DEVICE, SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR ARRANGING JEWELRY

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ABSTRACT

A device, system and method for layering individual jewelry articles in a desired order and configuration around a wearer and maintaining the jewelry articles in a desired layered arrangement about the wearer.
DEVICE, SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR ARRANGING JEWELRY

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/091,933 filed Dec. 15, 2014, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Layered or compound articles of jewelry (e.g., necklaces) have become highly sought after as stylish and fashionable pieces of jewelry. In addition to their beauty and their appearance enhancing characteristics, layered jewelry are popular fashion statements capable of expressing subtle and complex messages that reflect the views, opinions, attitudes, culture, religion, or background of the wearer. They can also be selected and worn for purely ornamental or sentimental reasons.

[0003] With respect to layered necklaces in particular, in their typical form layered necklaces are conglomerations of multiple individual necklaces combined into a single unit that the wearer can don as he or she would a singular necklace. Typically, each necklace in the ready-made conglomerate has a specific length that differs from the lengths of the other necklaces in the conglomerate, such that the necklaces appear arranged in a layered or nested manner with the longest length necklace (as measured to include the length of its chain, if any) hanging at the bottom of the conglomerate and subsequent necklaces (including the lengths of their chains) getting progressively shorter from bottom to top.

[0004] Such ready-made or pre-assembled layered necklaces, however, suffer the disadvantage of their inability to be easily modified. It is difficult or impossible for the wearer to add necklaces to the conglomerate, remove necklaces from the conglomerate, replace necklaces, or change the order or lengths of the individual necklaces. These shortcomings stifle the wearer's creativity and ability to adjust and adapt a layered necklace for particular outfits, occasions, moods, or messages sought to be expressed.

[0005] A solution to the inadequacies of the typical pre-assembled layered necklace is for the wearer to don multiple necklaces from his or her own collection of individual necklaces. This allows the wearer to mix and match styles, lengths, colors, and so forth, to present different and unique looks depending on the particular combination of necklaces chosen. However, make-shift or improvised layered necklaces derived from the wearer's own supply of singular necklaces are also problematic, as the necklaces chosen have not been designed to be worn together. This can result in necklaces being too long or too short to work with one another. Moreover, since the individual necklaces are loose and not coupled to one another, there is a tendency for them to tangle up or overlap one another in unappealing or otherwise undesirable ways, and for the necklaces to tarnish or become damaged from rubbing against each other during use.

[0006] Thus, there is a need for a device and improved method for wearing and arranging a plurality of individual necklaces into a desired layered or nested arrangement.

SUMMARY

[0007] The present disclosure is directed to a device, system and method for arranging articles of jewelry that overcome at least some of these challenges and drawbacks. Throughout this specification, the terms “clip” and “extender” will be used interchangeably with reference to the disclosed devices, systems, and methods.

[0008] In one aspect, a device for layering a plurality of jewelry articles is disclosed, the device having an open configuration and a closed configuration and comprising an upper member and a lower member pivotally attached to the upper member, the device further comprising a locking mechanism configured to lock the upper member and the lower member together when the device is in the closed configuration, the device further comprising at least one gripping member for holding one or more jewelry chains in place, the at least one gripping member disposed on at least one of the upper member or the lower member.

[0009] In another aspect, a jewelry system comprises: a plurality of chains; and a first chain layering device, the first chain layering device having an open configuration and a closed configuration and comprising an upper member and a lower member pivotally attached to the upper member, the first chain layering device further comprising a locking mechanism configured to lock the upper member and the lower member together when the first chain layering device is in the closed configuration, the first chain layering device further comprising at least one gripping member for holding the plurality of chains in place in a layered configuration, the at least one gripping member disposed on at least one of the upper member or the lower member.

[0010] In a further aspect, a method for layering a plurality of necklaces around a neck of a wearer, each of the plurality of necklaces comprising a chain comprises the steps of: positioning the plurality of necklaces around the neck; closing each of the plurality of necklaces; grasping each of the plurality of necklaces behind the neck at two positions on its chain, the two positions being selected such that the plurality of necklaces appears at a front of the wearer in a desired layered arrangement; sandwiching the two positions of each of the plurality of necklace chains in between gripping members of a clip situated behind the neck of the wearer; and closing and locking the clip such that the plurality of necklaces remain in place in the desired arrangement.

