US 20180160768A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2018/0160768 A1**

Clifton et al. (43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 14, 2018**

(54) **COMFORT SYSTEM FOR FOOTWEAR**

(71) Applicants: **Jason Clifton**, Nashville, TN (US); **Bill Beach**, Nashville, TN (US)

(72) Inventors: **Jason Clifton**, Nashville, TN (US); **Bill Beach**, Nashville, TN (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **15/837,030**

(22) Filed: **Dec. 11, 2017**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 62/432,974, filed on Dec. 12, 2016.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**

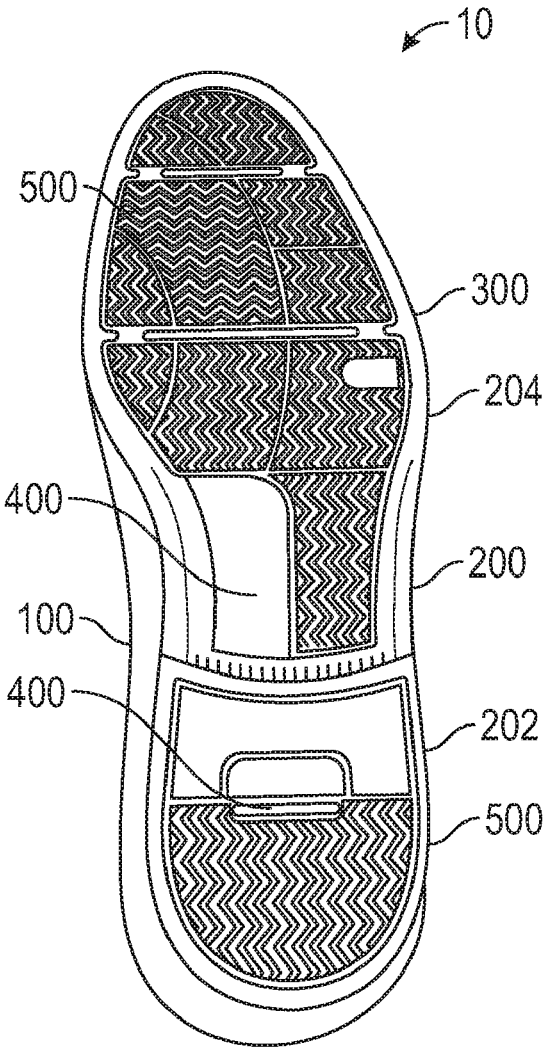
A43B 13/12	(2006.01)
A43B 13/04	(2006.01)
A43B 13/14	(2006.01)
A43B 13/18	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***A43B 13/122*** (2013.01); ***A43B 13/187*** (2013.01); ***A43B 13/141*** (2013.01); ***A43B 13/04*** (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An outsole for an article of footwear includes a support member and a comfort member. The support member includes a body defining a forepart aperture and a backpart aperture. The comfort member is supported by the support member and positioned within the forepart aperture and the backpart aperture. A method of assembling an article of footwear includes positioning a forepart of a comfort member within a forepart aperture defined by a forepart of a support member of an outsole for the article of footwear, positioning a backpart of the comfort member within a backpart aperture defined by a backpart of the support member, and securing the comfort member relative to the support member.



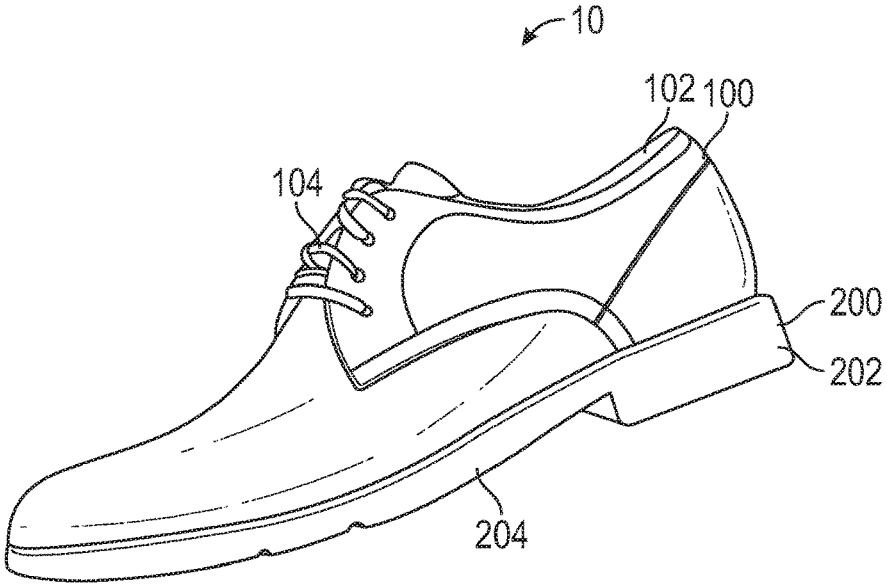


FIG. 1

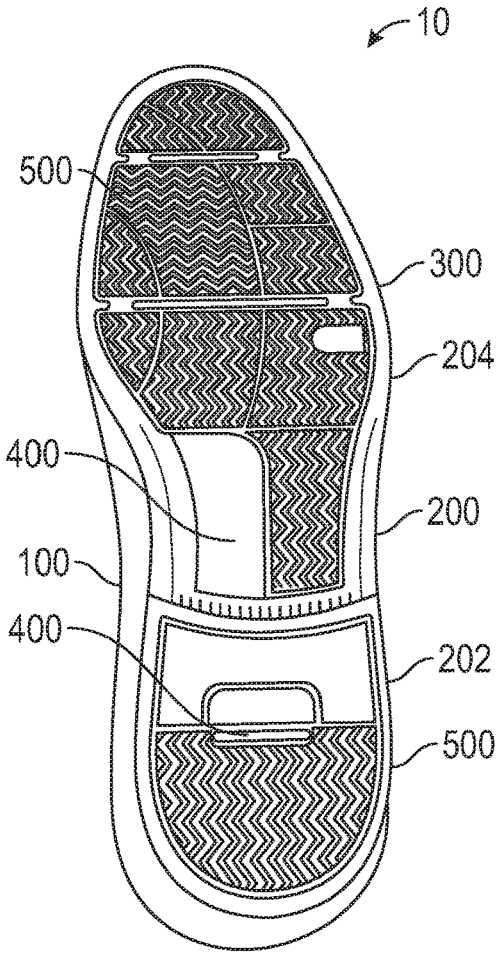


FIG. 2

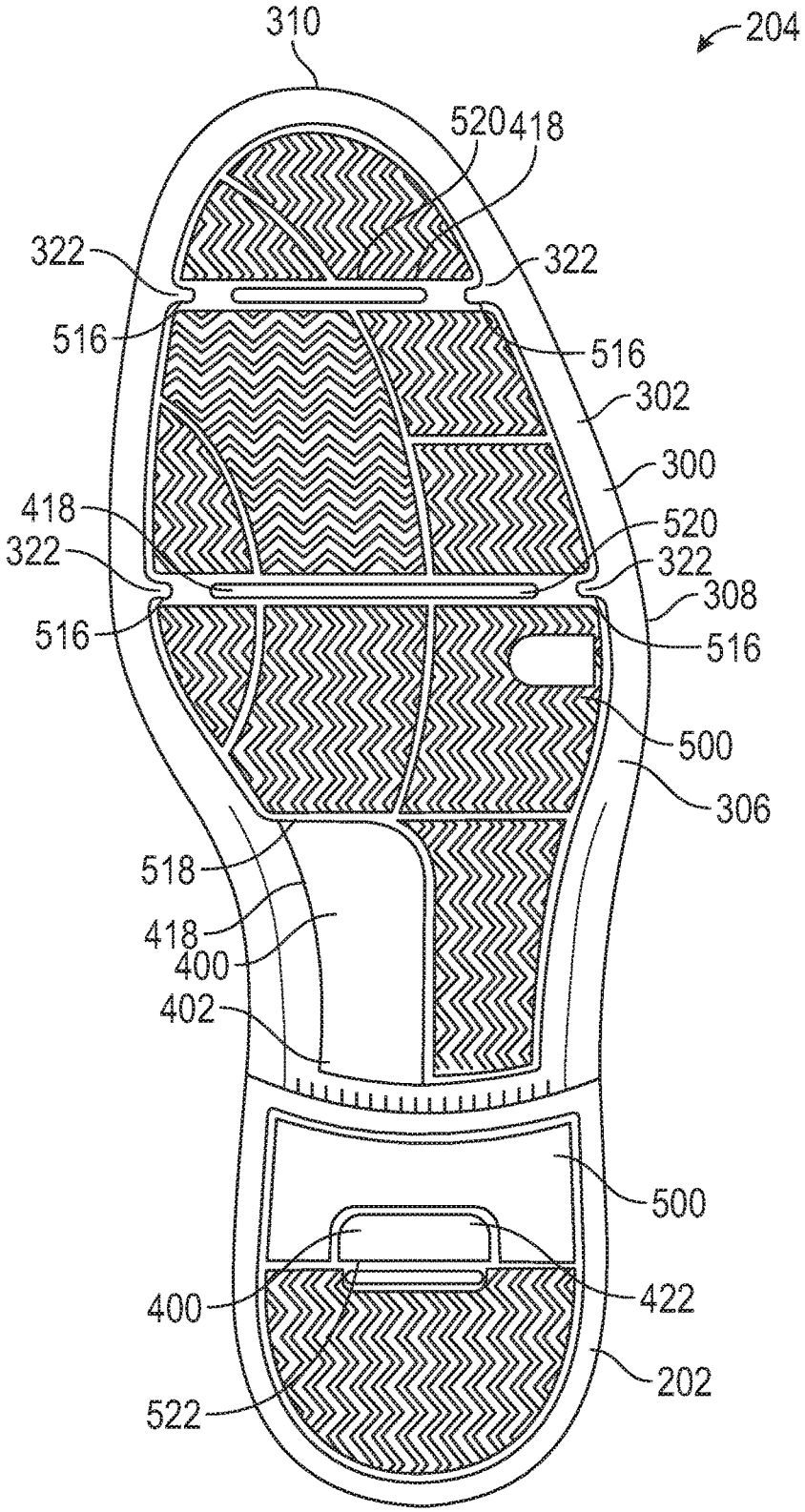

310
204
520
418
322
322
516
516
302
300
418
520
322
322
308
516
516
500
306
518
418
400
402
500
400
422
202
522

