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Free standing ballet bar exercise device

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(71) Applicant(s)
Fluidity Enterprises, Inc.

(72) Inventor(s)
Kwo, Jennie, Pedraza, Luis, Weiss, Roger, Podoloff, Robert

(74) Agent/Attorney
Davies Collison Cave, 1 Nicholson Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3000

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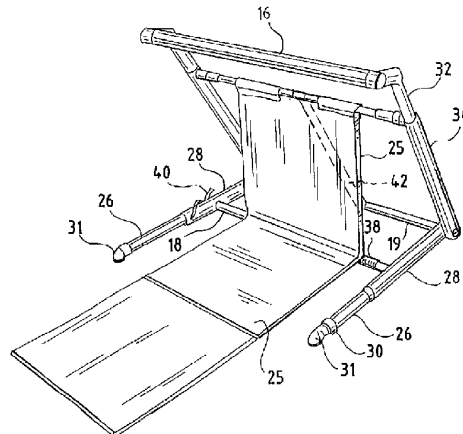
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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): FLUIDITY ENTERPRISES, INC. [US/US]; 410 East 78th Street, Apt. PH-C, New York, New York 10021 (US).
- (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): WEISS, Roger [US/US]; 10 Mary Way, Foxboro, Massachusetts 02035 (US). KWO, Jennie [CA/US]; 32 Kelly Road, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 (US). PODOLOFF, Robert

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(54) Title: FREE STANDING BALLET BAR EXERCISE DEVICE



(57) Abstract: A free standing, height adjustable ballet bar exercise device (10) is provided. The device (10) comprises a pair of legs (12), telescoping support arms (14) pivotally attached to the legs (12) and supporting a horizontal ballet bar (16) disposed between the support arms (14), a lower cross bar (18) connecting the legs (12) intermediate their ends, an upper cross bar (20) connecting the support arms (14), a backboard (22) pivotally attached to the upper cross bar (20) and releasably attached to the lower cross bar (18), and a floor board (24) hingedly attached to the bottom edge of the backboard (22) and adapted to lay flat on a floor to support the weight of the user. Preferably the backboard (22) and floor board (24) are covered by soft mats (25).

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FREE STANDING BALLET BAR EXERCISE DEVICE

Field Of The Invention

This patent relates to an exercise device. More particularly, this patent relates to a
5 free standing ballet bar exercise device that can be collapsed for easy transport and storage.

Background of the Invention

Conventional ballet bars usually are mounted to walls, and so are limited to rooms
in which a bar can be mounted to a wall. For home users of exercise bars this limits the
choice of rooms in which to exercise.

10 Thus it is desirable to provide an exercise bar that is free standing.

It is also desirable to provide a free standing exercise bar that is easy to set up and
can be collapsed for easy transport and storage, for example in a closet or under a bed.

It is further desirable to provide an exercise bar that can be raised or lower to a
desired height.

15

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the present invention, there is provided a free standing ballet bar
exercise device comprising:

20 a pair of legs, each leg having a proximal end and a distal end disposed away from
the proximal end;

support arms pivotally attached to the legs at the legs' distal ends;

a horizontal exercise bar mounted between the support arms;

a first lower cross bar connecting the legs intermediate their ends;

25 an upper cross bar connecting the support arms; and

a backboard attached to the upper cross bar and attached to the first lower cross bar
to support the exercise bar in a free standing position.

One embodiment of the present invention is a free standing ballet bar exercise
device that can be collapsed for easy transport and storage. In a preferred embodiment the
30 device comprises a pair of legs and a pair of support arms pivotally attached to the legs at
the legs' distal ends, an exercise bar mounted between the support arms at a height

user's weight and any downward force applied to the floor board maintains the ballet bar in position during use, even when the exercise bar is subjected to an upward force by the user.

The unit is easy to set up and can be folded into a relatively flat, compact shape for convenient shipping and storage.

THE DRAWINGS

Embodiments of the present invention are hereinafter described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

5 Figure 1 is a perspective view of a free standing ballet bar exercise device according to the present invention.

Figure 2 is another perspective view of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 1.

10 Figure 3 is a close up perspective view in partial section of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 1.

Figure 3 A is a cross-sectional view taken along line 3A-3A of Figure 3.

Figure 4 is a close up view of the left side spring loaded knob of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 1.

