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Lancellotti

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[54] **TRIGGER POINT INSTRUMENT**

[76] Inventor: **William E. Lancellotti,** 371 Broadway, Providence, R.I. 02909

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **128/60**

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A61h 7/00**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 128/2 N, 2 R, 54, 60, 67, 128/69, 303 R, 61

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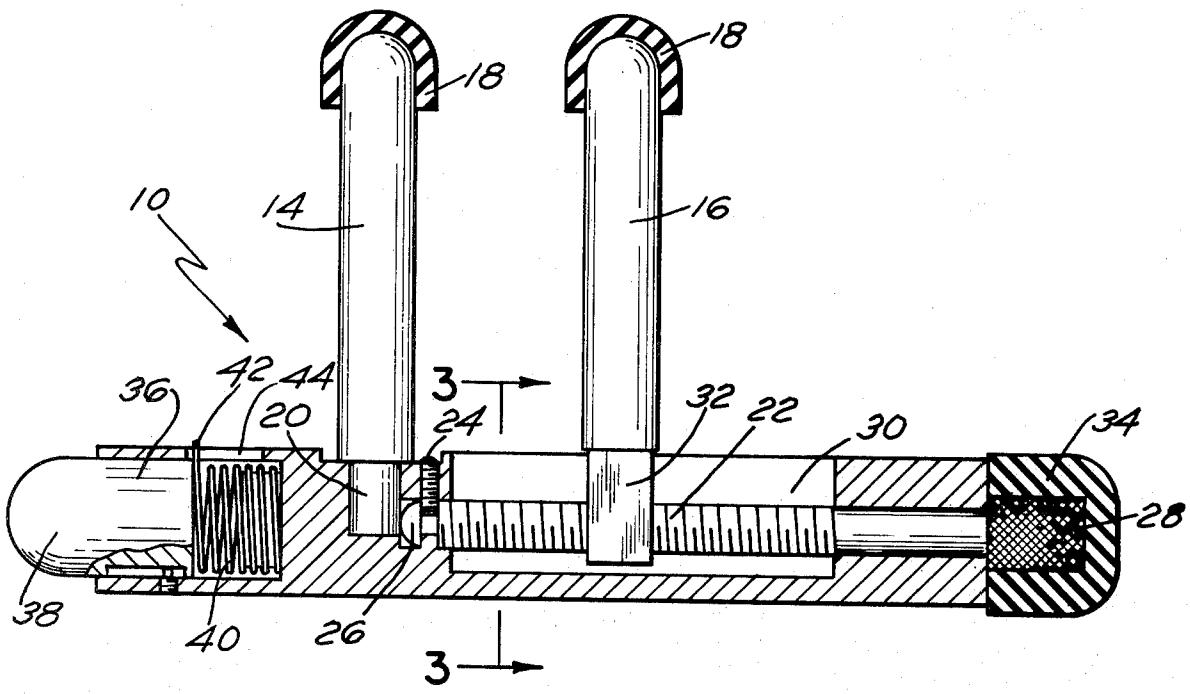
Primary Examiner—William E. Kamm

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Salter & Michaelson

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A trigger point instrument for chiropractic use in releasing trigger points in the human body comprising an elongated handle portion with a pair of spaced legs extending from said handle portion in substantially the same direction, the spacing between said legs being readily adjustable, and each of said legs having a resilient tip secured to the outer end thereof, the handle portion also having resilient tips secured to its outer ends, said latter tips being larger than the tips secured to the spaced legs.