FIG. 3

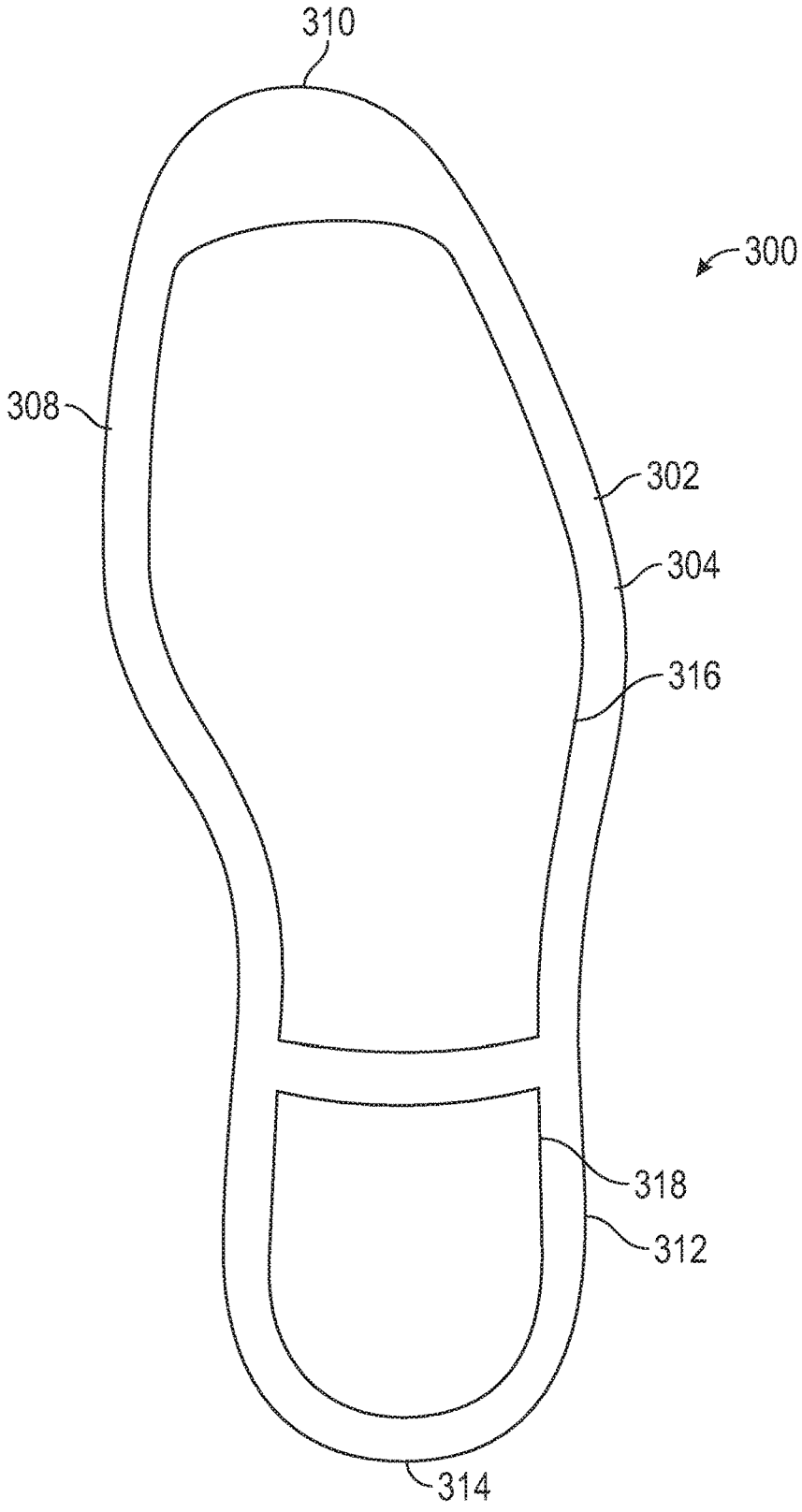


FIG. 4

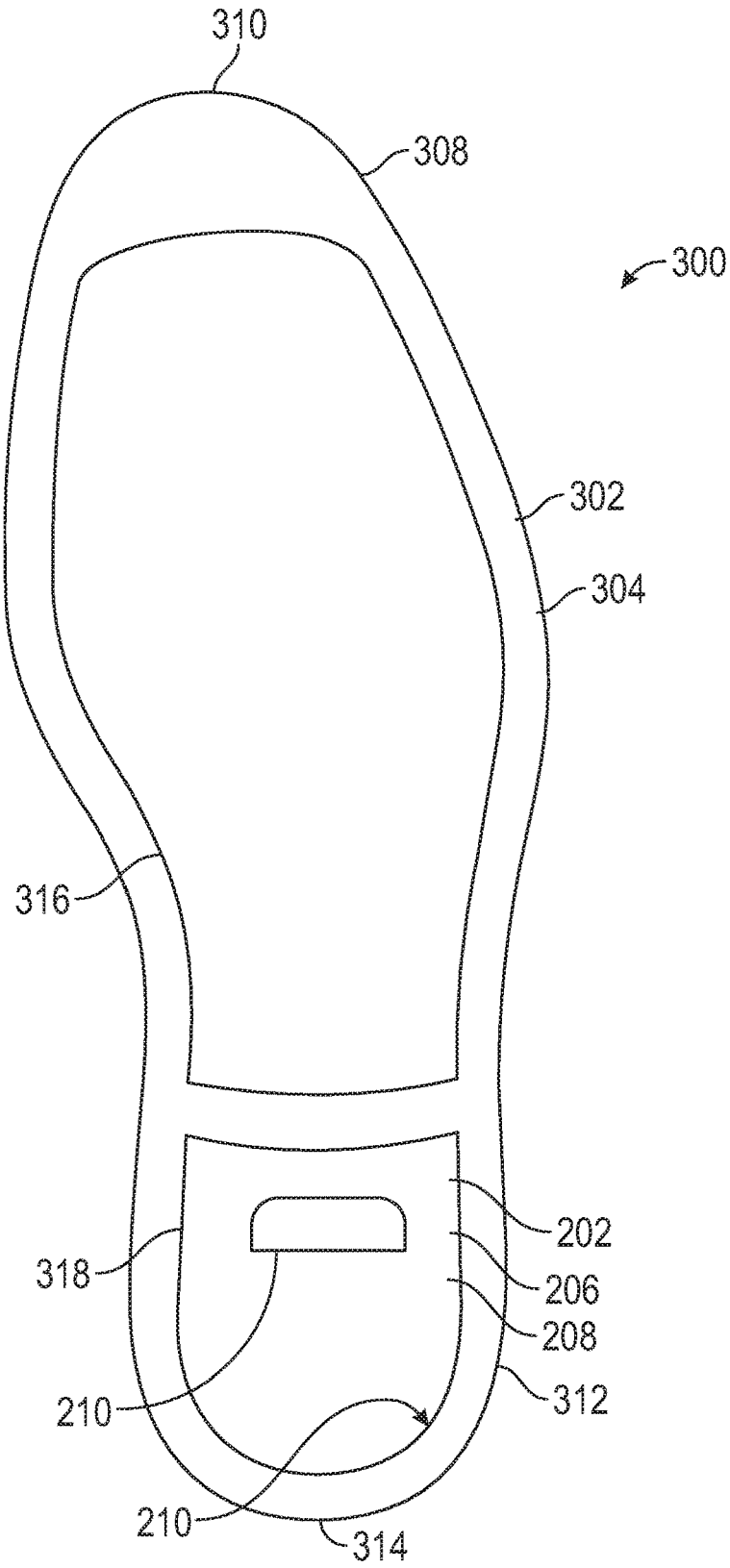


FIG. 5

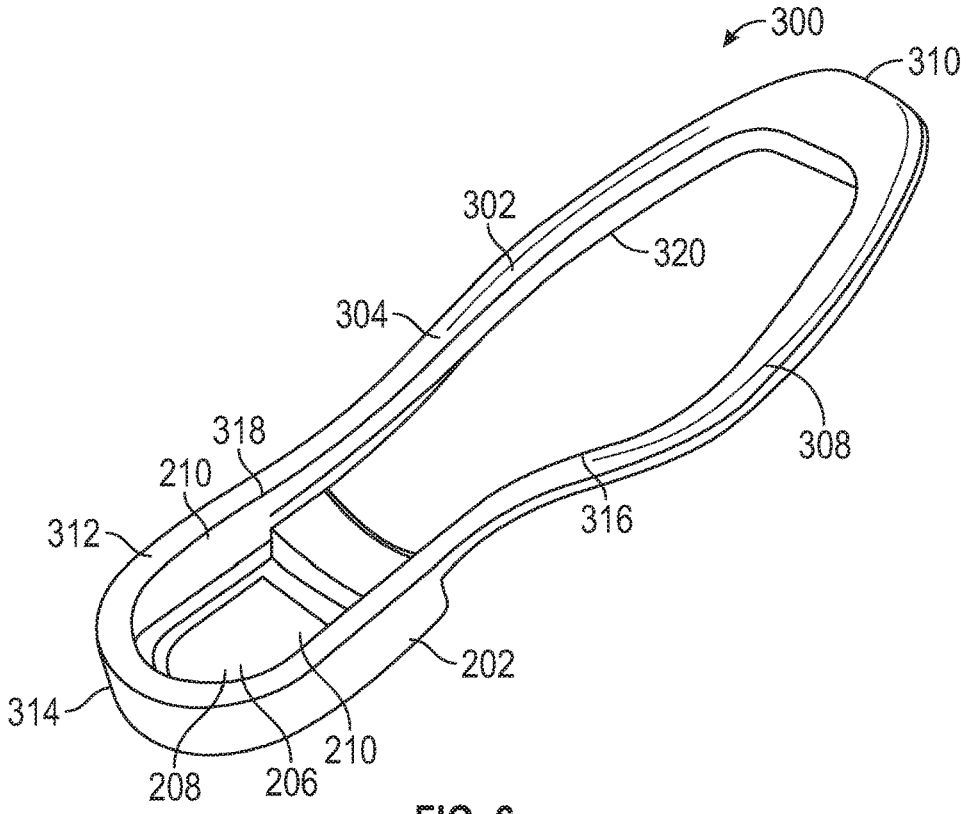

300
310
302
320
304
318
210
308
312
316
202
314
208
206
210

FIG. 6

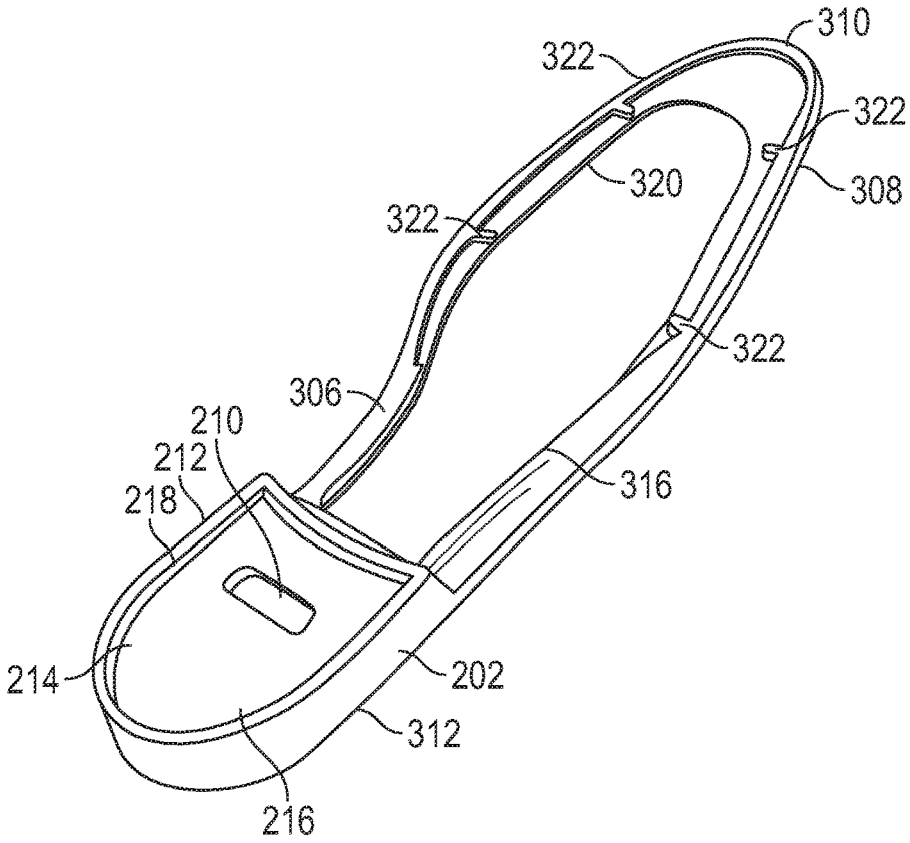

310
322
322
320
308
322
322
306
210
212
218
316
214
202
312
216

FIG. 7

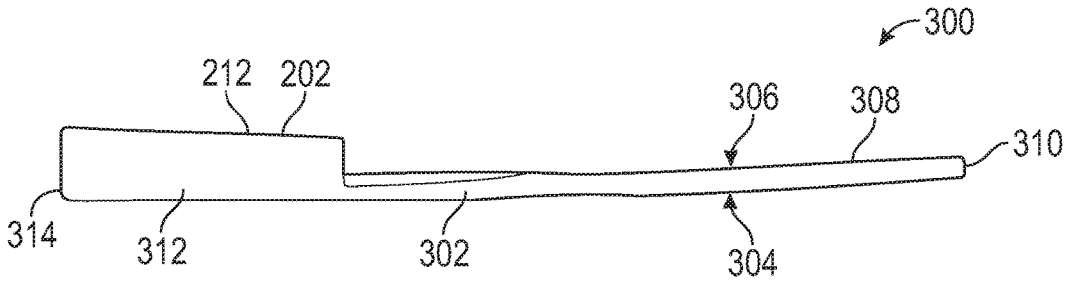

300
212
202
306
308
310
314
312
302
304

FIG. 8

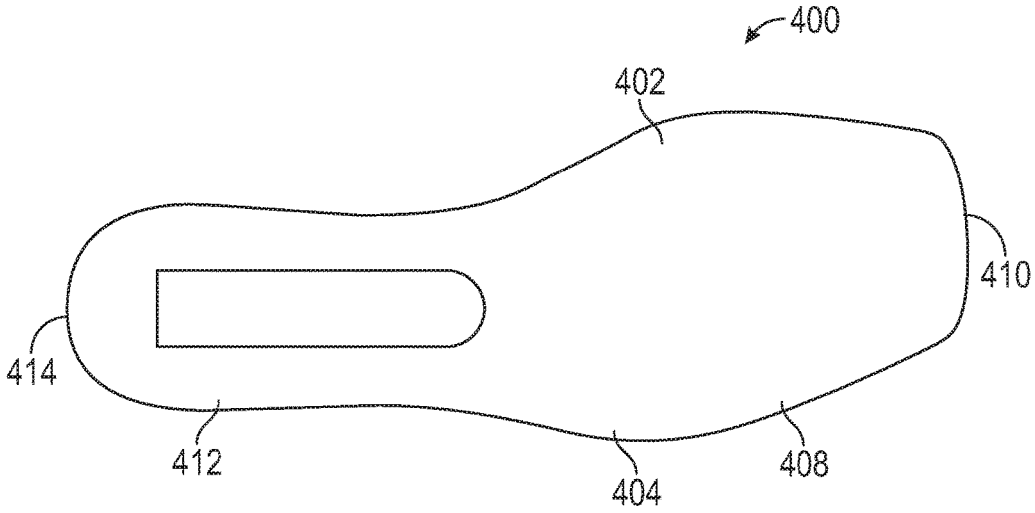

400
402
410