15 Figure 5 is a close up view of the right side spring loaded knob of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 1, shown as it is being released by a user.

Figure 6 is a close up view of the right side spring loaded knob of Figure 5 after release.

Figure 7 is a perspective view in partial section of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 1 with the mats removed.

20 Figure 8 is a close up view of the left side leg of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 1.

Figure 9 is a close up view of the left side leg of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 1 shown partially extended.

25 Figure 10 is a close up view of the right side spring loaded handle of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 1.

Figure 11 is a close up view of the right side spring loaded handle of Figure 10 shown being refracted by a user.

Figure 12 is a perspective view of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of

Figure 1 shown prior to being collapsed by a user and with mats removed.

Figure 13 is a perspective view of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 12 shown partially collapsed.

Figure 14 is a perspective view of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 12 shown completely collapsed but before the straps are fastened.

Figure 15 is a close up view of the right side leg and support arm of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 14 shown with leg straps secured.

Figure 16 is a perspective view of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 12 shown completely collapsed and with the retaining strap secured.

Figure 17 is a close up view of the left side wheel of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 16.

Figure 18 is a perspective view of the free standing ballet bar exercise device of Figure 16 shown balanced on its wheels.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Turning to the drawings, there is shown in Figure 1 a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a free standing ballet bar exercise device 10. The device 10 comprises a pair of telescoping legs 12, each leg 12 having a proximal end which includes an optional rubber stabilizing foot 31 and a distal end 15 disposed away from the proximal end, telescoping support arms 14 pivotally attached to the legs 12 at the legs' distal ends 15, a height adjustable horizontal exercise bar 16 mounted between the support arms 14, a first lower cross bar 18 connecting the legs 12 intermediate their ends, a second lower cross bar 19 connecting the legs 12 at their distal ends 15, an upper cross bar 20 connecting the support arms 14, a backboard 22 pivotally attached to the upper cross bar 20 and releasably attached to the first lower cross bar 18, and a floor board 24 hingedly attached to the backboard 22. Preferably the backboard 22 and floor board 24 are covered by soft mats 25 as shown in Figure 2.

Each leg 12 comprises an inner leg member 26 that slides within a sleeve or outer leg member 28. Detents 30 attached to the outer leg members 28 can be used to lock the inner leg member 26 in an extended position. To collapse the leg 12, the user pushes the inner leg member 26 inside the outer leg member 28. This releases the detent and the inner leg member 26 can be retracted inside the outer leg member 28. Feet 31 with rubber pads may be attached to the proximal ends of the inner leg members 26 for better stability.

Similarly, each support arm 14 comprises an inner arm member 32 that slides within a sleeve or outer arm member 34. The exercise bar 16 is mounted between the upper ends of the inner arm members 32. Preferably, the exercise bar 16 is inserted through openings in the support arms 14 and held in place by set screws. The height of the exercise bar 16 can be adjusted by sliding the inner arm members 32 within the outer arm members 34 and locking the inner arm members 32 into the desired position. As best

shown in Figures 4-6, each inner arm member 32 is locked into position by means of a spring loaded knob 36 mounted at either end of the upper cross bar 20 adjacent the outer arm members 34. To adjust the height of the exercise bar 16, the spring loaded knobs 36 are retracted (pulled away from the support arms 14), which allows the inner arm members 32 to slide freely within the outer arm members 34. The exercise bar 16 can then be adjusted to the desired height. When the bar 16 is at the desired height the spring loaded knobs 36 are engaged as shown in Figure 5. Preferably, the inner arm members 32 are angled toward the user as shown in the figures to better position the bar 16 over the floor board 24.

As perhaps best shown in Figures 3, 3A, 10 and 11, the floor board 24 is joined to the bottom edge of the backboard 22 by metal hinges 46 and arcuate connecting member 48. The backboard 22 is pivotally attached to the upper cross bar 20 and therefore indirectly to the exercise bar 16. The arcuate connecting member 48, and thus the backboard 22 and floor board 24, mates with the first lower cross bar 18 and is held or locked in place by a spring loaded cammed handle 38 (Figure 10). To release the backboard 22 and floor board 24 from the first lower cross bar 18, the spring loaded handle 38 must be retracted as shown in Figure 11. The floor board 24 may include more than one board hingedly connected together as shown in Figures 1 and 2 for a larger exercise surface.