[0011] In still a further aspect, a method comprises placing a first necklace around a user's neck and closing the first necklace; placing the first necklace in two jewelry clips, one on either side of the user's neck, each of the jewelry clips sandwiching the first necklace between corresponding gripping members disposed on the jewelry clips; placing a second necklace having two free ends and being shorter than the first necklace in the two jewelry clips, each of the jewelry clips grasping a portion at or near an end of the second necklace between corresponding gripping members such that the second necklace hangs lower on a wearer's front than the first necklace.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a top, perspective view of an embodiment of a jewelry clip in accordance with the present disclosure, the jewelry clip being shown in an open configuration.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a right side view of the jewelry clip of FIG. 1, the jewelry clip being shown in a closed configuration.
FIG. 3 is a rear view of the jewelry clip of FIG. 1, the jewelry clip being shown in a closed configuration.

FIG. 4 shows the back of the neck of a user of the jewelry clip of FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 shows the front of a user of multiple of the jewelry clips of FIG. 1.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a jewelry clip in accordance with the present disclosure, the jewelry clip being in an open configuration.

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a further alternative embodiment of a jewelry clip in accordance with the present disclosure, the jewelry clip being in an open configuration.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Various embodiments are described herein in detail with reference to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals represent like parts and assemblies throughout the several views. Reference to various embodiments does not limit the scope of the appended claims. Additionally, any examples set forth in this specification are not intended to be limiting and merely set forth some of the many possible embodiments for the appended claims.

FIG. 1 is a top, perspective view of an embodiment of a jewelry clip 10 in accordance with the present disclosure, the jewelry clip 10 being shown in an open configuration. With reference to FIG. 1, the jewelry clip or extender 10 comprises an upper leg 12 and a lower leg 14. The upper leg 12 and the lower leg 14 are pivotally coupled to each other at the rear of the clip 10 via the hinge 16. A locking mechanism 18 is disposed at the front end of the clip 10. A first gripping member 20 is disposed on the upper side of the lower leg 14, and a second gripping member 22 is disposed on the lower side of the upper leg 12. According to this embodiment, the upper leg 12 has a convex upper surface 30, and the lower leg 14 has a convex lower surface. The convexity of the lower surface of the lower leg 14 is shown in profile in FIG. 1 and indicated by reference numeral 32.

The legs 12 and 14 of the jewelry clip or extender 10 can be made of any suitable material known in the art, including but not limited to a base metal or metal alloy, a precious metal, plastic, wood, glass, stone, and so forth.

The gripping members 20 and 22 can be made of any material suitable to keep the jewelry articles (e.g., necklace chains) in place on the gripping members 20, 22 when the clip 10 is closed. By way of example and without limitation, the gripping members 20 and 22 can be made of natural rubber, an elastomer, Teflon®, silicone, vinyl, foam rubber, and so forth. In one embodiment of the present disclosure, each gripping member 20, 22 is a single, continuous element situated within the border of the top face 25 of the lower leg 14 and the bottom face 27 of the upper leg 12, respectively. The thickness of the gripping members 20 and 22 is such that when the clip 10 is in a closed position, the gripping members contact each other lightly (so as not to damage the jewelry), but with sufficient force to keep necklace chains sandwiched therebetween in place by friction. In alternative examples, multiple-piece gripping members are used. In further alternative examples, a gripping member is placed on one but not both of the legs 12, 14 of the clip.

The gripping members 20, 22 are affixed to the legs 14, 12 (respectively) of the clip 10 through any suitable means, such as glue or other drying adhesive, hook and loop fasteners such as Velcro®, and so forth.

Due to the flexible, compressible, gripping nature of the material of the gripping members 20, 22, once the clip 10 is locked or otherwise secured with the necklace chains sandwiched between the clip’s legs, the chains are held in place by the frictional force generated from the pressure applied on the chains by the gripping elements. This prevents the necklaces from moving about or tangling in undesirable ways, and hinders or prevents tarnishing or damage that may otherwise be caused by the necklaces’ and/or their chains’ rubbing together.

FIG. 2 is a right side view of the jewelry clip 10 of FIG. 1, the jewelry clip 10 being shown in a closed configuration. The locking mechanism 18 can be any suitable mechanism known in the art, such as a spring-ring clasp, toggle clasp, lobster clasp, magnetic clasp or so forth. Once the user places the necklace chains in the clip 10 at the desired positions, the legs 12, 14 of the clip are brought together by means of the hinge 16 and the locking mechanism 18 is engaged to secure the necklace chains in place at the desired positions. The clip 10 can hold as many necklace chains as can fit along the length (as measured from the front 21 to the back 23) of the gripping members 20 and 22. It should be understood that, when a single clip 10 is used (rather than multiple clips, as discussed below; see FIGS. 4-5), since the clip 10 grasps each necklace chain at two positions on the chain, each chain fed through the clip 10 is sandwiched by a length of the gripping members 20 and 22 approximately equivalent to twice the width of that chain.