414
412
404
408

FIG. 9

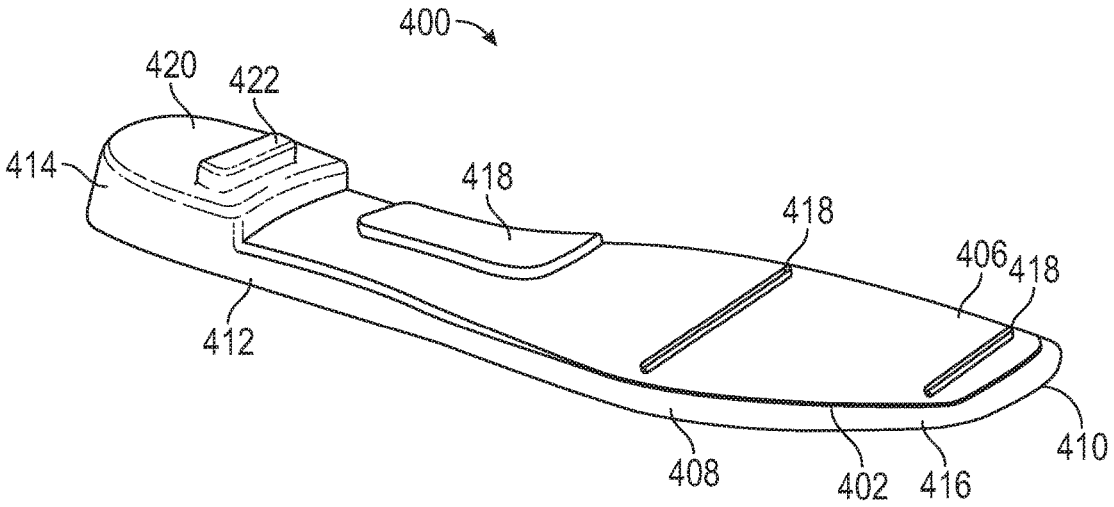

400
420
422
414
418
418
406
418
412
408
402
416
410

FIG. 10

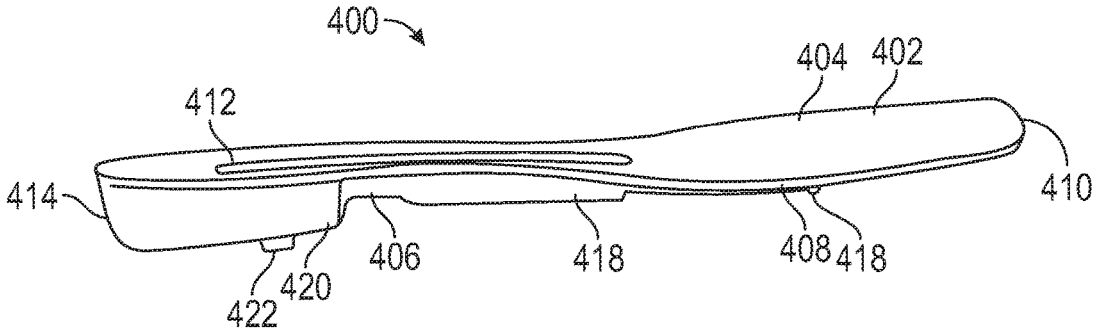

400
404
402
412
414
410
406
418
408
418
420
422

FIG. 11

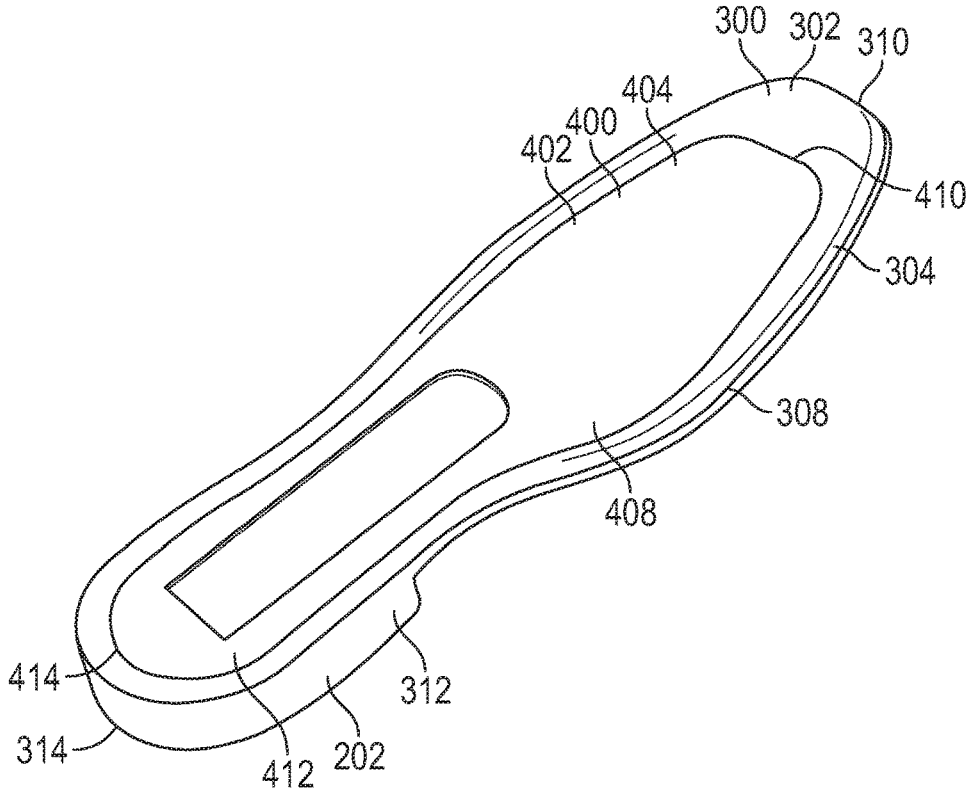

300
302
310
404
400
402
410
304
308
408
414
312
314
412
202

FIG. 12

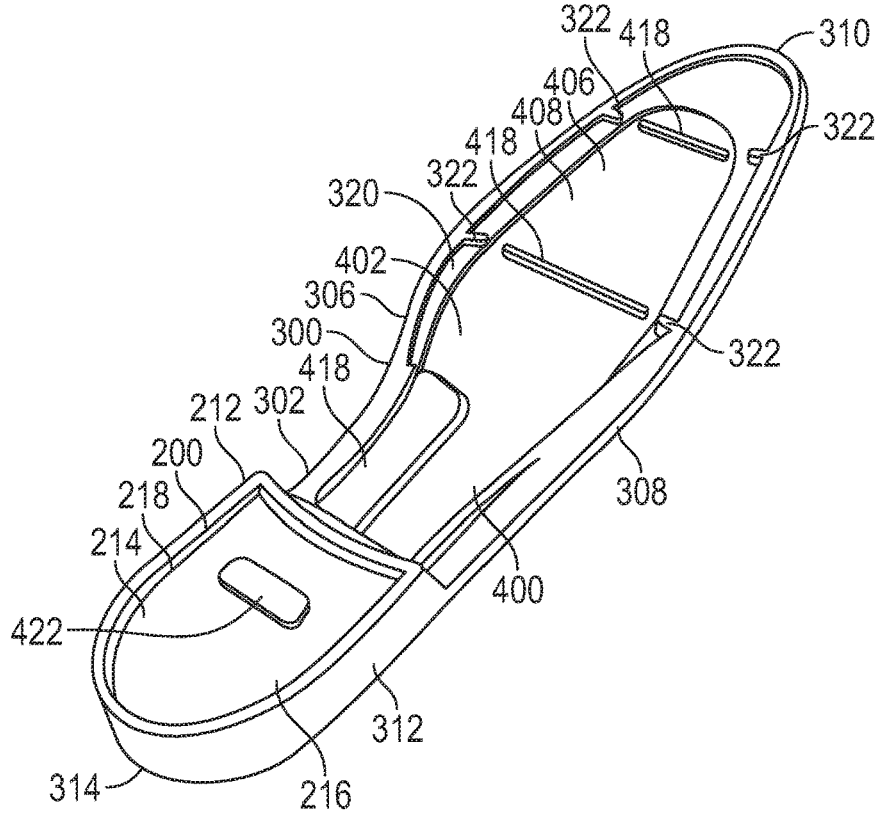

322
418
310
406
408
418
322
322
320
402
306
300
322
418
212
302
200
218
214
308
400
422
312
314
216