Figure 7 is another close up view of the ballet bar exercise device 10, and Figures 8 and 9 are close up views of one of the telescoping legs 12. An optional leg strap 40 may be connected to the outer member 28 of each leg 12 and used to secure the unit 10 when it is folded, as explained in more detail below.

To set up the unit 10, the user starts with the unit 10 lying on the floor with the rear surface of the backboard 22 facing up as shown in Figure 16. First, leg straps 40 are undone. The user then lifts up on the wooden exercise bar 16 to unfold the unit 10. After

unfolding the unit 10, the backboard 22 is locked into a vertical position by attaching it to the lower cross bar 18 via the hinges 46 and ensuring that the spring loaded handle 38 locks in place over the hinge 46. The floor board 24 should lay flat against the floor. The telescoping legs 12 can be fully extended for greater stability. The exercise bar 16 can be adjusted to the desired height by retracting the spring loaded knobs 36 mounted at each end of the upper cross bar 20 adjacent the support arms 14 and then pulling up on the bar 16. Before using the device 10 the user should make sure the spring loaded knobs 36 are locked into position.

To use the exercise device 10, the user may stand, kneel, sit or otherwise rest on the floor board 24 and stretch or perform exercises using the exercise bar 16. Because the floor board 24 is attached to the backboard 22 and indirectly to the exercise bar 16, the user's weight and any downward force applied to the floor board 24 maintains the device 10 in position during use, even when lifting up on the exercise bar 16.

The unit 10 can be folded into a relatively flat, compact shape for convenient shipping and storage. To fold the unit 10, the legs 12 are first collapsed telescopically. Next, the floor board 22 and backboard 24 are unsnapped from the lower cross bar 18 after retracting the spring loaded cammed handle 38. With the boards 22, 24 disconnected from the first lower cross bar 18, the boards 22, 24 can be swung rearward by pivoting the boards 22, 24 around the upper cross bar 20 until the backboard 22 is approximately aligned with the support arms 14 as shown in Figure 12. Next, as shown in Figures 12 and 13, the user can grab the exercise bar 16 and lower the support arms 14 until they are aligned with the legs 12.

Figure 14 is a perspective view of the free standing ballet bar exercise device 10 after the arms 14 have been lowered. In this position, the user may secure the arms and legs together with the leg straps 40. Figure 15 is a close up view of the right side leg 12 and support arm 14 shown strapped together. The inner leg members 26 may be

collapsed inside the outer leg members 28.

As shown in Figure 16, a nylon retaining strap 42 is permanently attached to the second lower cross bar 19 and the upper cross bar 20. This strap holds the boards 22, 24 in place when the unit is being transported.

5 The folded unit 10 shown in Figures 16-18 has a depth of only about six inches and is light enough to be easily carried by one person. Optional wheels 44 attached to the ends of the legs 12 where the legs 12 are connected to the second lower cross bar 19 allow the unit 10 to be rolled from place to place. The folded unit 10 can be stored in a small area, such as in a closet or under a bed.

10 Preferably, the exercise bar 16 is made of wood, the boards 22, 24 are made of plywood, and the legs 12 and arms 14 are made of metal or plastic. The mats 25 that cover the boards 22, 24 may be made of any suitable cushioned material.

15 Other modifications and alternative embodiments of the invention are contemplated which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the foregoing teachings and appended claims. It is intended that the claims cover all such modifications that fall within their scope.

20 Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

25 The reference in this specification to any prior publication (or information derived from it), or to any matter which is known, is not, and should not be taken as an acknowledgment or admission or any form of suggestion that that prior publication (or information derived from it) or known matter forms part of the common general knowledge in the field of endeavour to which this specification relates.