4 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures



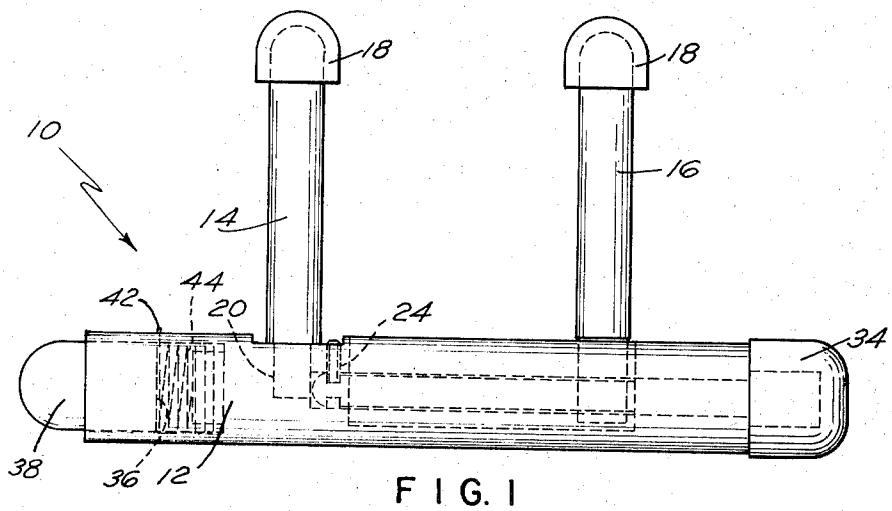


FIG. 1

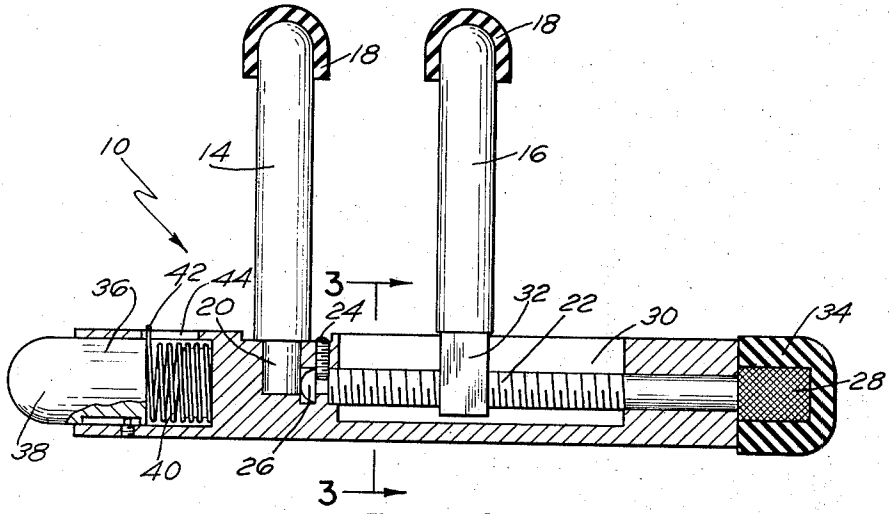


FIG. 2

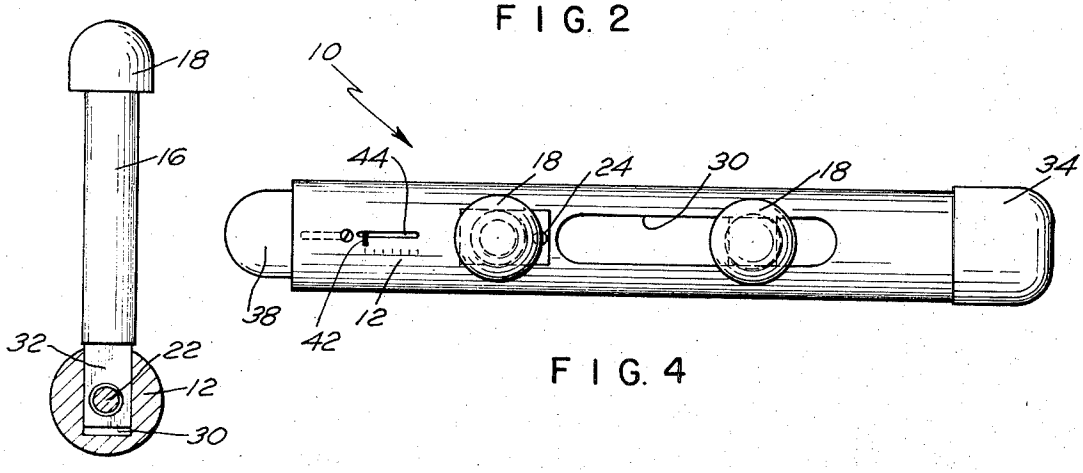


FIG. 3

FIG. 4

TRIGGER POINT INSTRUMENT

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a trigger point instrument for chiropractic use and, more particularly, to an instrument of this type that is both adjustable and more versatile than presently existing trigger point instruments.