FIG. 13

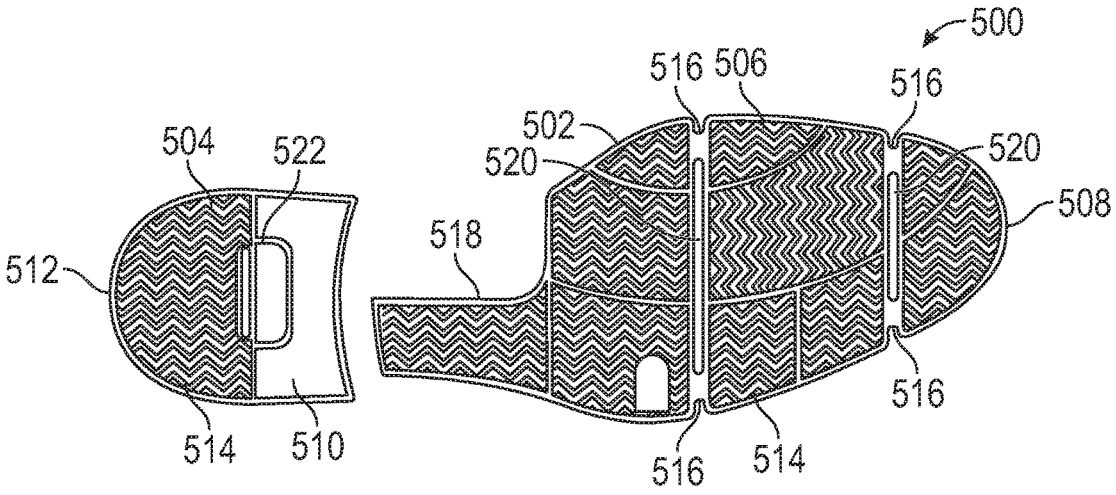

500
516
506
516
502
520
520
504
522
508
518
512
516
514
510
516
514

FIG. 14

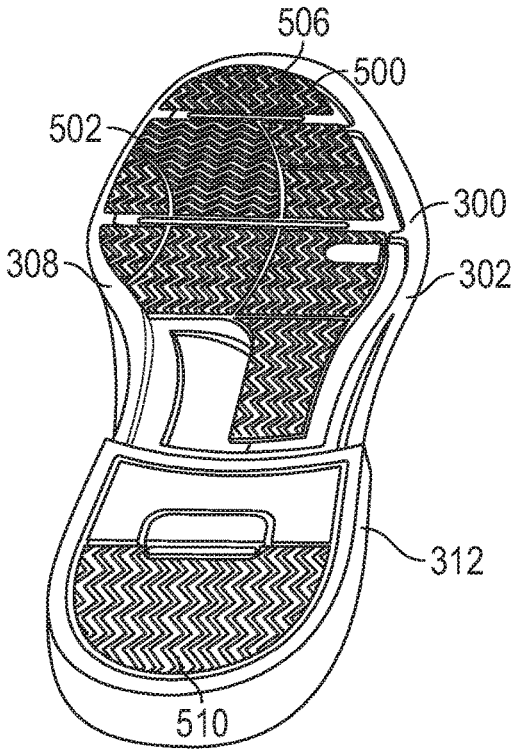

506
500
502
300
308
302
312
510

FIG. 15

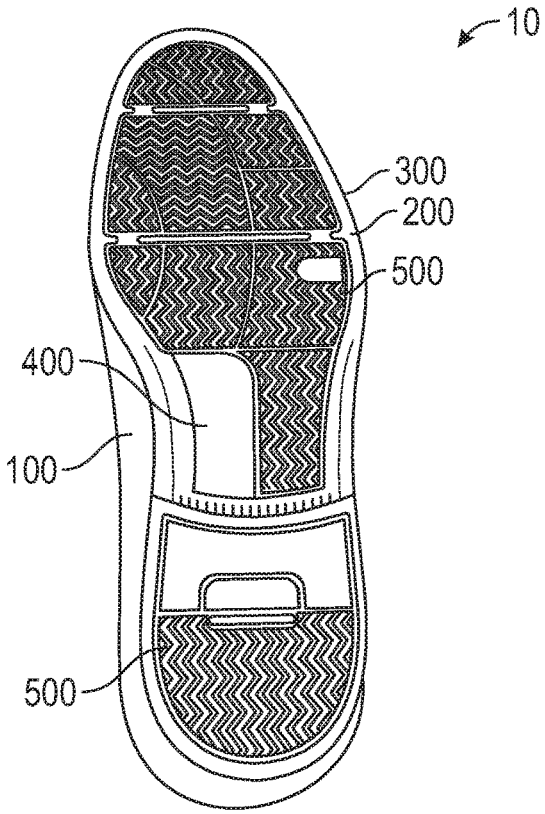


FIG. 16

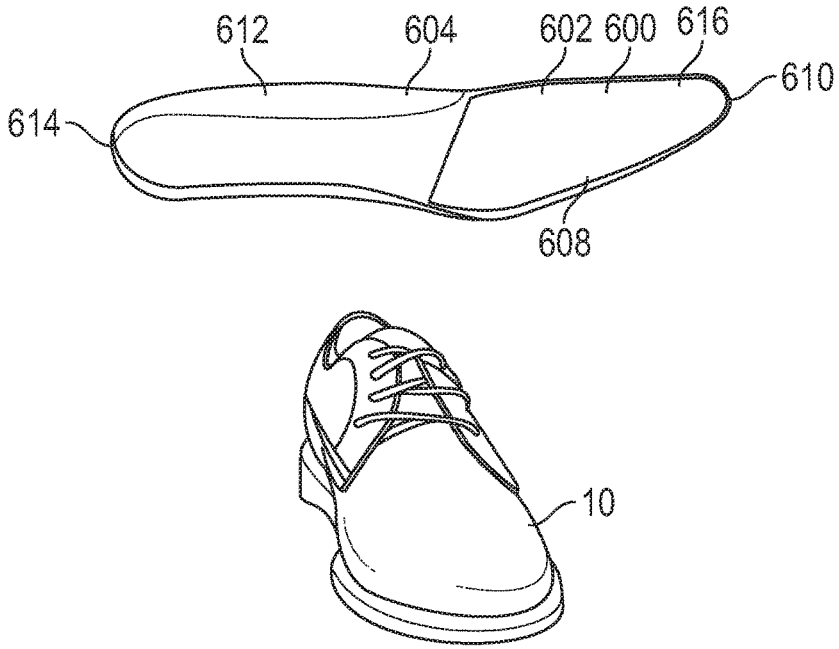


FIG. 17

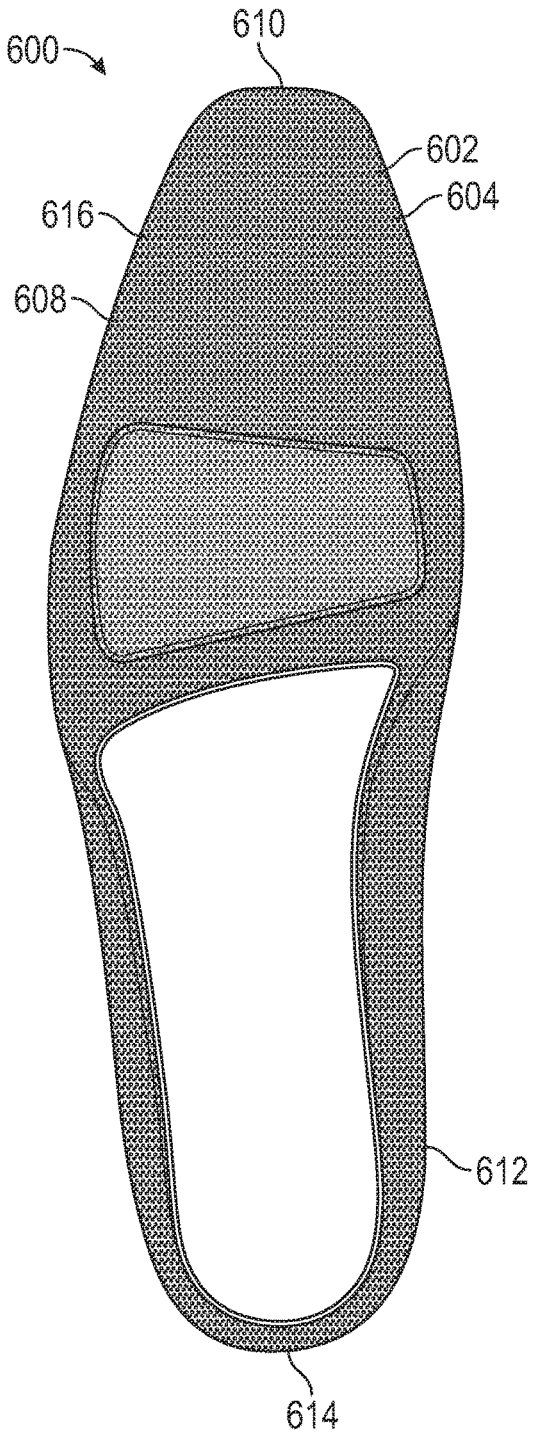

600
610
602
604
616
608
612
614

FIG. 18

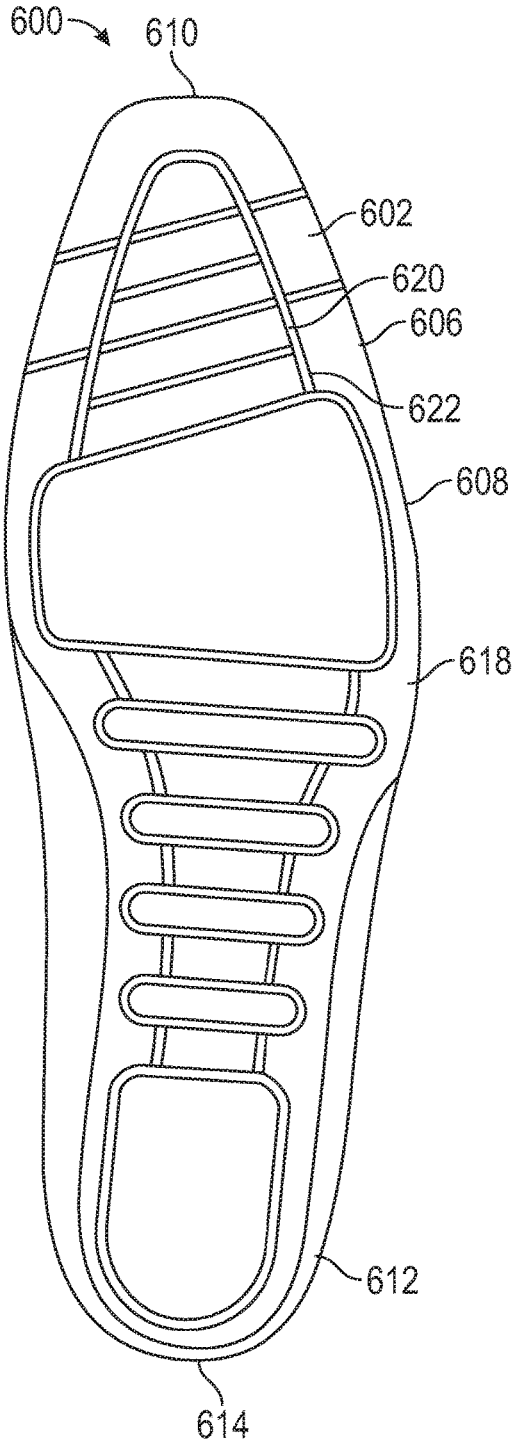

600
610
602
620
606
622
608
618
612
614

FIG. 19

COMFORT SYSTEM FOR FOOTWEAR

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/432,974, filed Dec. 12, 2016 and entitled COMFORT SYSTEM FOR FOOTWEAR, the content of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This application relates to footwear, and more particularly to comfort systems for footwear.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Footwear comes in many forms and may be worn by a person depending on their preference or requirements in a certain situation. While footwear serves the basic purpose of covering or protecting the wearer's foot, it may be desirable incorporate stylish features into such footwear. Traditionally, to achieve such stylish features, it has been necessary to construct the shoes of rigid durable materials to provide a high degree of support with minimal amount of material, which may be uncomfortable to wear. Therefore, there is a need for footwear that provides comfort and support to the wearer while providing the enhanced features.

SUMMARY

[0004] The terms "invention," "the invention," "this invention" and "the present invention" used in this patent are intended to refer broadly to all of the subject matter of this patent and the patent claims below. Statements containing these terms should be understood not to limit the subject matter described herein or to limit the meaning or scope of the patent claims below. Embodiments of the invention covered by this patent are defined by the claims below, not this summary. This summary is a high-level overview of various embodiments of the invention and introduces some of the concepts that are further described in the Detailed Description section below. This summary is not intended to identify key or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used in isolation to determine the scope of the claimed subject matter. The subject matter should be understood by reference to appropriate portions of the entire specification of this patent, any or all drawings, and each claim.

[0005] According to certain examples, a sole member for an article of footwear includes an outsole and a heel. The outsole includes a support member with a body defining a backpart aperture and a comfort member supported by the support member. The heel is on the support member and includes a top side and a bottom side, the top side defining a heel cavity various examples, the backpart aperture provides access to the heel cavity, and the comfort member is positioned within the backpart aperture and the heel cavity.

[0006] In some examples, the support member includes a forepart aperture, the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and the comfort member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture. In certain cases, the support member includes a top side and a bottom side, the comfort member includes a top side and a bottom side, and the top side of the comfort member is substantially flush with the top side of the support member. According to various examples, the ledge is recessed relative to a top side of the support member and relative to a bottom side of the support member.

[0007] In certain aspects, the comfort member includes a top side, a bottom side, a forepart, and a backpart, the backpart includes a heel extension extending from the bottom side of the backpart, and the heel extension is positioned through the backpart aperture of the support member and into the heel cavity. In some cases, the bottom side of the heel defines a heel recess. In some examples, the heel defines a heel slot extending from a heel cavity surface to the bottom side of the heel, and a heel extension of the comfort member comprises a heel extension rib positioned within the heel slot. According to various aspects the support member includes a top side and a bottom side, the comfort member includes a top side and a bottom side, and the article of footwear further includes a cover member secured to the bottom side of the comfort member. In some aspects, the support member further includes a forepart aperture, the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, the ledge of the support member comprises a plurality of engagement ribs, and the cover member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture and the cover member comprises a plurality of engagement notches engaged with the engagement ribs of the support member. In certain examples, the comfort member defines a plurality of engagement projections on the bottom side of the comfort member, and the cover member defines a plurality of flex zone slots configured to receive the plurality of engagement projections of the comfort member.