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THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A free standing ballet bar exercise device comprising:
a pair of legs, each leg having a proximal end and a distal end disposed away from
5 the proximal end;
support arms pivotally attached to the legs at the legs' distal ends;
a horizontal exercise bar mounted between the support arms;
a first lower cross bar connecting the legs intermediate their ends;
an upper cross bar connecting the support arms; and
10 a backboard attached to the upper cross bar and attached to the first lower cross bar
to support the exercise bar in a free standing position.
2. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 1 further comprising:
a floor board hingedly attached to the backboard and adapted to lay flat on a floor
15 for supporting the weight of a user.
3. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 2 further comprising:
a second lower cross bar connecting the legs at their distal ends.
- 20 4. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 3 wherein the support arms are
telescopic to enable the height of the ballet bar to be adjusted.
5. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 4 wherein the legs
telescopically extend to enhance the stability of the device.
25
6. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 4 further comprising a
cushioned mat covering the floor board.
7. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 4 further comprising spring
30 loaded knobs mounted at either end of the upper cross bar adjacent the support arms, the
spring loaded knobs adapted to lock the support arms at a desired height.

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8. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 4 wherein the floor board is joined to the bottom edge of the backboard by at least one hinge.
- 5 9. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 8 wherein the at least one hinge is releasably attached via a snap fit onto the first lower cross bar.
- 10 10. The free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 9 wherein the at least one hinge is locked into place to the first lower cross bar by a spring loaded cammed handle.
11. A method of using the free standing ballet bar exercise device of claim 4, comprising the steps of:
 - 15 placing at least a portion of the user's body on the floor board to apply a downward force on the floor board and thus stabilize the device; and
 - using the exercise bar to stretch or perform exercises.
12. A device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
- 20 13. A method substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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FIG. 1

