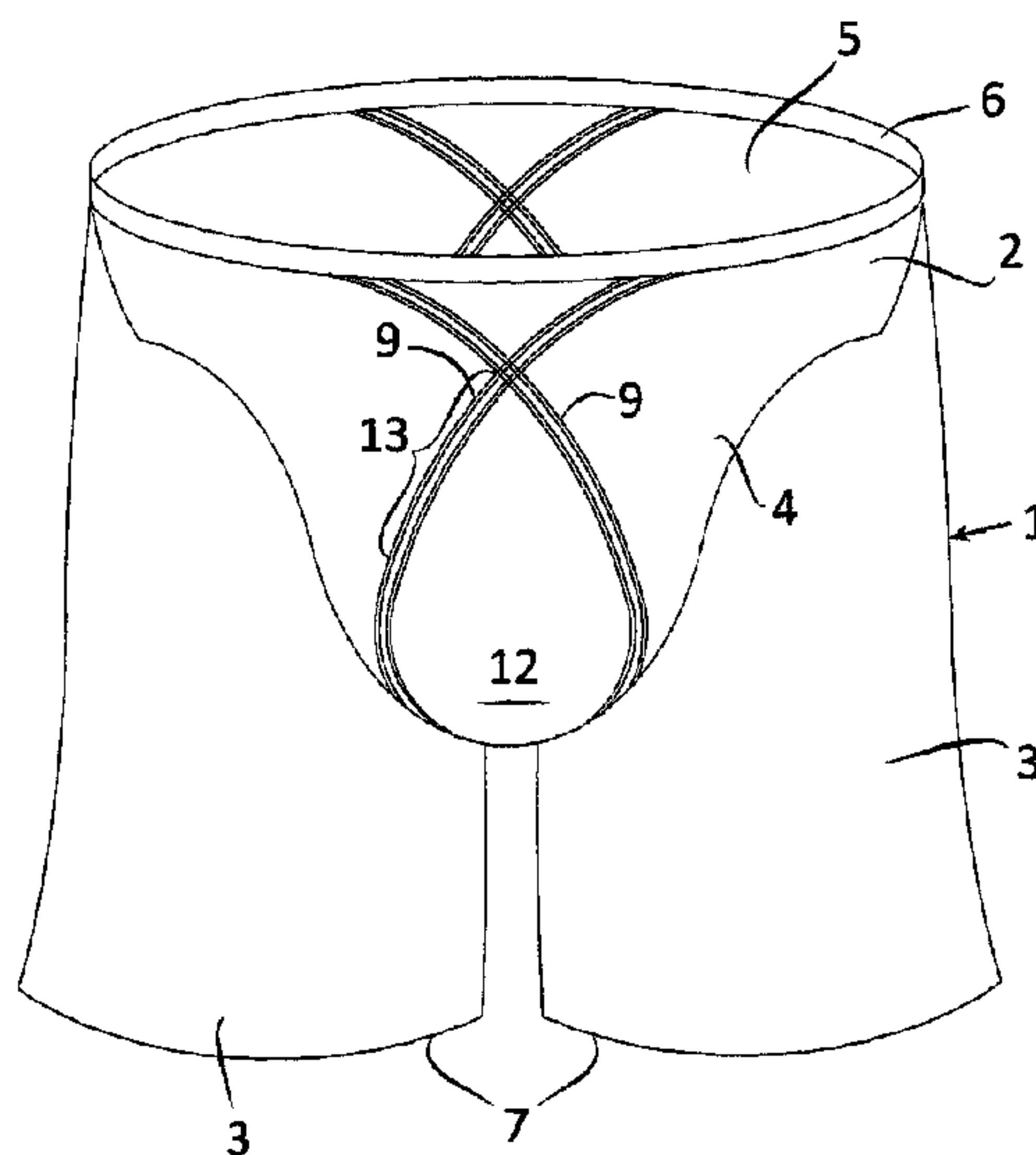




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(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

An item of men's underwear (1) comprises a garment having a front side (4), a rear side (5), and a waistband(6) defining a waist opening. The garment further defines respective openings (7) for the left and right legs of a wearer, and includes a crotch region connecting the front and rear sides and which in use is located between the wearer's legs. The garment is shaped to accommodate a wearer's male external genitalia. It is provided with a pair of elongate support bands (9) extending from and being connected to the waistband at spaced positions therealong on the front side. The bands cross each other at a crossing point on the front side at a position between the waistband and the wearer's external genitalia to provide a measure of abdominal support on the front side, are curved to pass around either side of the wearer's external genitalia and continue via the crotch region to the rear side, to thereby provide a measure of support for the wearer's external genitalia. The bands cross each other at a crossing point on the rear side, and are connected to and terminate at spaced positions on the waistband on the rear side.