In one embodiment of the present disclosure, the locking mechanism 18 is made from the same material as the clip 10 and can be manufactured/cast integrally with the clip 10. Alternatively, the locking mechanism 18 can be affixed to the legs 12 and 14 after the clip 10 is manufactured, through any suitable means such as soldering, glue, or so forth.

FIG. 3 is a rear view of the jewelry clip 10 of FIG. 1, the jewelry clip being shown in a closed configuration. In this example, the upper surface 30 of the upper leg 12 and the bottom surface 32 of the lower leg 14 are convex. In alternative examples, these surfaces are flat or substantially flat, and parallel to each other when the clip 10 is in its closed configuration.

FIG. 4 shows the back of the neck of a user of the jewelry clip 10 of FIG. 1. The clip 10 is shown in closed configuration grasping a first necklace chain 80, a second necklace chain 82, and a third necklace chain 84. Each of the necklace chains 80, 82, and 84 is grasped by the clip 10 at two positions, resulting in slack from the chains lying below the clip in approximately loop or U-shaped formations as shown in FIG. 4. By adjusting the positions on the necklace chains grasped by the clip 10, the user can adjust the amount of slack from each chain that falls below the clip, which in turn affects the length of each necklace appearing on the front of the user. For each chain, the more slack taken up by the clip (i.e. the longer each loop of chain falls below the clip), the shorter that particular necklace appears on the front of the user. In this manner, the user can customize a layered or nested look for a plurality of necklaces.

FIG. 5 shows the front of a user of multiple of the jewelry clips 10 of FIG. 1. By using a pair of clips 10 as shown in FIG. 5, a longer necklace 92 lies above, and therefore appears shorter than, a shorter necklace 90. In this example, the shorter necklace 90 is not long enough to attach behind the wearer’s neck and also lie as low on the front of the wearer as shown in the figure. However, the ends of the chain of the
shorter necklace 90 are held in place by the pair of clips 10 on either side of the wearer’s neck, while the clips 10 themselves are held in place by the longer necklace 92, which is fed through the clips 10 and hangs in the normal fashion from the back of the wearer’s neck. Thus, it should be understood, in this configuration the chains of necklaces 90 and 92 are held at just one position along the chain (rather than two) by each clip 10, thereby freeing up more space in each clip 10 to hold additional necklace chains.

[0030] Alternatively or in addition, the appearance of the length of the necklace 92 can be further shortened relative to the appearance of the length of necklace 90 by feeding loops of slack of the chain of necklace 92 through one or more of the clips 10 in the manner described above with reference to FIG. 4.

[0031] Likewise, it should be understood that additional necklaces can be added to the configuration shown on FIG. 5, and fed through one or both of the clips 10 in accordance with the above disclosures to effect the appearance of a specific length of each of the additional necklaces at the front of the user relative to necklaces 90 and 92. For example, a third necklace that is longer than the necklace 90 and shorter than the necklace 92 can be donned to appear to hang between the necklaces 90 and 92 on the front of the user by feeding sufficient chain slack through each clip 10. By adjusting the slack through each clip, the exemplary third necklace can alternatively be positioned to appear to hang above the necklace 92 or below the necklace 90. Thus, by using multiple clips 10 at the same time, it will be appreciated that numerous arrangements of a multitude of necklaces can be achieved.

[0032] In a further embodiment of the present disclosure, more than two (e.g., three or four) clips 10 are used simultaneously to create the desired layered or nested look of a plurality of necklaces.

[0033] In further embodiments, multiple locking devices are employed to secure the clip.

[0034] In further embodiments, one or more locking devices are disposed on the clip in locations other than the front of the clip, such as the side of the clip.

[0035] In further embodiments of the present disclosure, the length of the clip 10 or the length of the gripping members 20, 22 (as measured from their front 21 to their rear 23) is smaller or greater depending on the number of necklaces and/or the thickness of necklace chains to be engaged by the clip 10. For example, the clip 10 can be long enough to grasp two necklace chains, or alternatively three, four, or five necklace chains, and so forth. Similarly, a clip of greater length would be suitable for engaging relatively thick necklace chains, and a clip of shorter length would be suitable for engaging relatively thin necklace chains.