[0008] According to various examples, an article of footwear includes an upper connected to the sole member.

[0009] According to some examples, a method of assembling an article of footwear includes positioning a forepart of a comfort member within a forepart aperture defined by a forepart of a support member of an outsole for the article of footwear, positioning a backpart of the comfort member within a backpart aperture defined by a backpart of the support member, and securing the comfort member relative to the support member.

[0010] In certain aspects, the method includes securing the outsole to an upper. In various cases, the method includes securing a heel the backpart of the support member and positioning the heel such that the backpart aperture of the support member provides access to a heel cavity of the heel. According to various examples, positioning the backpart of the comfort member includes inserting a heel projection of the comfort member through the backpart aperture of the support member and into a heel cavity of a heel, and positioning the forepart of the comfort member includes positioning the forepart of the comfort member on a ledge defined by the support member within the forepart aperture.

[0011] According to various examples, an outsole for an article of footwear includes a support member and a comfort member. The support member includes a body defining a forepart aperture and a backpart aperture. The comfort member is supported by the support member and is positioned within the forepart aperture and the backpart aperture.

[0012] In certain examples, the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and the comfort member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture. In various cases, the support member includes a top side and a bottom side, the comfort member includes a top side and a bottom side, the ledge is recessed relative to a top side of the support member and relative to

a bottom side of the support member, and the top side of the comfort member is flush with the top side of the support member in various aspects, the comfort member includes a top side, a bottom side, a forepart, and a backpart, the backpart includes a heel extension extending from the bottom side of the backpart, and the heel extension is positioned through the backpart, aperture of the support member.

[0013] In various cases, the support member includes a top side and a bottom side, and the comfort member includes a top side and a bottom side. In some examples, a cover member is secured to the bottom side of the comfort member. According to various aspects, the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and the cover member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture.

[0014] Various implementations described in the present disclosure can include additional systems, methods, features, and advantages, which cannot necessarily be expressly disclosed herein but will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art upon examination of the following detailed description and accompanying drawings. It is intended that all such systems, methods, features, and advantages be included within the present disclosure and protected by the accompanying claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] The features and components of the following figures are illustrated to emphasize the general principles of the present disclosure. Corresponding features and components throughout the figures can be designated by matching reference characters for the sake of consistency and clarity.

[0016] FIG. **1** is a lateral side view of an article of footwear according to aspects of the current disclosure.

[0017] FIG. **2** is a perspective bottom view of the article of footwear of FIG. **1**.

[0018] FIG. **3** is a bottom view of an outsole the article of footwear of FIG. **1**.

[0019] FIG. **4** is bottom view of a support member of the outsole of FIG. **3**.

[0020] FIG. **5** is a bottom view of the support member of FIG. **4** with a heel of the article of footwear of FIG. **1**.

[0021] FIG. **6** is a perspective top view of the support member of FIG. **4**.

[0022] FIG. **7** is a perspective bottom **7** of the support member of FIG. **4**.

[0023] FIG. **8** is a side view of the support member of FIG. **4**.

[0024] FIG. **9** is a bottom view of a comfort member of the outsole of FIG. **3**.

[0025] FIG. **10** is a perspective bottom view of the comfort member of FIG. **9**.