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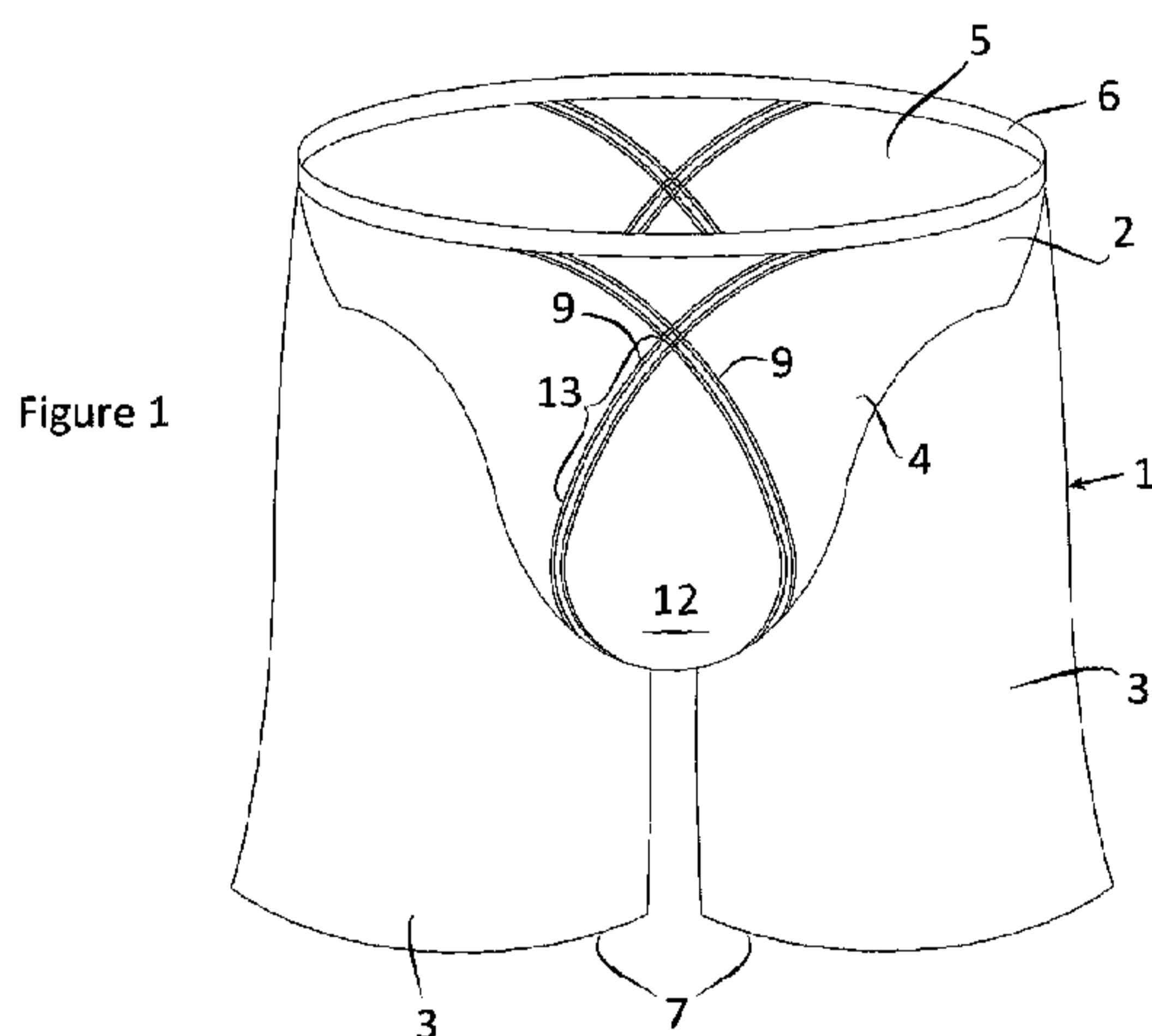
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## UNDERGARMENT FOR MEN

**Background**

5 This disclosure relates to garments and more specifically to men's underwear.

Conventional men's underwear provides insufficient support for the male external genitalia, especially for men engaged in strenuous working or sporting activities. As a result sportsmen will often wear an athletic support, commonly termed a jock-strap.