Trigger point instruments, as presently known in the chiropractic art, traditionally comprise a T-shaped device, with the cross bar of the "T" functioning as a handle, and the leg portion of the "T" having a rubber tip secured to the end thereof. Devices of this type are used by chiropractic physicians to locate and then treat or release "trigger points" in the human body. The term "trigger point" as used herein and as known in the art refers to highly sensitive muscular areas where muscular spasms or the like are taking place. In using a device of this type, the chiropractic physician will probe and press the rubber tip against numerous muscular areas, attempting to locate the "trigger point"; and, once so located, further pressure application of the device against the trigger point will treat the sensitive area and release undesirable tension caused by said sensitivity or spasm.

Prior art trigger point instruments, as described above, have been found to have certain shortcomings in use. For example, depending upon the particular muscular area being probed, a larger or smaller rubber tip must be used, thus making it necessary for the chiropractic physician to have a number of these devices of different sizes on hand. Also, when probing the transverse processes of the spinal column, it is necessary when using the existing instrument to first probe one side of the spinal column and then the other; whereas it would be advantageous to be able to probe both sides of the spinal volumn without having to raise and replace the instrument.

The present invention overcomes these shortcomings by providing a trigger point instrument wherein a pair of spaced legs, each having rubber tips at the end thereof, extend from the elongated handle portion of the device, whereupon said spaced tips may be used to get it between the transverse processes of the spinal column, whereby pressure may be applied to spaced points therealong without having to raise and then reapply the instrument. Means are provided for permitting ready adjustment of the spacing between the aforesaid legs, whereupon the spacing between the pressure tips can be adjusted to conform to the thickness or width of the spine being probed and treated.

In addition to the above, rubber tips are secured to the opposite ends of the elongated handle portion of my device, said rubber tips being substantially larger than the tips on the aforesaid spaced legs. Thus, the tips on the handle may be used for probing and applying pressure to the larger muscular structures, such as the gluteus muscles, hence adding to the versatility of my device. If desired, and preferably, the tips secured to the opposite ends of the elongated handle are somewhat different in size and/or configuration with respect to each other so as to be more effectively usable for specific muscular areas.

Also, one or more of the aforesaid rubber tips are spring loaded and are provided with calibration means whereby the pressure being applied by said tip can readily be determined.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will become apparent as the description thereof proceeds when considered in connection with the accompanying illustrative drawings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings which illustrate the best mode presently contemplated for carrying out the present invention:

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of a trigger point instrument embodying my invention;

FIG. 2 is a sectional view of the instrument shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a section taken on line 3—3 of FIG. 2; and

FIG. 4 is a top plan view thereof.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to the drawings, a trigger point instrument embodying my invention is shown generally at **10** and comprises an elongated handle **12** and a pair of outwardly extending legs **14** and **16,** each of which extend from handle **12** in substantially the same direction so as to be in alignment with each other, as clearly shown in the drawings. The handle **12** is preferably of cylindrical configuration and is constructed of any suitable structural material, such as metal or a rigid plastic. Likewise, the legs **14** and **16** are preferably of cylindrical configuration and are constructed of any suitable structural material. Secured to the end of the legs **14** and **16,** by any suitable means, are resilient tips **18,** each of which is substantially the same size. In practice, it has been found that preferably the handle **12** is approximately 4 inches long and approximately ¾ inch in diameter. The legs **14** and **16** are preferably approximately 2 inches long and 5/16 to ⅜ inch in diameter. The tips **18,** which preferably are of a rubber construction, are approximately ⅜ inch thick.