[0036] One exemplary method of using the jewelry clip 10 of the present disclosure includes the steps of placing the necklaces sought to be layered around the neck and closing them, grasping each necklace chain at two positions behind the neck, the positions being selected such that the necklaces fall down the front of the user in the desired arrangement/configuration, sandwiching the chains in a clip 10 designed in accordance with the disclosures herein behind the neck (e.g., by sandwiching the chains between corresponding gripping members 20, 22 disposed on the clip 10), and closing and locking the clip 10 such that the necklaces remain in place in the desired arrangement.

[0037] In another exemplary method of using two of the jewelry clips 10 of the present disclosure, a first necklace 92 (FIG. 5) is placed around a user’s neck and closed. The first necklace 92 is placed in two jewelry clips 10, one on either side of the user’s neck, each of the jewelry clips 10 sandwiching the necklace between corresponding gripping members 20, 22 (FIG. 1) disposed on the jewelry clips 10. A second necklace 90 (FIG. 5) having two free ends and being shorter than the first necklace 92 is placed in the two jewelry clips 10, each of the jewelry clips 10 grasping a portion at or near an end of the second necklace between corresponding gripping members 20, 22 (FIG. 1). In some example methods, the positions on the second necklace 90 grasped by the jewelry clips 10 are selected such that the second necklace 90 hangs lower on the user’s front than the first necklace 92. In alternative example methods, the positions on the second necklace 90 grasped by the jewelry clips 10 are chosen such that the first necklace 92 hangs lower on the user’s front than the second necklace 90.

[0038] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a jewelry clip 200 in accordance with the present disclosure, the jewelry clip 200 being in an open configuration. The clip 200 includes an interior cavity 201 defined by an upper housing 202 and a lower housing 204 pivotally connected with a hinge 206. A recessed rim 208 about a portion of the perimeter of the lower housing 204 includes one or more locking elements 210. A recessed rim 208 is disposed to nest inside at least a portion of the rim 212 of the upper housing 202 when the hinge 206 is rotated such that the upper housing 202 and the lower housing 204 come together to close the clip 200. The one or more locking elements 210 (e.g., rubber protrusions) engage the upper housing 202 (e.g., in a frictional fashion) when the clip 200 is in a closed configuration to help prevent the clip 200 from opening undesirably. Openings 214 disposed on opposing sides 216, 218 of the upper housing 202, with corresponding openings 214 disposed on opposing sides 220, 222 of the lower housing 204, provide openings to the interior cavity 201 of the clip 200 when the clip 200 is in a closed configuration through which one or more jewelry chains can be placed in the manner described above. Gripping members 226, 228 are provided on the interior of the upper housing 202 and the interior of the lower housing 204, respectively, to frictionally sandwich the one or more necklace chains therebetween when the clip 200 is in a closed configuration to provide the desired layered effect as described above. It should likewise be appreciated that more than one clip 200 can be used simultaneously as described above in connection with FIG. 5.

[0039] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a further alternative embodiment of a jewelry clip 300 in accordance with the present disclosure, the jewelry clip 300 being in an open configuration. The clip 300 includes an interior 301 defined by an upper member 302 and a lower member 304 pivotally connected with a hinge 306. A locking element 310 (e.g., a flexible or spring loaded notched projection) is disposed on the lower member 304 and configured to releasably engage the upper member 302 (e.g., by engaging a corresponding groove or recess in the upper member 302 in a frictional fashion) when the clip 300 is in a closed configuration to help prevent the clip 300 from opening undesirably. Openings 314 disposed on opposing sides 316, 318 of the upper member 302, with corresponding openings 314 disposed on opposing sides 320, 322 of the lower member 304, provide openings to the interior 301 of the clip 300 when the clip 300 is in a closed configuration through which one or more jewelry chains can be placed in the manner described above. Gripping members
326, 328 are provided on the interior of the upper member 302 and the interior of the lower member 304, respectively, to frictionally sandwich the one or more necklace chains therebetween when the clip 300 is in a closed configuration to provide the desired layered effect as described above. It should likewise be appreciated that more than one clip 300 can be used simultaneously as described above in connection with FIG. 5.

The various embodiments described above are provided by way of illustration only and should not be construed to limit the claims attached hereto. Those skilled in the art will readily recognize various modifications and changes that may be made without following the example embodiments and applications illustrated and described herein, and without departing from the true spirit and scope of the following claims.