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**Summary**

As will become clear from the detailed description of preferred embodiments below, the present disclosure adopts a different approach.

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In accordance with a first aspect of this disclosure, an item of men's underwear comprises a garment having a front side, a rear side, and a waistband defining a waist opening; the garment further defining respective openings for the left and right legs of a wearer, and including a crotch region connecting the front and rear sides and which in use is located between the wearer's legs; the garment being shaped to accommodate a wearer's male external genitalia and being provided with a pair of elongate support bands extending from and being connected to the waistband at spaced positions therealong on the front side; the bands crossing each other at a crossing point on the front side at a position between the waistband and the wearer's external genitalia to provide a measure of abdominal support on the front side, being curved to pass around either side of the wearer's external genitalia and continuing via the crotch region to the rear side, to thereby provide a measure of support for the wearer's external genitalia; and the bands crossing each other at a crossing point on the rear side, and being connected to and terminating at spaced positions on the waistband on the rear side.

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Having the bands cross on the rear side of the garment as well as being connected to the waistband on the rear side at spaced positions reduces the possibility of the garment being drawn into the gap between the wearer's buttocks.

Preferred embodiments have one or more of the following features: The fabric of the garment provides a close fit, being formed, apart from the support bands, from a stretchable fabric. The garment is configured as a brief. Alternatively, the garment is provided with leg portions adapted in use to cover upper portions of the wearer's thighs.

5 In a further alternative, the garment is configured as long-johns with leg portions extending along substantially the full length of the wearer's legs. The garment may be configured as a pair of tights, in a yet further alternative, with leg portions extending along substantially the full length of the wearer's legs and terminating in foot portions. The support bands are relatively inelastic in the longitudinal direction thereof compared to the

10 elasticity of the remaining fabric of the garment. The support bands are provided as tapes or pre-formed bands sewn or otherwise fixed to the remaining fabric while that fabric is in an unstretched state, whereby the remaining fabric is adapted to create a pouch in use for the wearer's external genitalia between the support bands on the front side between the crossing point and the crotch region. The support bands are provided as seams formed in

15 the fabric of the garment, the fabric being adapted to create a pouch in use for the wearer's external genitalia between the seams on the front side between the crossing point and the crotch region. The garment is provided with an opening for manual access, while the garment is being worn, to the genitalia for urination, the opening running alongside one curved portion of support band on the front side. The bands pass from the front side to

20 the rear side via the crotch region without crossing in the crotch region.

In a second and alternative aspect thereof, this disclosure provides a method for supporting a user's external genitalia in men's underwear, the method comprising providing elongate support bands in a garment of the kind having a front side, a rear side,

25 a waistband defining a waist opening, respective openings for the left and right legs of a wearer, and a crotch region connecting the front and rear sides and which in use is located between the wearer's legs; the bands extending from and being connected to the waistband at spaced positions therealong on the front side, crossing each other at a crossing point on the front side at a position between the waistband and the wearer's external genitalia to

30 provide a measure of abdominal support on the front side, being curved to pass around either side of the wearer's external genitalia and continuing via the crotch region to the rear side, to thereby provide a measure of support for the wearer's external genitalia, crossing each other at a crossing point on the rear side, and being connected to and terminating at spaced positions on the waistband on the rear side.

Preferred implementations of this method include one or more of the following features: The garment provides a close fit, being formed, apart from the support bands, from a stretchable fabric, the support bands being relatively inelastic in the longitudinal direction thereof compared to the elasticity of the fabric, and being provided as tapes or pre-formed bands sewn or otherwise fixed to the stretchable fabric while that fabric is in an unstretched state. The garment provides a close fit, being formed from a stretchable fabric, the support bands being relatively inelastic in the longitudinal direction thereof compared to the elasticity of the remainder of the fabric, and being provided as seams formed in the fabric.

### **Brief Description of the Drawings**

Reference is now made to the accompanying drawings, by way of example only, in which:-

Fig. 1 is a front view of a pair of men's underpants in the configuration they would adopt when worn;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the underpants of Fig. 1 in the configuration when worn, as seen from below to show the crotch region thereof;

Fig. 3 is rear view of the underpants of Figs. 1 and 2 in the configuration when worn; and

Fig. 4 is a view of the underpants of Figs. 1 to 3 in the configuration when worn, as seen from a position partly to one side.