Referring now to FIG. **2,** it will be seen that leg **14** is fixedly secured to handle **12,** as at **20.** On the other hand, leg **16** is adjustably mounted, whereby the spacing between legs **14** and **16** may be readily adjusted. Specifically, handle **12** is provided with a longitudinally extending threaded shaft **22,** secured in position by means of a set screw **24** which, when inwardly threaded, engages behind head member **26** carried by the adjacent end of shaft **22.** It will thus be seen that shaft **22** is firmly held in position within handle **12,** but is free to rotate therein, and, specifically, the opposite end of shaft **22** is provided with a knurled portion **28** located outwardly of handle **12,** which knurled portion, when turned, will cause shaft **22** to rotate. As will be seen most clearly in FIGS. **2** and **4,** handle **12** is provided with an elongated slot **30** which is in communication with the threaded portion of shaft **22.** Leg **16** is provided with a squared bottom portion **32** which extends downwardly into slot **30** and which threadedly receives shaft **22.** It will thus be seen that rotation of knurled portion **28** and hence of shaft **22** will cause leg **16** to move longitudinally along handle **12** either toward or away from fixed leg **14,** depending on the direction of rotation of shaft **22.** Thus, simply by turning the knurled portion **28,** the spacing between legs **14** and **16** can readily be adjusted so that when the instrument **10** is being used to probe the transverse processes

of the spinal column, the spacing can be adjusted to conform to the thickness or width of the spine being probed or treated.

Secured to knurled portion **28** is a resilient tip **34** which it will be noted is substantially larger than the aforesaid tips **18.** At the opposite end of handle **12,** there is secured, as at **36,** an additional resilient tip **38,** preferably of rubber, it being noted that the tip **38** is of a somewhat different configuration than the tip **34,** and is slightly smaller. It will be understood that the tips **34** and **38** may be used when it is desired to probe the larger muscle structures, such as the gluteus muscles. Thus, the same instrument may be used to probe the spinal column area, as well as other muscular structures in the body. In addition, the prongs **14** and **16** which are used for probing the spinal column area may be readily adjusted with respect to each other to conform to the thickness or width of the particular spine being treated.

In many cases it is desirable to apply a predetermined amount of pressure when probing or treating the patient with the instrument **10,** and to accomplish this, the tip **38** is spring loaded by means of spring **40** whereby pressure on tip **38** will cause same to depress against the action of said spring. Any suitable calibration means, such as pointer **42,** extending through slot **44,** may be associated with spring **40;** whereby when tip **38** is depressed, the amount of pressure being applied may be quickly determined. If desired, other tips, such as the tips **18,** could be similarly spring loaded.

While there is shown and described herein certain specific structure embodying the invention, it will be manifest to those skilled in the art that various modifications and rearrangements of the parts may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the underlying inventive concept and that the same is not limited to the particular forms herein shown and described except insofar as indicated by the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A trigger point instrument comprising an elongated handle, a pair of spaced legs extending outwardly from said handle in substantially the same direction, resilient tips secured to the ends of said legs, and means carried by said instrument operable to adjust the spacing between said legs, said adjustable means comprising a threaded shaft rotatably mounted within said handle and extending longitudinally thereof, one end of said shaft extending outwardly from the adjacent end of said handle whereby rotation may be imparted to said one end to rotate said shaft, an elongated slot in said handle communicating with said threaded shaft, one of said legs extending through said slot and making threaded engagement with said shaft whereby when the latter is rotated, said one leg will be caused to move along said slot, said other leg being fixedly attached to said handle.

2. In the instrument of claim **1,** said one end of said shaft having a resilient tip secured thereover, and said other end of said handle having a resilient tip secured thereover, said shaft and handle tips being larger than the tips on said legs.

3. In the instrument of claim **2,** at least one of said tips being movably mounted, and resilient means normally urging said one tip outwardly, whereby pressure on said movable tip causes it to move inwardly against the action of said resilient means.

4. In the instrument of claim **3,** said movable tip having calibration means associated therewith whereby the amount of pressure applied by said tip can be readily determined.

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