A fastener is provided for extendably holding ends of a piece of jewelry together. The fastener includes two fastener bodies and a cord. Each fastener body is affixable to one end of the piece of jewelry. One fastener body includes a housing and a spring biased cord retraction mechanism. The cord retraction mechanism is positioned within the housing. The housing has an opening through which the cord passes. The cord is tethered between the first fastener body and the cord retraction mechanism so that the cord retraction mechanism draws the cord into the second fastener body, pulling the first and second fastener bodies together.
RETRACTABLE JEWELRY FASTENER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] People often desire to adorn themselves, or their pets, with jewelry. Sometimes, jewelry wearers may have a difficult time fastening and unfastening regular jewelry clasps. Additionally, conventional jewelry clasps often come unfastened when the wearer desires for them to stay fastened.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0002] FIG. 1 is a diagram illustrating one embodiment of the present invention retractable jewelry fastener in a retracted position.

[0003] FIG. 2 is an enlarged illustration of the fastener shown in FIG. 1.

[0004] FIG. 3 is a partially cut away view of the retractable jewelry fastener of FIG. 2 in an extended position.

[0005] FIG. 4 is an enlarge illustration of one of the fastener bodies in FIG. 3, further showing a locking mechanism.

[0006] FIG. 5 is a diagram illustrating another embodiment of the present invention retractable jewelry fastener incorporated into a piece of jewelry.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0007] FIG. 1 shows one embodiment of a fastener 2 for extendably holding ends 6, 8 of a piece of jewelry 4 together. Fastener 2 allows ends 6, 8 of piece of jewelry 4 to extend from one another without being unclasped. Extending ends 6, 8 of piece of jewelry 4 from one another enlarges piece of jewelry 4, making it easier to don.

[0008] Piece of jewelry 4 is any type of jewelry, such as a necklace, choker, collar, bracelet, watchstrap, anklet, earring, or body jewelry, having at least two ends which are joined to form a loop for encircling a body part of a human or animal.

[0009] Fastener 2 includes two fastener bodies 10, 12. Fastener bodies 10, 12 are each affixed to one end 6, 8 of piece of jewelry 4.

[0010] FIG. 2 is an enlarged illustration of one embodiment of fastener 2. Formed in each fastener body 10, 12 is a loop 14, 16 for attachment to one of the ends 6, 8 of piece of jewelry 4. A jump ring 18, 20 is attached to each loop 14, 16.

[0011] FIG. 3 is a partially cut away view of fastener body 2 in an extended position. In one embodiment, fastener body 10 includes a housing 22 and a spring biased cord retraction mechanism 24 within housing 22. An opening 26 is formed in housing 22.

[0012] A cord 28 is tethered between fastener body 12 and cord retraction mechanism 24. Cord 28 is of any suitable length and is formed of any suitable material in any desired color.

[0013] Cord 28 passes through opening 26. Cord retraction mechanism 24 is configured to draw cord 28 into fastener body 10, pulling fastener bodies 10, 12 together.

[0014] In an alternative embodiment, not illustrated, fastener body 12 also includes a housing 22, a spring biased cord retraction mechanism 24 within housing 22, and an opening 26 formed in housing 22. In this embodiment, the cord 28 is tethered between each of the spring biased cord retraction mechanisms 24.

[0015] Although shown in the Figures as bead-shaped, fastener bodies 10, 12 may be shaped in any form, so long as at least one of the fastener bodies 10, 12 includes housing 22 and spring biased cord retraction mechanism 24. Furthermore, fastener bodies 10, 12 may, but need not, be similarly shaped. Fastener bodies 10, 12 are manufactured from any suitable material and are of any suitable size.

[0016] FIG. 4 is an enlarge illustration of one of the fastener body 10. In one embodiment, spring biased cord retraction mechanism 24 includes a reel 30 for holding cord 28 and a spring (not shown) biasing reel 30 to resist paying out cord 28 from reel 30.