### **Description of Preferred Embodiments**

The garment 1 shown in the accompanying drawings is a pair of men's underpants in a close-fitting boxer-short configuration with a body portion 2 and short left and right leg portions 3 adapted to cover upper portions of a wearer's thighs. Garment 1 has a front side 4, a rear side 5, a waistband 6 defining a waist opening, respective openings 7 for the left and right legs of a wearer, in this case at the distal ends of the leg portions 3, and a crotch region 8 connecting the front and rear sides and which in use is located between the wearer's legs.

A pair of elongate support bands 9, suitably formed by tapes, which are preferably relatively inelastic in their longitudinal direction as compared with the elasticity of the fabric of the garment, or by seams, commence at and are connected to the waistband 6 on the front side of the garment. The bands 9 cross at a crossing point 10 located between the waistband and the wearer's external genitalia in use, which provides a measure of lower abdomen core support, and are curved to pass around either side of the wearer's genitalia in use and via the crotch region 8 to the rear side 5, crossing each other at a second crossing point 11 on the rear side, before terminating at the waistband 6 on the rear side. In addition to providing a measure of abdominal support, the bands, by crossing on the front side, serve to define a portion 12 of the front side between the crossing point 10 and the crotch region 8 and confined between the respective support bands 9, which is shaped to accommodate the wearer's external genitalia, and in particular the scrotal sac. To provide support from beneath, the bands 9 are gathered close together in the crotch region 8, or may even cross in this region, which arrangement is not excluded, although we have found that the slight bulge resulting from a crossing point in the region of the perineum may not be too comfortable for some wearers when sitting. Additional bands or seams (not illustrated) may extend between the two bands in the illustrated embodiment to define a gusset in the crotch region.

As a result, and especially when the garment is close fitting and preferably formed, apart from the support bands 9, from a stretch fabric, such as one incorporating elastic fibres such as fibres sold under the Trademark Lycra®, the external genitalia are supported close to the body, enabling the user to comfortably engage in strenuous activity such as sports while wearing the garment, and without need for an athletic support as such. The bands are preferably sewn or otherwise fixed to the fabric of the garment while that fabric is in its unstretched state. Accordingly, this tends to create a pouch, emphasised by stretching the fabric, for comfortably accommodating the wearer's external genitalia, which pouch is fully supported by the bands 9. The adoption of crossing points results in a neater and firmer structure than one without crossing points, but still with stretch where required.

We have found that by providing a crossing point 11 on the rear side of the garment and connecting the bands to the waistband at spaced positions on the rear of the

garment, this reduces the possibility for the garment to be drawn into the gap between the user's buttocks.

5 An opening 13 for manual access to the genitalia for urination without undressing is suitably provided in either left-handed or right-handed versions, the opening running alongside one of the support bands 9 on the front of the garment. Opening 13 is suitably bounded on one side by the support band, and on its opposite side by a band formed in a similar manner to the support band and attached at its ends, at either end of the opening 13, to the support band itself.

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Although, the illustrated embodiment is configured as a pair of close-fitting boxer-shorts, it will be readily appreciated that the garment may be configured as a brief without leg portions, or as long-johns with leg portions extending along substantially the full length of the wearer's legs or even as complete tights additionally incorporating foot  
15 portions.

**Claims**

1. An item of men's underwear comprises a garment having a front side, a rear side, and a waistband defining a waist opening; the garment further defining respective  
5 openings for the left and right legs of a wearer, and including a crotch region connecting the front and rear sides and which in use is located between the wearer's legs; the garment being shaped to accommodate a wearer's male external genitalia and being provided with a pair of elongate support bands extending from and being connected to the waistband at spaced positions therealong on the front side; the bands crossing each other at a crossing  
10 point on the front side at a position between the waistband and the wearer's external genitalia to provide a measure of abdominal support on the front side, being curved to pass around either side of the wearer's external genitalia and continuing via the crotch region to the rear side, to thereby provide a measure of support for the wearer's external genitalia; and the bands crossing each other at a crossing point on the rear side, and being connected  
15 to and terminating at spaced positions on the waistband on the rear side.
2. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 1, wherein the garment is formed from fabric which provides a close fit, the fabric, apart from the support bands, being stretchable.  
20
3. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 1, configured as a brief.
4. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 1, provided with leg portions adapted in use to cover upper portions of the wearer's thighs.  
25
5. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 1, configured as long-johns with leg portions extending along the wearer's legs.
6. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 1, configured as a pair of tights  
30 with leg portions extending along the wearer's legs and terminating in foot portions.
7. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 1, wherein the garment is formed from fabric in which the fabric of the support bands is relatively inelastic in the

longitudinal direction of the support bands compared to the elasticity of the fabric elsewhere in the garment.

8. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 7, wherein the support bands are provided as tapes or pre-formed bands sewn or fixed to said remaining fabric while that fabric is in an unstretched state, whereby said fabric elsewhere in the garment is adapted to create a pouch in use for the wearer's external genitalia between the support bands on the front side between the crossing point and the crotch region.
9. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 7, wherein the support bands are provided as seams formed in the fabric of the garment, the fabric being adapted to create a pouch in use for the wearer's external genitalia between the said seams on the front side between the crossing point and the crotch region.
10. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 7, wherein the garment is provided with an opening for manual access, while the garment is being worn, to the genitalia for urination, the opening running alongside one curved portion of support band on the front side.
11. An item of men's underwear according to Claim 1, wherein the bands pass from the front side to the rear side via the crotch region without crossing in the crotch region.
12. A method for supporting a user's external genitalia in men's underwear, the method comprising providing elongate support bands in a garment of the kind having a front side, a rear side, a waistband defining a waist opening, respective openings for the left and right legs of a wearer, and a crotch region connecting the front and rear sides and which in use is located between the wearer's legs; the bands extending from and being connected to the waistband at spaced positions therealong on the front side, crossing each other at a crossing point on the front side at a position between the waistband and the wearer's external genitalia to provide a measure of abdominal support on the front side, being curved to pass around either side of the wearer's external genitalia and continuing via the crotch region to the rear side, to thereby provide a measure of support for the wearer's external genitalia, crossing each other at a crossing point on the rear side, and being connected to and terminating at spaced positions on the waistband on the rear side.

13. A method according to Claim 12, wherein the garment provides a close fit, being formed, apart from the support bands, from a stretchable fabric, the support bands being relatively inelastic in the longitudinal direction thereof compared to the elasticity of the fabric, and being provided as tapes or pre-formed bands sewn or otherwise fixed to the stretchable fabric while that fabric is in an unstretched state.

14. A method according to Claim 12, wherein the garment provides a close fit, being formed from a stretchable fabric, the support bands being relatively inelastic in the longitudinal direction thereof compared to the elasticity of the fabric elsewhere in the garment, and being provided as seams formed in the said fabric.