[0026] FIG. **11** is a side view of the comfort member of FIG. **9**.

[0027] FIG. **12** is a perspective top view of the comfort member of FIG. **9** assembled with the support member of FIG. **4**.

[0028] FIG. **13** is a perspective bottom view of the comfort member of FIG. **9** assembled with the support member of FIG. **4**.

[0029] FIG. **14** is a bottom view of a covering member of the outsole of FIG. **3**.

[0030] FIG. **15** is a perspective bottom view of the covering member of FIG. **14** partially assembled on the support member of FIG. **4**.

[0031] FIG. **16** is another perspective bottom view of the article of footwear of FIG. **1**.

[0032] FIG. **17** is a perspective view of a footbed member for the article of footwear of FIG. **1**.

[0033] FIG. **18** is a top view of the footbed member of FIG. **17**.

[0034] FIG. **19** is a bottom view of the footbed member of FIG. **17**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0035] The subject matter of embodiments of the present invention is described here with specificity to meet statutory requirements, but this description is not necessarily intended to limit the scope of the claims. The claimed subject matter may be embodied in other ways, may include different elements or steps, and may be used in conjunction with other existing or future technologies. This description should not be interpreted as implying any particular order or arrangement among or between various steps or elements except when the order of individual steps or arrangement of elements is explicitly described. Directional references such as "up," "down," "top," "left," "right," "front," and "back," among others are intended to refer to the orientation as illustrated and described in the figure (or figures) to which the components and directions are referencing.

[0036] Referring to FIGS. **1** and **2**, an article of footwear **10** is illustrated. As used herein, "footwear" refers generally to any type of wear suitable for use on a foot including, but not limited to, a shoe, a boot, a sandal, an overshoe, or various other types of footwear **10**. In the present example, the article of footwear **10** is a shoe. The article of footwear **10** includes an upper **100**, a sole member **200**, and a footbed member **600** (see FIG. **17**).

[0037] The upper **100** defines a cavity **102** in which a wearer may insert his or her foot. The upper may include adjusters **104** that are configured to adjust the fit of the upper around the wearer's foot. In various examples, the adjusters **104** may be various types of adjusters **104** including, but not limited to, laces, strings, hook and loop fasteners, belts, clips, clasps, pins, or various other suitable adjusters **104** for adjusting the fit of the upper on the wearer's foot.

[0038] The upper **100** may be constructed from various materials including, but not limited to, leather, canvas, rubber, plastics, textiles, or various other desired materials or combinations of materials. In one non-limiting example, the upper **100** is constructed from waterproof leather. Various suitable manufacturing techniques may be used to form the upper **100** having a desired shape.

[0039] The sole member **200** generally includes a heel **202** and an outsole **204**, and defines at least in part an outermost bottom-facing surface of the footwear **10**. It will be appreciated that in various other examples, the sole member **200** may include layers or components in addition to the heel **202** and the outsole **204**. In some examples, the heel **202** and the outsole **204** are integrally formed as a unitary component; however, in various other examples, the heel **202** may be formed as a separate component that is secured to the outsole **204**. In the present example, the heel **202** is integrally or monolithically formed with the outsole **204** as a unitary or monolithic component.

[0040] Referring to FIGS. **2** and **3**, in various examples, the outsole **204** includes a support member **300**, a comfort member **400**, and a covering member **500**.

[0041] Referring to FIGS. **3-8**, the support member **300** of the outsole **204** includes a body **302** having a top side **304** (see FIGS. **4-6**), a bottom side **306**, a forepart **308** including a toe end **310**, and a backpart **312** including a heel end **314** (see FIGS. **4-8**), in various examples, the support member **300** is constructed from various materials that are lighter in weight and more wear-resistant than leather, as well as flexible or resilient or elastic. For example, the support member **300** may be constructed from various materials including, but not limited to, polyurethane, thermoplastic rubbers, latex rubbers, dual density polyurethane, natural rubbers, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), or various other materials or combinations or compounds of materials. In various examples, the support member **300** is constructed from a material where expansion of the material during molding or forming may be controlled to accurately and consistently form support members **300** having consistent shapes that may be mated with the other components of the outsole **204**, including, but not limited to polyurethane or other materials with similar properties. In various examples, the support member **300** has a durometer of from about 40A to about 90A, such as from about 50A to about 80A, such as from about 60A to about **70**A. In some examples, the support member **300** may have a durometer of about 65A to about 80A. As described in detail below, in various examples, the support member **300** may have a durometer that is greater than that of the comfort member **400**. The support member **300** may be formed through various manufacturing techniques such as molding, compression, one shot, casting, forming, and various other suitable techniques.

[0042] As illustrated in FIGS. **4-7**, the forepart **308** defines a forepart aperture **316**, and the backpart **312** defines a backpart aperture **318**. The forepart aperture **316** is configured to accommodate a forepart **408** of the comfort member **400** and the backpart aperture **318** is configured to accommodate a heel projection **420** of the comfort member **400**, as described in detail below. In some cases, as illustrated in FIGS. **6** and **7**, the forepart **308** defines a ledge **320** extending partially into the forepart aperture **316**. The ledge **320** is configured to support the comfort member **400** when the comfort member **400** is positioned in the forepart aperture **316** from the top side **304** of the support member **300**. The ledge is also configured to support the covering member **500** within the forepart aperture **316** when the covering member **500** is positioned from the bottom side **306** of the support member **300**. In various examples, the ledge **320** is recessed relative to the top side **304** of the support member **300** (see FIG. **6**). In other examples, the ledge **320** may also be recessed relative to the bottom side **306** of the support member **300** (see FIG. **7**). Recessing the ledge **320** relative to the top side **304** and/or the bottom side **306** of the support member **300** may allow the comfort member **400** and/or the covering member **500** to be secured substantially flush to the support member **300**, as described in detail below. As illustrated in FIGS. **3** and **7**, in some examples, engagement ribs **322** are defined on the bottom side of the ledge **320**. The engagement ribs **322** may engage engagement notches **516** of the covering member **500** to further position the covering member **500** relative to the support member **300**, as described in detail below.

[0043] As described above, in some examples, the heel **202** is a separate component that is secured to the outsole **204**. In these examples, the heel **202** may be secured to the backpart **312** of the support member **300** such that the backpart aperture **318** provides access to a heel cavity **206** defined by the heel **202**. The heel cavity **206** is configured to accommodate the heel projection **420** of the comfort member **400**, as described in detail below. The heel **202** may be secured to the bottom side of the backpart through various adhesives, fasteners, or other suitable securing mechanisms as desired. FIG. **4** illustrates an example of the support member **300** before the heel **202** is secured to the support member **300**.

[0044] Referring to FIG. **6**, in the examples where the heel **202** and outsole **204** are integrally formed, the heel **202** is formed as a component of the backpart **312** on the bottom side **306** of the body **302** (see also FIGS. **6-8**). In various examples, a top side of the heel **202**, whether integrally formed with the outsole **204** or secured to the outsole **204**, includes the heel cavity **206**. The heel cavity **206** includes a cavity bottom surface **208** and a cavity sidewall surface **210**, and is configured to receive the heel projection **420** of the comfort member **400**. As illustrated in FIGS. **5-7**, in some examples, the heel **202** may optionally define a heel slot **210** extending from the cavity bottom surface **208** to a bottom side **212** of the heel **202** (see FIG. **7**). As illustrated in FIG. **7**, in some examples, the bottom side **212** of the heel **202** may define a heel recess **214** having a recess bottom surface **216** and a recess side surface **218**. The heel recess **214** is configured to receive a portion of the covering member **500**, as described in detail below.

[0045] Referring to DIGS. **9-11**, the comfort member **400** includes a body **402** having a top side **404**, a bottom side **406** (see FIG. **10**), a forepart **408** including a toe end **410**, and a backpart **412** including a back end **414** The comfort member **400** may be constructed from various materials that are lightweight and configured to provide comfort and flexibility to the wearer's foot. In various examples, the comfort member **400** is constructed from a material where expansion of the material during molding or forming may be controlled to accurately and consistently form comfort members **400** having consistent shapes that may be mated with the other components of the outsole **204**, including, but not limited to polyurethane or other materials with similar properties. In various examples, the comfort member **400** has a durometer of from about 0A to about 80A, such as from about 10A to about 60A, such as from about 30A, to about 50A. In some examples, the comfort member **400** may have a durometer of about 45A to about 60A. In various examples, the comfort member **400** may have a durometer that is less than that of the support member **300**. The comfort member **400** may be formed through various manufacturing techniques such as molding, compression, one shot, casting, forming, and various other suitable techniques.

[0046] Referring to FIGS. **10** and **11**, in various examples, the bottom side **406** of the comfort member **400** defines a locking recess **416** extending around at least a portion of the perimeter of the forepart **408**. In some examples, the locking recess **416** is configured to engage the ledge **320** of the forepart **308** of the support member **300** and seat the forepart **408** of the comfort member **400** within the forepart aperture **316**. In various cases, when the support member **300** is seated within the forepart aperture **316**, the top side **404** of the support member **300** may be substantially flush with the

top side **304** of the comfort member **400** (see FIG. **12**). In various other examples, the top side **404** of the comfort member **400** may extend above or below the top side **304** of the support member **300**.

[0047] In certain examples, the backpart **412** of the comfort member **400** defines the heel projection **420** extending from the bottom side of the comfort member **400**. The heel projection **420** is sized and dimensioned such that the heel projection **420** may be inserted into the heel cavity **206** defined by the heel **202**. Engagement of the heel projection **420** with the heel cavity **206** may aid in positioning and retaining the comfort member **400** relative to the support member **300**. As illustrated in FIGS. **10** and **11**, in various cases, the he& projection **420** may optionally include a heel projection rib **422**, which is sized and dimensioned to be positioned within the heel slot **210** of the heel **202** (see FIG. **13**). Engagement of the heel projection rib **422** with the heel slot **210** may further retain the position of the comfort member **400** relative to the support member **300**.

[0048] As illustrated in FIGS. **10** and **11**, in some cases, the bottom side **406** of the forepart **408** of the comfort member **400** optionally defines engagement projections **418**. As described in detail below, the engagement projections **418** may aid in positioning the covering member **500** relative to the support member **300** and the comfort member **400**. In various cases, the engagement projections **418** are optionally positioned on the bottom side **406** such that when the comfort member **400** is positioned on the support member **300**, at least some of the engagement projections **418** are aligned with the engagement ribs **322** of the support member **300** (see FIGS. **3** and **13**). The shape, size, and positioning of the engagement projections **418** on the comfort member **400** should not be considered limiting on the current disclosure.