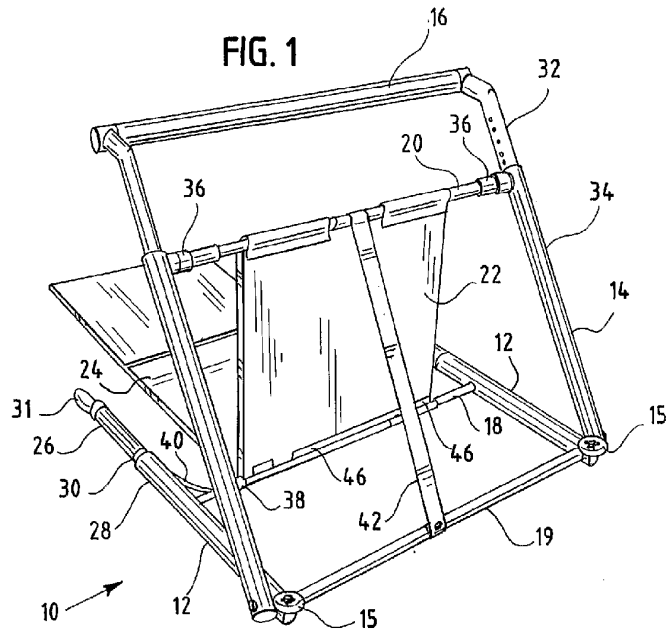
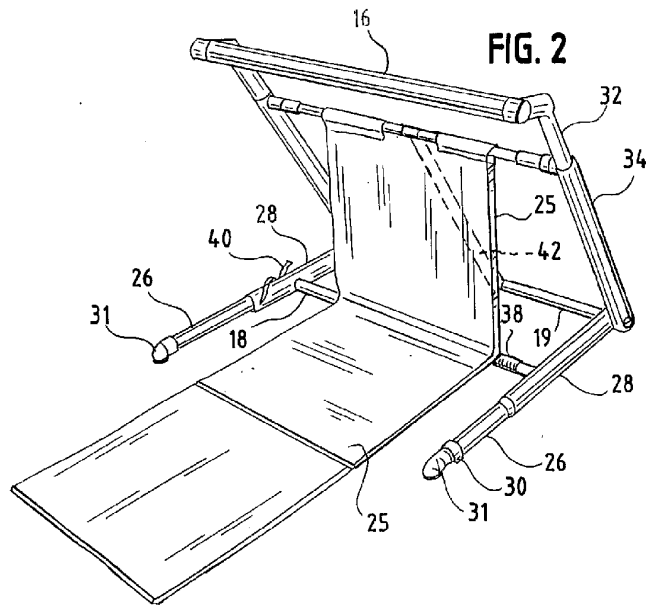
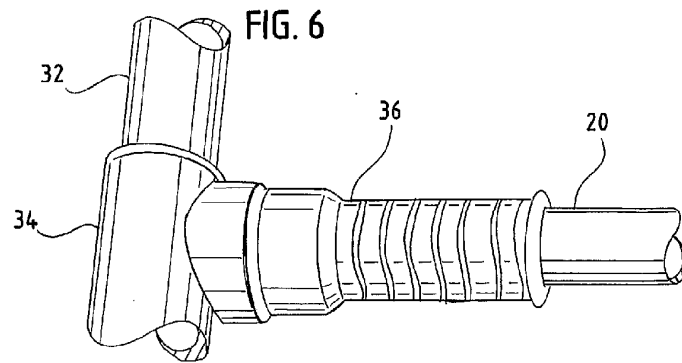
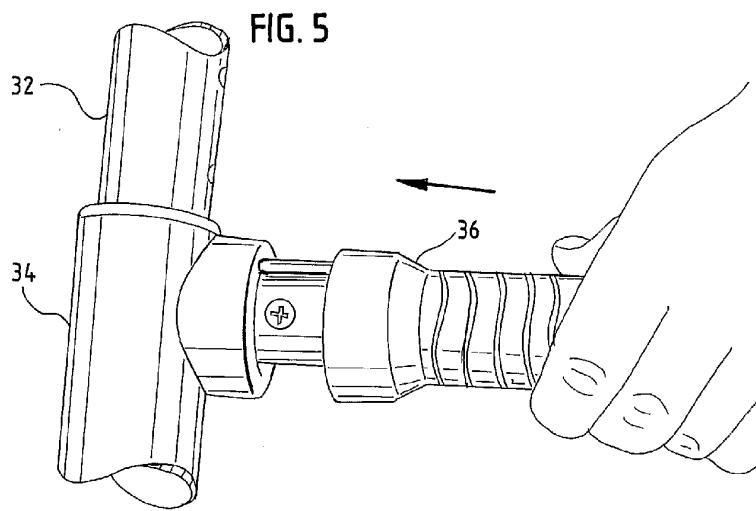
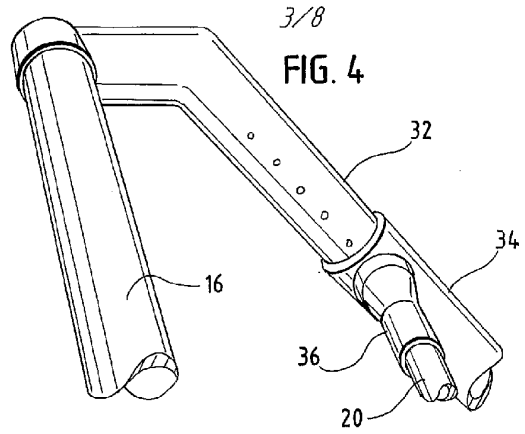
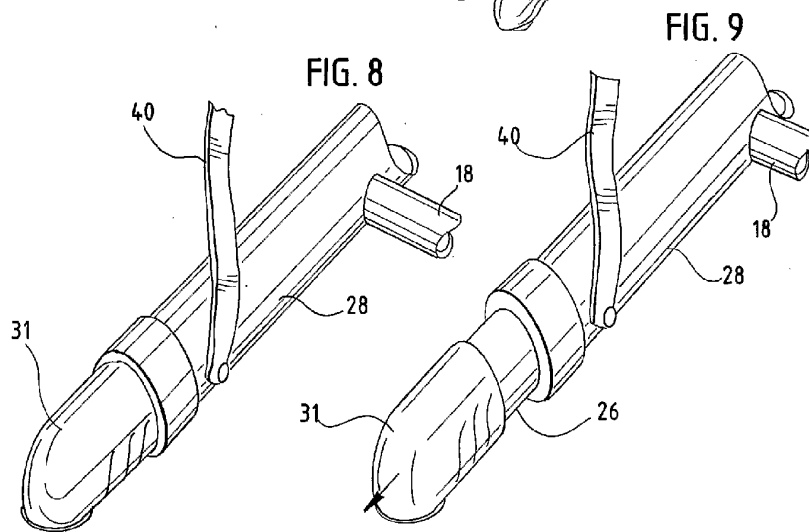
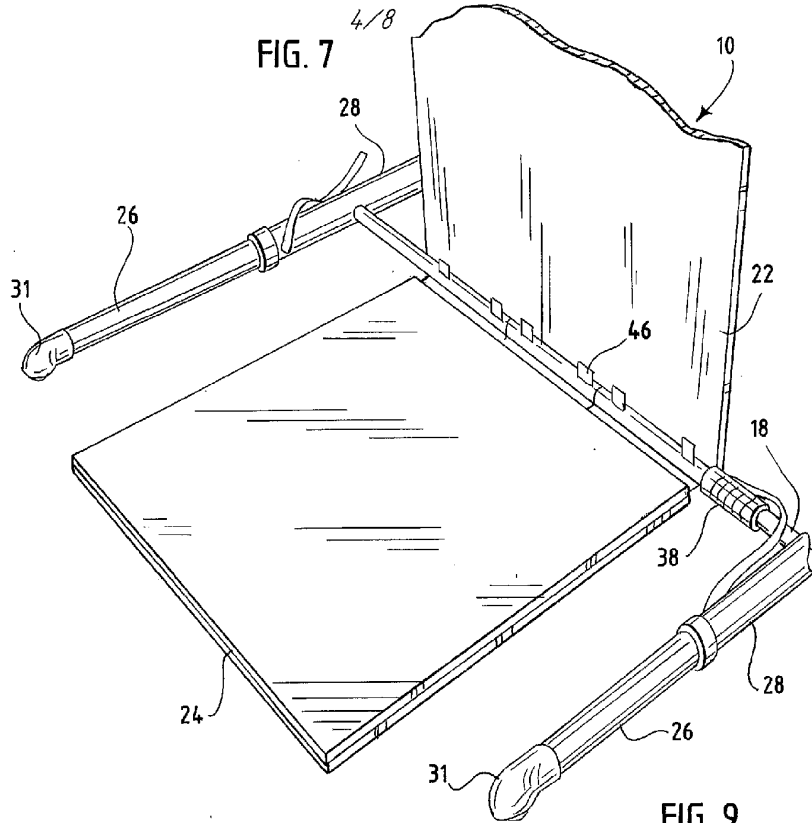