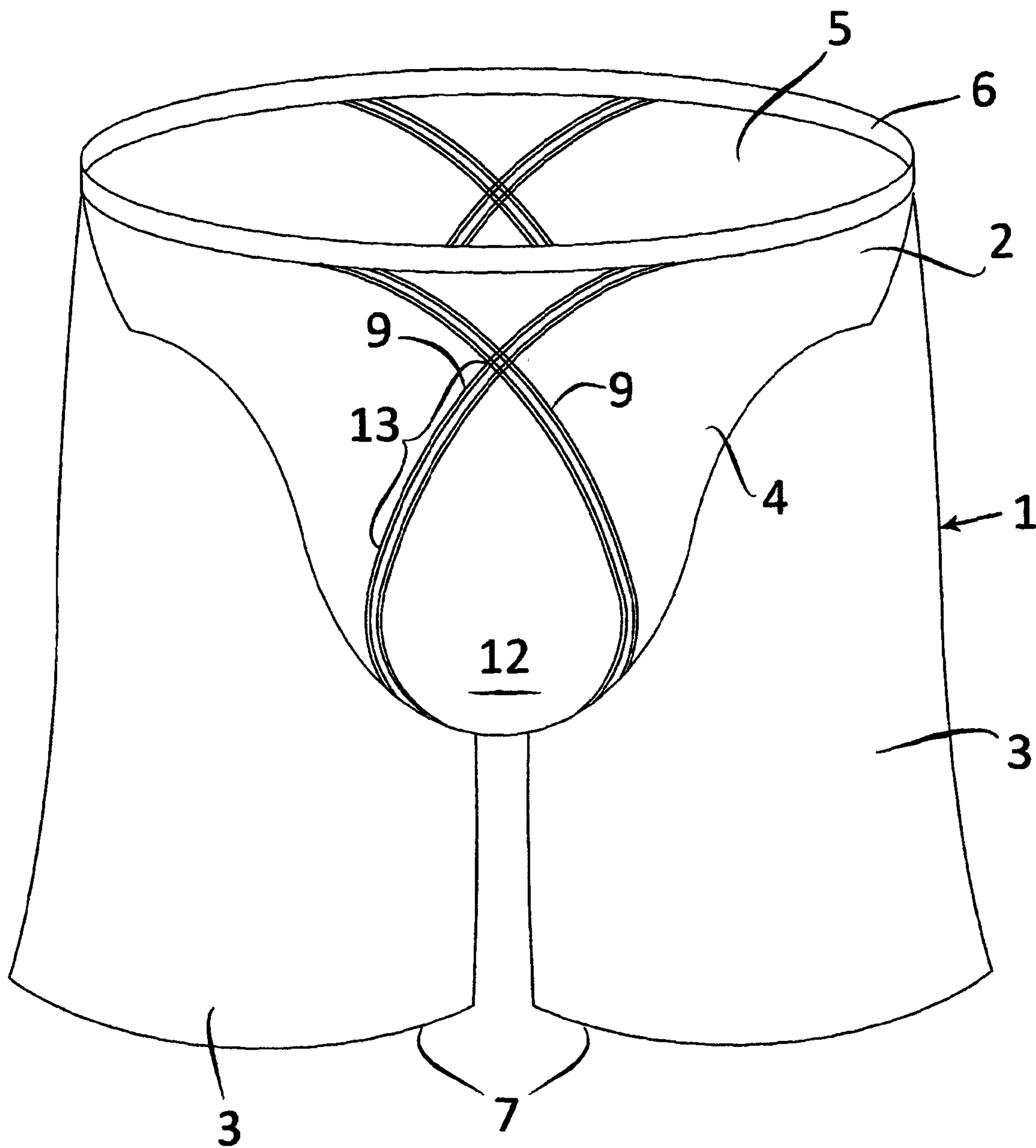


Figure 1