1. A device for layering a plurality of jewelry articles, the device having an open configuration and a closed configuration and comprising an upper member and a lower member pivotally attached to the upper member, the device further comprising a locking mechanism configured to lock the upper member and the lower member together when the device is in the closed configuration, the device further comprising at least one gripping member for holding one or more jewelry chains in place, the at least one gripping member disposed on at least one of the upper member or the lower member.

2. The device as in claim 1 further comprising a first gripping member on an upper side of the bottom member, and a second gripping member on a lower side of the upper member, the first and second gripping members configured to sandwich a plurality of necklace chains therebetween when the device is in the closed configuration.

3. A device as in claim 2, wherein each of the first gripping member and the second gripping member has a length sufficient to sandwich at least two necklace chains therebetween.

4. A jewelry system comprising:
   a plurality of chains; and
   a first chain layering device, the first chain layering device having an open configuration and a closed configuration and comprising an upper member and a lower member pivotally attached to the upper member, the first chain layering device further comprising a locking mechanism configured to lock the upper member and the lower member together when the first chain layering device is in the closed configuration, the first chain layering device further comprising at least one gripping member for holding the plurality of chains in place in a layered configuration, the at least one gripping member disposed on at least one of the upper member or the lower member.

5. The system as in claim 4, further comprising a first gripping member on an upper side of the bottom member, and a second gripping member on a lower side of the upper member, the first and second gripping members configured to sandwich the plurality of chains therebetween when the device is in the closed configuration.

6. The system as in claim 5, wherein each of the first gripping member and the second gripping member has a length sufficient to sandwich at least two necklace chains therebetween.

7. The system as in claim 4, further comprising a second chain layering device, the second chain layering device having an open configuration and a closed configuration and comprising an upper member and a lower member pivotally attached to the upper member, the second chain layering device further comprising a locking mechanism configured to lock the upper member and the lower member together when the second chain layering device is in the closed configuration, the second chain layering device further comprising at least one gripping member for holding the plurality of chains in place in a layered configuration, the at least one gripping member disposed on at least one of the upper member or the lower member.

8. The system as in claim 7, further comprising a first gripping member on an upper side of the bottom member of each of the first and second chain layering devices, and a second gripping member on a lower side of the upper member of each of the first and second chain layering devices, the first and second gripping members configured to sandwich the plurality of chains therebetween when the first and second chain layering devices are in the closed configuration.

9. The system as in claim 8, wherein each of the first gripping member and the second gripping member of each of the first chain layering device and the second chain layering devices has a length sufficient to sandwich at least two necklace chains therebetween.

10. The system as in claim 7, wherein each of the plurality of chains is a necklace, wherein a first of the plurality of chains is shorter than a second of the plurality of chains, and wherein the first of the plurality of chains hangs lower down a front of a wearer of the system than the second of the plurality of chains when the system is worn by the wearer and the first and second chains are sandwiched in the first and second chain layering devices.

11. The system as in claim 4, wherein each of the plurality of chains is held in place by the first chain layering device in two positions on the chain, such that a U-shaped portion of each of the plurality of chains extends below the first chain layering device on a wearer of the system.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein at least two of the plurality of chains have different lengths.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein at least two the U-shaped portions have different lengths.

14. A method for layering a plurality of necklaces around a neck of a wearer, each of the plurality of necklaces comprising a chain, the method comprising the steps of:
   a. placing the plurality of necklaces around the neck;
   b. closing each of the plurality of necklaces;
   c. grasping each of the plurality of necklaces behind the neck at two positions on its chain, the two positions being selected such that the plurality of necklaces appears at a front of the wearer in a desired layered arrangement;
   d. sandwiching the two positions of each of the plurality of necklace chains in between gripping members of a clip situated behind the neck of the wearer; and
   e. closing and locking the clip such that the plurality of necklaces remain in place in the desired arrangement.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the clip has an open configuration and a closed configuration, wherein the clip comprises an upper member and a lower member pivotally attached to the upper member, the clip further comprising a locking mechanism configured to lock the upper member and the lower member together when the device is in the closed configuration, and wherein a first of the gripping members is
disposed on an upper side of the bottom member and a second of the gripping members is disposed on a lower side of the upper member.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein each of the first of the gripping members and the second of the gripping members has a length sufficient to sandwich at least two necklace chains therebetween.

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