[0017] Additionally illustrated in FIG. 4 is one example of a locking mechanism 34. Locking mechanism 34 is any means for electively preventing cord retraction mechanism 24 from either retracting or paying out cord 28. For example, locking mechanism 34 may include a toggle button, which when pushed locks cord 28, preventing it from paying out or retracting. When pushed again, the toggle button releases cord 28, allowing it to again pay out or retract. Using locking mechanism 34 to prevent the retraction of cord 28 may allow a wearer of piece of jewelry 4 to don piece of jewelry 4 more easily or to extend piece of jewelry 4. Using locking mechanism 34 to prevent the paying out of cord 28 helps secure piece of jewelry 4 on the wearer.

[0018] FIG. 5 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention wherein fastener 2 is incorporated into piece of jewelry 4. Piece of jewelry 4 is a flexible strip 32 having ends 6, 8. Fastener body 12 is affixed one end 6 of strip 32. Fastener body 10 is affixed to the other end 6 of strip 32. Fastener bodies 10, 12 are either affixed directly to ends 6, 8, as illustrated in FIG. 5, or affixed indirectly through jump rings 18, 20 as shown in FIG. 1.

[0019] In practice, fastener 2 is attached to ends 6, 8 of piece of jewelry 4. Fastener bodies 10, 12 are then manually pulled apart to enlarge piece of jewelry 4. Enlarging piece of jewelry 4 allows it to more easily fit the body part where it is to be worn. For example, piece of jewelry 4 may be a necklace that, when clasped, does not fit over the wearer's head. Fastener 2 is affixed to the clasps of the necklace. Fastener bodies 10, 12 are then manually pulled apart to allow the necklace to fit over the wearer's head. When released, spring biased cord retraction mechanism 24 pulls bodies 10, 12 together.

[0020] The foregoing description is only illustrative of the invention. Various alternatives, modifications, and variances can be devised by those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the present invention embraces all such alternatives, modifications, and variances that fall within the scope of the described invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A fastener for extendably holding ends of a piece of jewelry together, the fastener comprising:
   a first fastener body affixable to a first end of the piece of jewelry;
   a second fastener body affixable to a second end of the piece of jewelry, the second fastener body including a housing and a spring biased cord retraction mechanism within the housing, the housing having an opening formed therein;
   a cord tethered between the first fastener body and the cord retraction mechanism and passing through the opening in the housing, wherein the cord retraction mechanism is configured to draw the cord into the second fastener body, pulling the first and second fastener bodies together.

2. The fastener of claim 1 further including, formed in each fastener body, a loop for attachment to one of the ends of the piece of jewelry.
3. The fastener of claim 2 further including first and second jump rings for attachment to one of the ends of the piece of jewelry, the first jump ring attached to the loop in the first fastener body and the second jump ring attached to the loop in the second fastener body.

4. The fastener of claim 1 wherein the spring biased cord retraction mechanism includes a reel for holding the cord and a spring biasing the reel to resist paying out the cord from the reel.

5. The fastener of claim 1 further including a locking mechanism configured to electively prevent the cord retraction mechanism from retracting the cord.

6. The fastener of claim 1 further including a locking mechanism configured to electively prevent the cord retraction mechanism from paying out the cord.

7. A jewelry piece including:
   a flexible strip having first and second ends;
   a first fastener body affixed to the first end of the strip;
   a second fastener body affixed to the second end of the strip, the second fastener body including a housing and a spring biased cord retraction mechanism within the housing, the housing having an opening formed therein;
   a cord tethered between the first fastener body and the cord retraction mechanism and passing through the opening in the housing, wherein the cord retraction mechanism is configured to draw the cord into the second fastener body, pulling the first and second fastener bodies together.

8. The jewelry piece of claim 7 further including, formed in each fastener body, a loop for attachment to one of the ends of the strip.

9. The jewelry piece of claim 8 further including first and second jump rings for attachment to one of the ends of the strip, the first jump ring attached to the loop in the first fastener body and the second jump ring attached to the loop in the second fastener body.

10. The jewelry piece of claim 7 wherein the spring biased cord retraction mechanism includes a reel for holding the cord and a spring biasing the reel to resist paying out the cord from the reel.

11. The jewelry piece of claim 7 further including a locking mechanism configured to electively prevent the cord retraction mechanism from retracting the cord.

12. The jewelry piece of claim 7 further including a locking mechanism configured to electively prevent the cord retraction mechanism from paying out the cord.

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