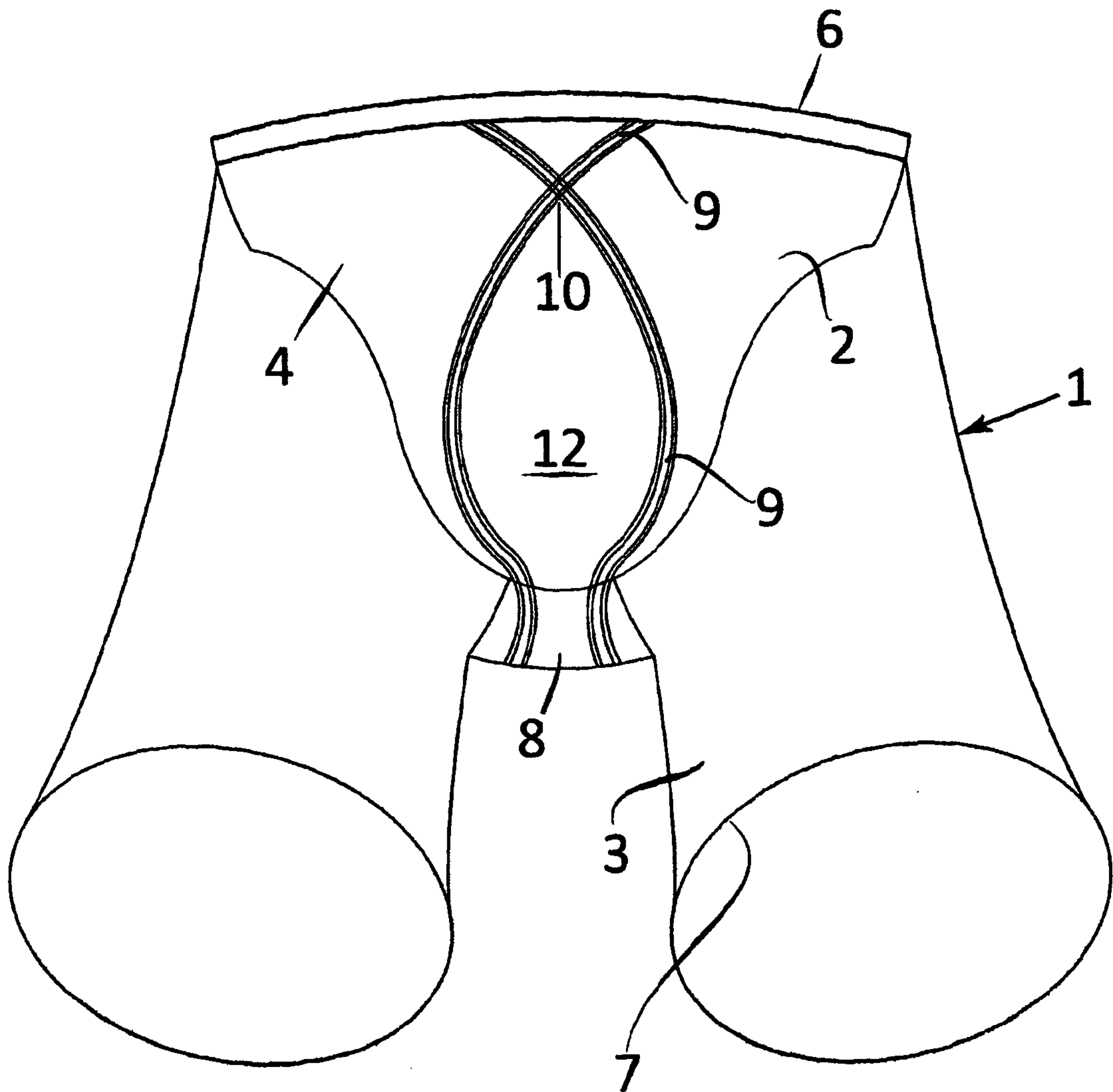


Figure 2

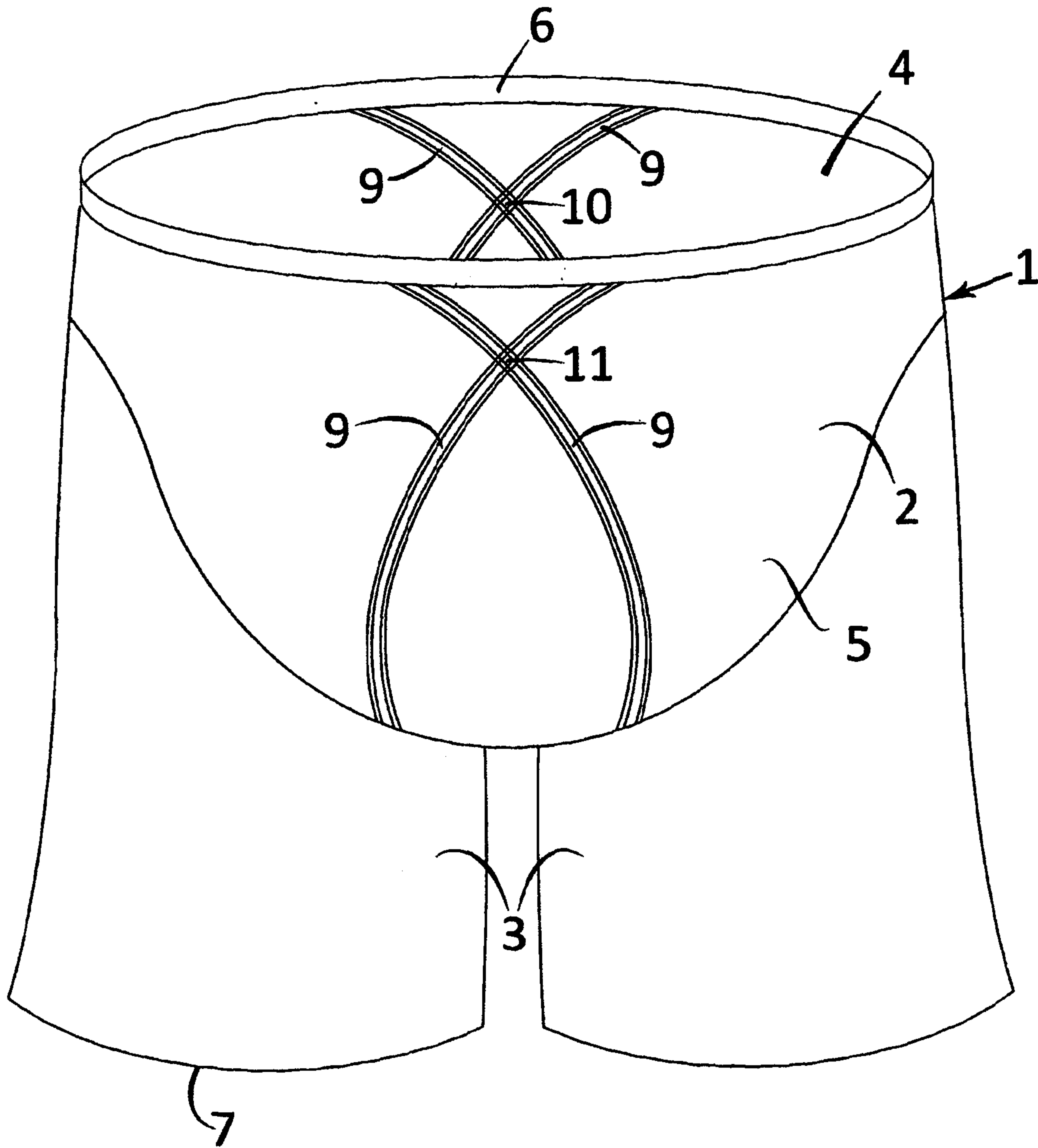