[0049] Referring to FIGS. **14-16**, the covering member **500** includes a body **502** having a top side (not shown), a bottom side **504**, a forepart **506** including a toe end **508**, and a backpart **510** including a heel end **512**. In the present example, the forepart **506** and the backpart **510** are disconnected such that the bottom side **504** is not continuous from the toe end **508** to the heel end **512**. However, in various other examples, forepart **506** and backpart **510** may be integrally formed. The covering member **500** may be constructed from various materials including, but not limited to, various rubbers, thermoplastic rubber, leather, or various other materials forming a bottom layer of the footwear **10**. As illustrated, the covering member **500** may optionally include tread **514** on the bottom side **504**, although it need not.

[0050] As illustrated in FIGS. **3**, **14**, and **15**, in various examples, the forepart **506** defines engagement notches **516** at various locations around the perimeter of the forepart **506**. The number, shape, size, or location of the engagement notches **516** should not be considered limiting on the current disclosure. In various examples, the engagement notches **516** are configured to engage the engagement ribs **322** of the support member **300** to aid in positioning of the covering member **500** relative to the support member **300**. In some examples, the forepart **506** defines flex zone slots **520**. The number shape, size, or location of the flex zone slots **520** should not be considered limiting on the current disclosure. The flex zone slots **520** may be aligned with high impact areas of the wearer's foot, although they need not be. The flex zone slots **520** may increase flexibility or bending of the forepart **506** at the locations of the flex zone slots **520**. In some examples, the flex zone slots **520** are sized and dimensioned to accommodate the engagement projections **418** of the comfort member **400**. Engagement of the engagement projections **418** with the flex zone slots **520** may position the forepart **506** relative to the comfort member **400**. In some cases where the engagement projections **418** are engaged with the flex zone slots **520**, the engagement projections **418** may be substantially flush with the bottom side **504** of the forepart **506**; however, in other examples, the engagement projections **418** may extend above or below the bottom side **504** of the forepart **506**. As illustrated in FIGS. **14** and **15**, the forepart **506** may also optionally define a cutout **518** that is configured to accommodate at least one of the engagement projections **418** (see FIG. **3**).

[0051] As illustrated in FIGS. **3** and **15**, the backpart **510** is sized and dimensioned to be positioned within the heel recess **214** defined by the heel **202**. In some cases, the backpart **510** defines a covering slot **522** that is configured to align with the heel slot **210** defined by the heel **202**. In various examples, a translucent, transparent, or semi-transparent material, such as various glass, gels, plastics, and other materials, may be positioned within the covering slot **522** and/or heel slot **210** between the heel projection **420** and the bottom side **504** of the backpart **510**, although it need not. In various examples, when the backpart **510** is positioned within the heel recess **214**, the top side of the backpart **510** abuts the recess bottom surface **216** of the heel recess **214** and the bottom side **504** of the backpart **510** may be substantially flush with the bottom side **212** of the heel **202**, although it need not be.

[0052] Referring to FIGS. **3**, **11**, **12**, **14**, and **15**, a method of assembling the outsole **204** includes providing the support member **300** and securing the heel **202** to the backpart **312** of the support member **300** if the heel **202** is not formed as part of the support member **300**. In various examples, securing the heel **202** to the support member **300** includes positioning the heel **202** such that the backpart aperture **318** of the support member **300** provides access to the heel cavity **206** of the heel **202**.

[0053] The comfort member **400** is positioned relative to the support member **300** such that the top side of the comfort member **400** faces the same general direction as the top side of the support member **300**. In some examples, the forepart of the comfort member **400** is positioned within the forepart aperture of the support member **300** by positioning an engagement recess of the comfort member **400** on a ledge of the support member **300**. Positioning the comfort member **400** relative to the support member **300** may also include inserting a heel projection of the comfort member **400** through the backpart aperture of the support member **300** and into the heel cavity **206** of the heel **202**. In some examples, positioning the heel projection **420** into the heel cavity **206** includes positioning the heel projection rib **422** within the heel slot **210**. The comfort member **400** may be secured to the support member **300** through adhesives, fasteners, various other bonding materials or agents, or various other suitable fasteners.

[0054] When assembled, the comfort member **400** extends from proximate the toe end **310** of the support member **300** to proximate the heel end **314** of the support member **300** (see FIG. **12**). The combination of the comfort member **400** with the support member **300** provides a structure that is

lightweight and provides comfort and flexibility to the wearer while providing structure and support to the wearer's foot

[0055] The forepart **506** of the coveting member **500** is positioned by engaging the engagement ribs **322** of the support member **300** with the engagement notches **516** of the forepart **506**. In these examples, the top side of the forepart **506** abuts the bottom side **406** of the comfort member **400**. In various examples, positioning the forepart **506** of the covering member **500** optionally includes positioning engagement projections **418** on the bottom side **406** of the comfort member **400** within flex zone slots **520** of the forepart **506** of the covering member **500**. The forepart **506** of the covering member **500** may be secured to the support member **300** and/or the comfort member **400** through adhesives, fasteners, various other bonding materials or agents, or various other suitable fasteners.

[0056] The backpart **510** of the covering layer **616** is positioned within the heel recess **214** defined by the bottom side of the heel **202**. In some examples, positioning the backpart **510** includes aligning a covering slot **522** of the backpart **510** with the heel slot **210** of the heel **202**. In various cases, the top side of the backpart **510** abuts the recess bottom surface **216** of the heel **202**. The backpart **510** of the covering member **500** may be secured to the support member **300** through adhesives, fasteners, various other bonding materials or agents, or various other suitable fasteners.

[0057] Referring to FIGS. **17-19**, the footbed member **600** includes a body **602** having a top side **604**, a bottom side **606** (see FIG. **19**), a forepart **608** including a toe end **610**, and a backpart **612** including a heel end **614**. In some cases, the footbed member **600** is configured to accommodate a plurality of foot widths, although it need not.

[0058] As illustrated in FIGS. **17** and **18**, the top side **604** of the footbed member **600** includes a covering layer **616**. In various examples, the covering layer **616** may be constructed from various materials suitable for engaging with the wearer's foot, including but not limited to various textiles, leather, sheepskin, and other suitable materials.

[0059] Referring to FIG. **19**, the bottom side **606** of the footbed member **600** includes a base member **618**. According to various examples, the base member **618** is constructed from a material similar to that used to form the support member **300** of the outsole **204**, although it need not. In various cases, the base member **618** is constructed from a lightweight material configured to provide support to the wearer's foot.

[0060] In various examples, a comfort member **620** is provided between the covering layer **616** and the base member **618**. According to various examples, the comfort member **400** is constructed from a material similar to that used to form the comfort member **400** of the outsole **204**, although it need not. In various examples, the comfort member **400** is constructed from a lightweight material configured to provide cushioning and flexibility to the footbed member **600**. In various cases, the comfort member **620** and the base member **618** are assembled similar to the assembly of the support member **300** and the comfort member **400**, although it need not. As illustrated in FIG. **19**, in various cases, the base member **618** defines an engagement slot **622**. In some of these cases, the comfort member **620** may include projections similar to the engagement projections **418** that extend into the engagement slot **622** when the base member **618** and comfort member **620** are assembled.

[0061] In various examples, reinforcement members **624** may be provided for additional structure and stability to the footbed member **600**. The reinforcement members **624** may be constructed from a material similar to the material used for the base member **618**, or may be various other materials suitable for providing additional structure and stability to high impact areas. In some cases, the reinforcement members **624** are provided to align with high impact areas of the wearer's foot. The number or location of the reinforcement members **624** should not be considered limiting on the current disclosure.

[0062] A collection of exemplary embodiments, including at least some explicitly enumerated as "ECs" (Example Combinations), providing additional description of a variety of embodiment types in accordance with the concepts described herein are provided below. These examples are not meant to be mutually exclusive, exhaustive, or restrictive; and the invention is not limited to these example embodiments but rather encompasses all possible modifications and variations within the scope of the issued claims and their equivalents.

[0063] EC 1. An article of footwear comprising: an upper; and an outsole comprising: a support member comprising a body defining a forepart aperture and a backpart aperture; a comfort member supported by the support member within the forepart aperture and the backpart aperture, wherein a hardness of the comfort member is less than a hardness of the support member.

[0064] EC 2. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and wherein the comfort member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture.

[0065] EC 3. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the top side of the comfort member is substantially flush with the top side of the support member.

[0066] EC 4. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the ledge is recessed relative to a top side of the support member and relative to a bottom side of the support member.

[0067] EC 5. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member has a hardness of from about 65A to about 80A, and wherein the comfort member has a hardness of from about 45A to about 60A.

[0068] EC 6. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member comprises polyurethane, and wherein the comfort member comprises polyurethane,

[0069] EC 7. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side, a bottom side, a forepart, and a backpart, wherein the backpart comprises a heel extension extending from the bottom side of the backpart, and wherein the heel extension is positioned through the backpart aperture of the support member.

[0070] EC 8. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the outsole further comprises a heel on the support member and comprising a top side and a bottom side, wherein the top side of the heel defines a heel cavity and the bottom side of the heel defines a heel recess, wherein the heel is on the support member such that the backpart aperture provides access to the heel cavity, and wherein the heel extension of the comfort member is positioned within the heel cavity.

[0071] EC 9. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the heel is integrally formed with the support member.

[0072] EC 10. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the heel is secured to the support member.

[0073] EC 11. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the heel defines a heel slot extending from a heel cavity surface to the bottom side of the heel, and wherein the heel extension of the comfort member comprises a heel extension rib positioned within the heel slot.

[0074] EC 12. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the article of footwear further comprises: a cover member secured to the bottom side of the comfort member, wherein the cover member has a hardness greater than the hardness of the support member.

[0075] EC 13. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and wherein the cover member is supported on the ledge within the forefront aperture.

[0076] EC 14. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the ledge of the support member comprises a plurality of engagement ribs, and wherein the cover member comprises a plurality of engagement notches engaged with the engagement ribs of the support member.

[0077] EC 15. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the comfort member defines a plurality of engagement projections on the bottom side of the comfort member, and wherein the cover member defines a plurality of flex zone slots configured to receive the plurality of engagement projections of the comfort member.

[0078] EC 16. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the cover member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the bottom side comprises treads.

[0079] EC 17. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the cover member comprises a forepart component and a backpart component, wherein the outsole further comprises a heel on the support member and comprising a top side and a bottom side, wherein the bottom side of the heel defines a heel recess, and wherein the backpart component is configured to be positioned within the heel recess.

