to include some or any of the additional features or components such as the closeable pocket 102 or the pocket 108.

[0045] While preferred embodiments of the inventive device and cover have been described and disclosed, in particular by reference to certain figures and exemplary embodiments relating to the insulating cover 100, such cover embodiments and designs are not to be construed as limiting the scope of application of the inventive devices or products. For example, as described, the cover 100 may be made in a different size to accommodate different size containers, or include alternative placement or use of a zipper 106 or other closure device. Moreover, alternative materials for the cover may be used to provide different outside design configurations that could be effective to distinguish different covers 100 and drink containers. All such alternate embodiments are believed to be within the scope of the inventive design and below claims.

[0046] It will be recognized by those skilled in the art that other modifications, substitutions, and/or other applications are possible and all such modifications, substitutions and applications are within the true scope and spirit of the present invention. It is likewise understood that the above disclosure and attached claims are intended to cover all such modifications, substitutions, and/or applications.

What we claim as our invention is:

1. An insulating cover for a fluid or drink container, comprising:
 - a flexible cover shaped to substantially envelope a fluid or drink container;

at least one pocket formed on the exterior of said cover, wherein at least one of said at least one pocket is sized to hold a wireless device;

a closure element incorporated along one side of said cover to allow for easy placement and removal of the fluid container from within said cover; and

at least one opening incorporated along one side of said cover to allow access to a handle formed on the fluid container;

wherein said cover is manufactured from an insulating material thereby providing thermal insulation characteristics to maintain the temperature of any fluid contained within said fluid container.

2. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said cover is manufactured from a plurality of laminates thereby providing enhanced thermal insulation capability and improved protection from inadvertent impacts.

3. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, further comprising a semi-rigid bottom section providing enhanced impact protection to said fluid container.

4. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, further comprising at least one see-through section incorporated within said flexible cover to allow a user to see any contents of said fluid container.

5. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said closure element is a zipper.

6. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said closure element are overlapping flaps using hook and loop material to attach said overlapping flaps to each other.

7. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said closure element are overlapping flaps using magnets to attach said overlapping flaps to each other.

8. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said at least one opening incorporated along one side of said cover is at least one slit formed in said cover.

9. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said at least one opening incorporated along one side of said cover is a full opening allowing direct access to a handle formed on the fluid container.

10. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said insulating material is neoprene.

11. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 10, wherein said neoprene material is approximately at least 2 millimeters thick.

12. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 10, wherein said neoprene material is approximately between 2 millimeters and 5 millimeters thick.

13. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said insulating material is an insulating foam material.

14. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 13, wherein said insulating material is a closed-cell insulating foam material.

15. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, further comprising a latch element onto which clip at least one of a key chain, key, key chain fob, or towel.

16. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said one of said at least one pocket formed on the exterior of said cover is sized to fit a set of keys.

17. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said one of said at least one pocket formed on the exterior of said cover is sized to fit at least one of a plurality of key cards or credit cards.

18. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, wherein said one of said at least one pocket is formed on the exterior of said cover by an elastic mesh material.

19. The insulating cover for a fluid container, as provided in claim 1, further comprising a flap section on the exterior of at least one of said at least one pocket to hold identification information.

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