Figure 3

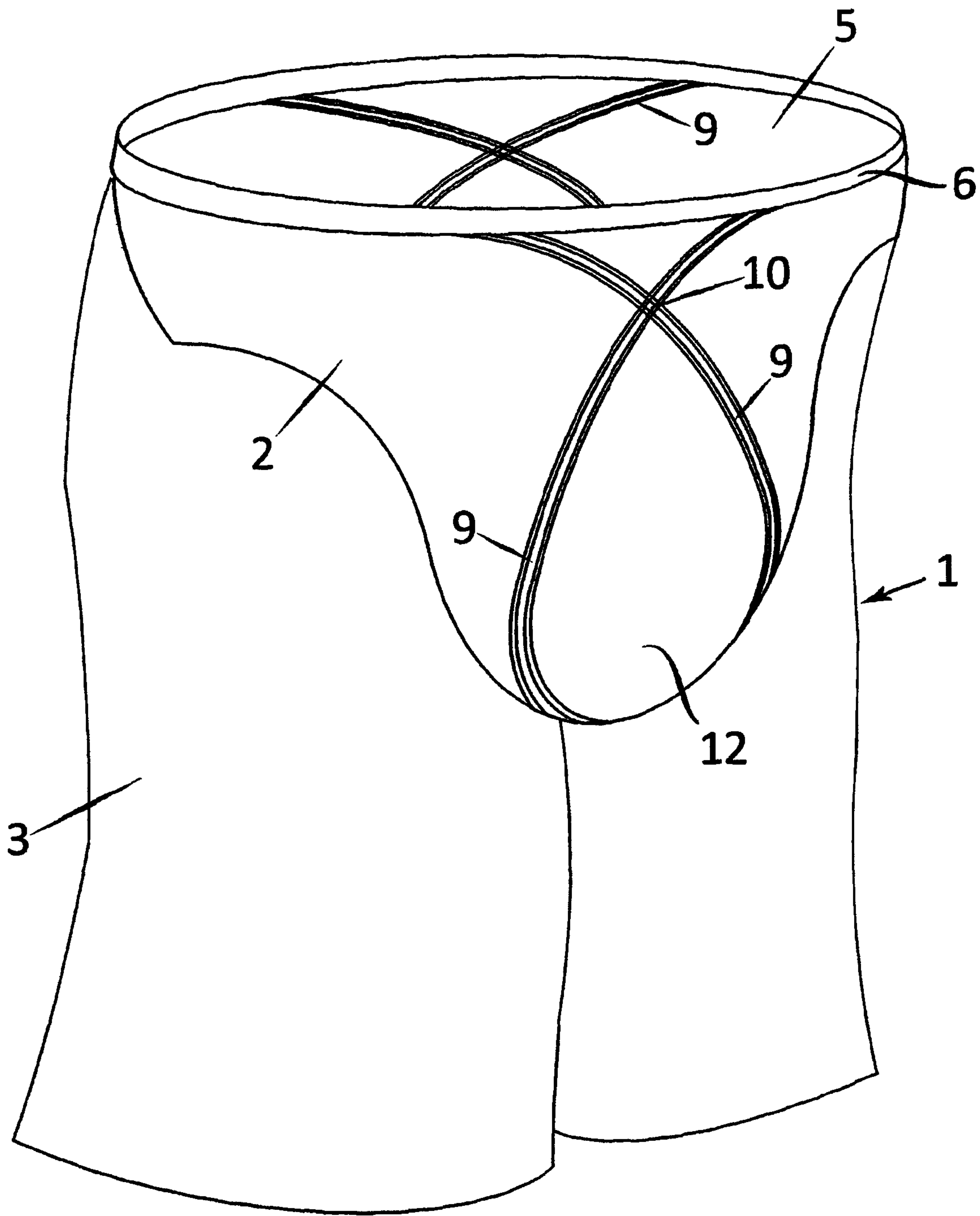


Figure 4