[0080] EC 18. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the upper defines an upper cavity configured to accommodate a foot of a wearer, and wherein the article of footwear further comprises a footbed insertable within the upper cavity.

[0081] EC 19. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the footbed comprises: a top layer; a base member; and a comfort member between the top layer and the base member, wherein a hardness of the comfort member of the footbed is less than a hardness of the base member of the footbed.

[0082] EC 20. The article of footwear of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the top layer of the footbed comprises sheepskin, wherein the base member of the footbed comprises polyurethane, and wherein the comfort member of the footbed comprises polyurethane.

[0083] EC **21**. A method of assembling an outsole for article of footwear comprising: positioning a forepart of a comfort member within a forepart aperture defined by a forepart of a support member; positioning a backpart of the comfort member within a backpart aperture defined by a backpart of the support member; and securing the comfort member relative to the support member.

[0084] EC **22**. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, further comprising securing the outsole to an upper.

[0085] EC **23**. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, further comprising securing a heel the backpart of the support member and positioning the heel such that the backpart aperture of the support member provides access to a heel cavity of the heel.

[0086] EC 24. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the comfort member is positioned relative to the support member such that a top side of the comfort member faces the same direction as a top side of the support member.

[0087] EC **25**. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein positioning the backpart of the comfort member comprises inserting a heel projection of the comfort member through the backpart aperture of the support member and into a heel cavity of a heel.

[0088] EC **26**. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein positioning the forepart of the comfort member comprises positioning the forepart of the comfort member on a ledge defined by the support member within the forepart aperture.

[0089] EC **27**. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein securing the comfort member relative to the support member comprises applying at least one of an adhesive, glue, bonding material, bonding agent, or fastener.

[0090] EC **28**. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, further comprising: positioning a forepart component of a covering layer by: engaging engagement ribs on a back side of the support member with engagement notches defined by the of the forepart component of the coveting layer; abutting a top side of the forepart component of the covering layer with a bottom side of the comfort member; positioning engagement projections on the bottom side of the comfort member within flex zone slots defined by the forepart component of the covering layer; and securing the forepart component of the covering layer relative to the comfort member and the support member.

[0091] EC 29. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, further comprising: positioning a backpart component of the covering layer by:

positioning the backpart component within a heel recess defined by a bottom side of a heel of the outsole; aligning a covering slot of the backpart component with a heel slot of the heel; abutting a top side of the backpart component of the covering layer with a heel recess surface of the heel; and securing the backpart component relative to the heel.

[0092] EC 30. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member has a hardness of from about 65A to about 80A, and wherein the comfort member has a hardness of from about 45A to about 60A.

[0093] EC 31. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member comprises polyurethane, and wherein the comfort member comprises polyurethane.

[0094] EC 32. A sole member for an article of footwear comprising: an outsole comprising: a support member comprising a body defining a backpart aperture; and a comfort member supported by the support member; and a heel on the support member and comprising a top side and a bottom side, the top side defining a heel cavity, wherein the backpart aperture provides access to the heel cavity, and wherein the comfort member is positioned within the backpart aperture and the heel cavity.

[0095] EC 33. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member further comprises a forepart aperture, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and wherein the comfort member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture.

[0096] EC 34. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the top side of the comfort member is substantially flush with the top side of the support member.

[0097] EC 35. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the ledge is recessed relative to a top side of the support member and relative to a bottom side of the support member.

[0098] EC 36. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side, a bottom side, a forepart, and a backpart, wherein the backpart comprises a heel extension extending from the bottom side of the backpart, and wherein the heel extension is positioned through the backpart aperture of the support member and into the heel cavity.

[0099] EC 37. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the bottom side of the heel defines a heel recess.

[0100] EC 38. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the heel defines a heel slot extending from a heel cavity surface to the bottom side of the heel, and wherein a heel extension of the comfort member comprises a heel extension rib positioned within the heel slot.

[0101] EC 39. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the article of footwear further comprises a cover member secured to the bottom side of the comfort member.

[0102] EC 40. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member further comprises a forepart aperture, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, wherein the ledge of the support member comprises a plurality of engagement ribs, and wherein the cover member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture and the cover member comprises a plurality of engagement notches engaged with the engagement ribs of the support member.

[0103] EC 41. The sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the comfort member defines a plurality of engagement projections on the bottom side of the comfort member, and wherein the cover member defines a plurality of flex zone slots configured to receive the plurality of engagement projections of the comfort member.

[0104] EC 42. An article of footwear comprising an upper connected to the sole member of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations.

[0105] EC 43. A method of assembling an article of footwear comprising: positioning a forepart of a comfort member within a forepart aperture defined by a forepart of a support member of an outsole for the article of footwear; positioning a backpart of the comfort member within a backpart aperture defined by a backpart of the support member; and securing the comfort member relative to the support member.

[0106] EC 44. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, further comprising securing the outsole to an upper.

[0107] EC 45. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, further comprising securing a heel the backpart of the support member and positioning the heel such that the backpart aperture of the support member provides access to a heel cavity of the heel.

[0108] EC 46. The method of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein positioning the backpart of the comfort member comprises inserting a heel projection of the comfort member through the backpart aperture of the support member and into a heel cavity of a heel, and wherein positioning the forepart of the comfort member comprises positioning the forepart of the comfort member on a ledge defined by the support member within the forepart aperture.

[0109] EC 47. An outsole for an article of footwear comprising: a support member comprising a body defining a forepart aperture and a backpart aperture; and a comfort member supported by the support member and positioned within the forepart aperture and the backpart aperture.

[0110] EC 48. The outsole of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and wherein the comfort member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture.

[0111] EC 49. The outsole of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the ledge is recessed relative to a top side of the support member and relative to a bottom side of the support member, and wherein the top side of the comfort member is flush with the top side of the support member.

[0112] EC 50. The outsole of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side, a bottom side, a forepart, and

a backpart, wherein the backpart comprises a heel extension extending from the bottom side of the backpart, and wherein the heel extension is positioned through the backpart aperture of the support member.

[0113] EC 51. The outsole of any of the preceding or subsequent example combinations, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the article of footwear further comprises: a cover member secured to the bottom side of the comfort member, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and wherein the cover member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture.

[0114] The above-described aspects are merely possible examples of implementations, merely set forth for a clear understanding of the principles of the present disclosure. Many variations and modifications can be made to the above-described. example(s) without departing substantially from the spirit and principles of the present disclosure. All such modifications and variations are intended to be included herein within the scope of the present disclosure, and all possible claims to individual aspects or combinations of elements or steps are intended to be supported by the present disclosure. Moreover, although specific terms are employed herein, as well as in the claims which follow, they are used only in a generic and descriptive sense, and not for the purposes of limiting the described invention, nor the claims which follow.

That which is claimed is:

1. A sole member for an article of footwear comprising:
an outsole comprising:
a support member comprising a body defining a backpart aperture; and
a comfort member supported by the support member; and
a heel on the support member and comprising a top side and a bottom side, the top side defining a heel cavity,
wherein the backpart aperture provides access to the heel cavity, and
wherein the comfort member is positioned within the backpart aperture and the heel cavity.

2. The sole member of claim **1**, wherein the support member further comprises a forepart aperture, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and wherein the comfort member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture.

3. The sole member of claim **2**, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the top side of the comfort member is substantially flush with the top side of the support member.

4. The sole member of claim **2**, wherein the ledge is recessed relative to a top side of the support member and relative to a bottom side of the support member.

5. The sole member of claim **1**, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side, a bottom side, a forepart, and a backpart, wherein the backpart comprises a heel extension extending from the bottom side of the backpart, and wherein the heel extension is positioned through the backpart aperture of the support member and into the heel cavity.

6. The sole member of claim **1**, wherein the bottom side of the heel defines a heel recess.

7. The sole member of claim **6**, wherein the heel defines a heel slot extending from a heel cavity surface to the bottom side of the heel, and wherein a heel extension of the comfort member comprises a heel extension rib positioned within the heel slot.

8. The sole member of claim **1**, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the article of footwear further comprises a cover member secured to the bottom side of the comfort member.

9. The sole member of claim **8**, wherein the support member further comprises a forepart aperture, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, wherein the ledge of the support member comprises a plurality of engagement ribs, and wherein the cover member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture and the cover member comprises a plurality of engagement notches engaged with the engagement ribs of the support member.

10. The sole member of claim **8**, wherein the comfort member defines a plurality of engagement projections on the bottom side of the comfort member, and wherein the cover member defines a plurality of flex zone slots configured to receive the plurality of engagement projections of the comfort member.

11. An article of footwear comprising an upper connected to the sole member of claim **1**.

12. A method of assembling an article of footwear comprising:
positioning a forepart of a comfort member within a forepart aperture defined by a forepart of a support member of an outsole for the article of footwear;
positioning a backpart of the comfort member within a backpart aperture defined by a backpart of the support member; and
securing the comfort member relative to the support member.

13. The method of claim **12**, further comprising securing the outsole to an upper.

14. The method of claim **12**, further comprising securing a heel the backpart of the support member and positioning the heel such that the backpart aperture of the support member provides access to a heel cavity of the heel.

15. The method of claim **12**, wherein positioning the backpart of the comfort member comprises inserting a heel projection of the comfort member through the backpart aperture of the support member and into a heel cavity of a heel, and wherein positioning the forepart of the comfort member comprises positioning the forepart of the comfort member on a ledge defined by the support member within the forepart aperture.

16. An outsole for an article of footwear comprising:
a support member comprising a body defining a forepart aperture and a backpart aperture; and
a comfort member supported by the support member and positioned within the forepart aperture and the backpart aperture.

17. The outsole of claim **16**, wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and wherein the comfort member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture.

18. The outsole of claim **17**, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the

ledge is recessed relative to a top side of the support member and relative to a bottom side of the support member, and wherein the top side of the comfort member is flush with the top side of the support member.

19. The outsole of claim **16**, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side, a bottom side, a forepart, and a backpart, wherein the backpart comprises a heel extension extending from the bottom side of the backpart, and wherein the heel extension is positioned through the backpart aperture of the support member.

20. The outsole of claim **16**, wherein the support member comprises a top side and a bottom side, wherein the comfort member comprises a top side and a bottom side, and wherein the article of footwear further comprises:

a cover member secured to the bottom side of the comfort member,

wherein the support member defines a ledge extending at least partially into the forepart aperture, and

wherein the cover member is supported on the ledge within the forepart aperture.

* * * * *