FIG. 2







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FIG. 10

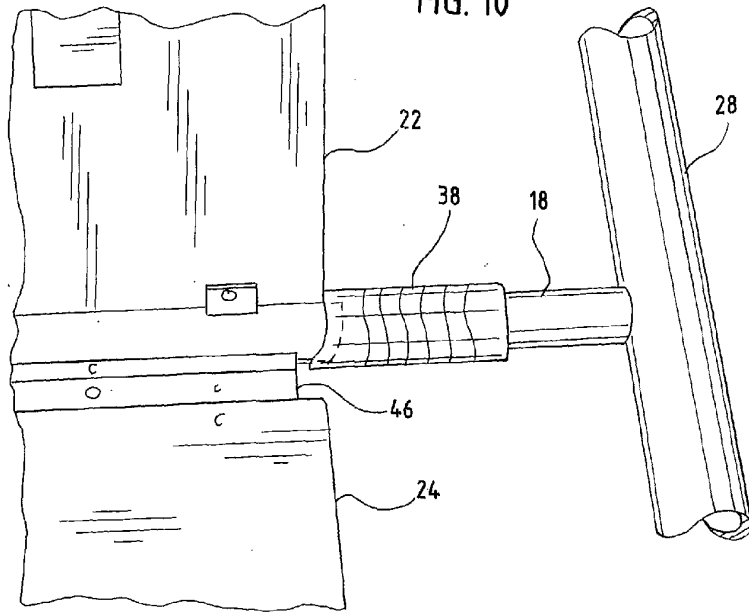
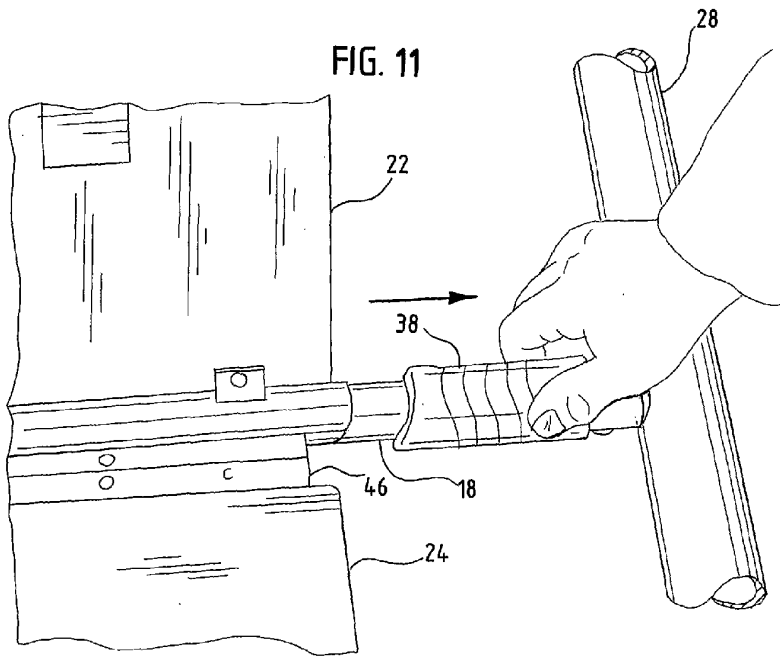


FIG. 11



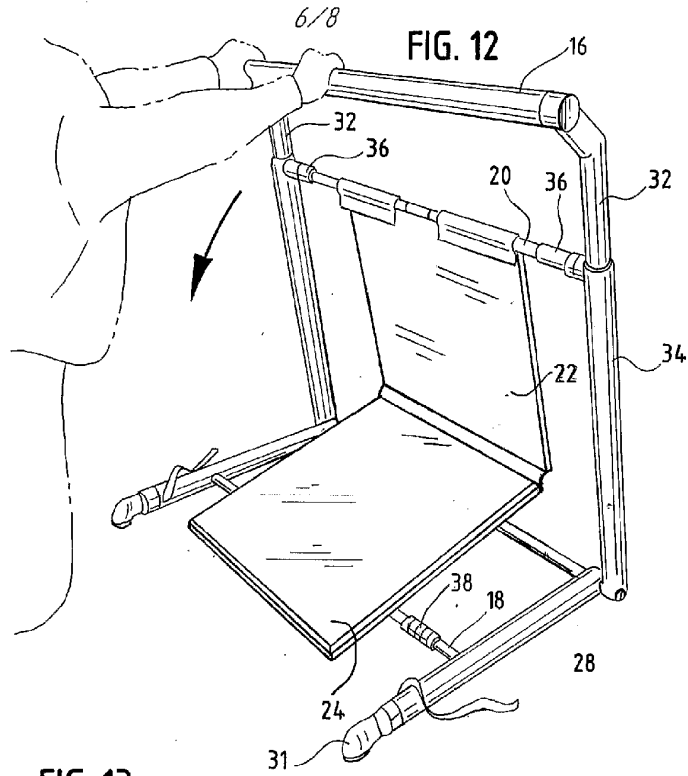
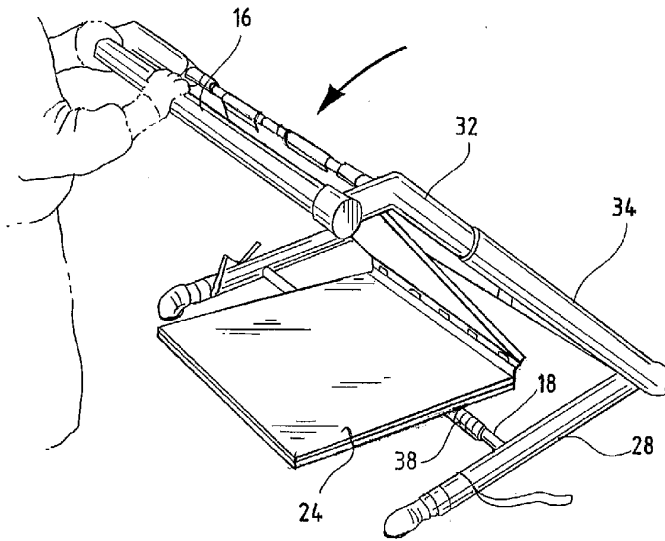


FIG. 13



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FIG. 14

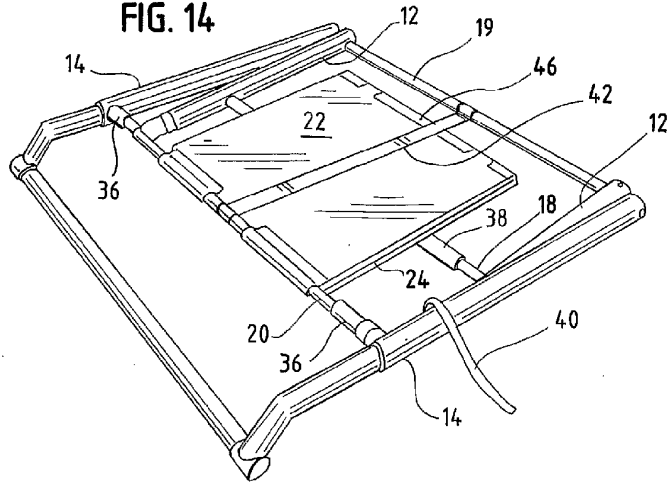
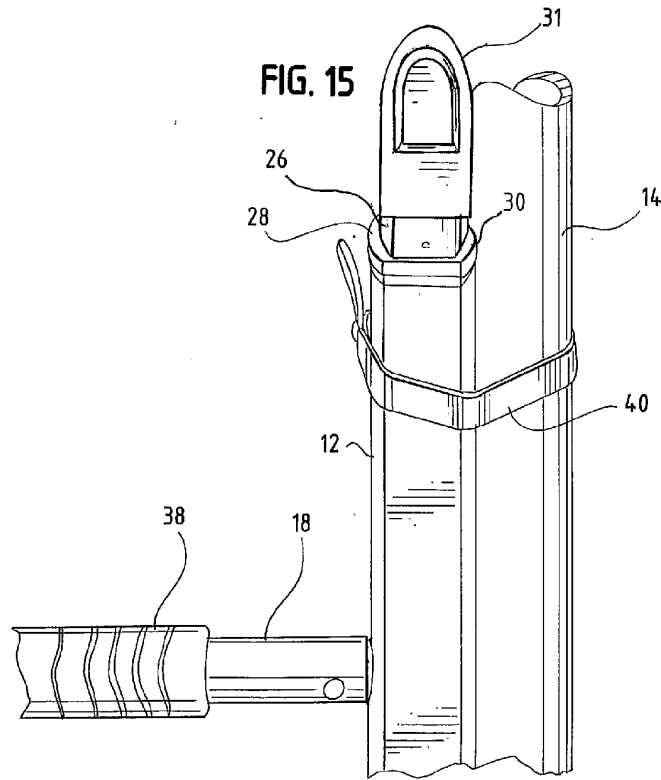


FIG. 15



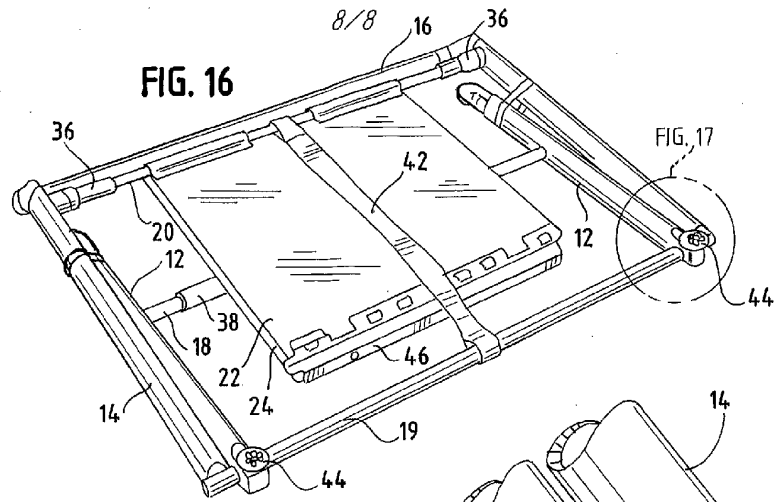


FIG. 17

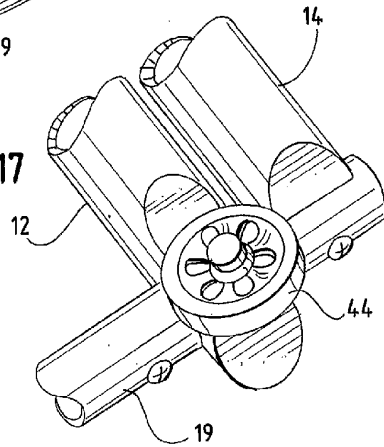


FIG. 18

