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(54) **CONVERTIBLE SHOE**

UMWANDELBARER SCHUH

CHAUSSURE CONVERTIBLE

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Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The invention relates to footwear with removable and replaceable inserts and soles to convert a low heel shoe to a higher heel shoe, or convert a casual shoe to a sport shoe.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] There are a number of existing inventions related to shoes having added inserts to alter the shoe from a low heeled shoe or flat to a higher heeled shoe, and there are a number of existing inventions relating to shoes with removable and replaceable soles. U.S. Pat. No. 7,752,695, issued July 13, 2010 to Kaufman et al., is drawn to a shoe having an insertable and removable wedge that can be inserted into an openable space in the heel of the shoe between the insole and the sole. The invention is drawn to a temporary insert for use during the finishing process, but it teaches the use of a removable insert to alter the height of the heel of the shoe.

[0003] U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US2003/0200675 to Gross, published on October 30, 2003, teaches a sandal or "flip-flop" style shoe with multiple inserts, or core modules, to adjust the height of the shoe. The core modules are all of uniform thickness so the overall height of the shoe is altered but not the height of the heel in relation to the toe. The core modules are positioned by a series of corresponding holes and insertable pins, and held together by mating hook and loop material.

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 3,902,259, issued Sept. 2, 1975 to Cracco discloses a sandal with interchangeable side plates and sole. The side plates and sole can be removed and replaced through a series of interlocking slots and are positioned with corresponding projections and holes. The side plates and sole can be altered to alter the look of the sandal, and in one embodiment a flat sole can be replaced with a sole with a wedge heel to convert the shoe from a low heel to a higher heel. Cracco does not disclose the use of an intermediate insertable component to alter a low heel into a high heel, and involves multiple components with a complicated locking mechanism.

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 5,317,822 issued June 7, 1994 to Johnson is drawn to an athletic shoe with interchangeable wear sole, or sole tread. The purpose is to allow the user to alter the tread to best match the tread to the surface of the athletic play area. The sole is positioned by a series of knobs and knob chambers that correspond to align the components, and the sole is held in place by Velcro hook and loop material and a series of lock brackets with locking pins placed around the perimeter of the sole. U.S. Pat. No. 7,549,237 issued on June 23, 2009 to Gallegos, discloses a shoe with a removable and interchangeable cushion and orthotic plate. The cushion and orthotic plate are positioned and held in place by

corresponding studs and apertures, or in the alternative by hook and loop material such as Velcro. Gallegos does not alter the height of the heel or the tread on the sole.

[0006] U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2009/0193684 to Diamond, published on August 6, 2009 teaches a convertible shoe with removable and replaceable foot bed upper and sole portion with various height and style sole and heel portion. The components are aligned by a series of corresponding prongs and recesses, and held in place by corresponding hook and loop material such as Velcro, along with a series of snap like fasteners on the periphery of the outsole. Diamond discloses heels of differing heights and styles, but does not use an insert placed between the insole and sole to alter the height of the shoe or the heel.

[0007] Further information pertaining to the prior art can be found in US 2003/136028 that discloses a height adjustable flexible shoe including a shoe upper portion having an open upper end, a closed lower end, and a body portion therebetween. The open upper end is dimensioned for receiving a foot therein. The closed lower end has a toe portion and a back portion. The back portion has a first heel portion extending downwardly therefrom. The body portion is comprised of an adjustable elastomeric material. A second heel portion is adapted for removably coupling with the first heel portion of the shoe upper portion. A third heel portion is adapted for removably coupling with the second heel portion. The first, second, and third heel portions are of substantially equal heights to provide significant control over the inclination of the shoe.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Technical Problem

[0008] Shoes with high heels are fashionable, but often uncomfortable. High heels are particularly uncomfortable if worn for long periods of time. Because of this, it is very common for a woman to carry an extra pair of shoes to change into when she is wearing high heels for an extended period of time. Women will frequently wear a pair of flats, or often tennis shoes, to work in the morning, and then switch into dressier shoes with high heels at the office. Often, if wearing high heels in the evening, a woman will also carry a pair of more comfortable shoes, such as ballet flats or flip-flops, in her purse for later wear. It is also not uncommon to see women in bare feet after wearing high heels for an extended length of time. There is a need, therefore, for a shoe that is both fashionable and easily convertible from a high to a low heel, and for a shoe that is easily convertible to a sport shoe.

Solution to the Problem

[0009] The present invention provides a convertible shoe in accordance with independent claim 1. Preferred embodiments of the invention are reflected in the de-

pendent claims.

[0010] The claimed invention can be better understood in view of the embodiments described and illustrated in the present disclosure, viz. in the present specification and drawings. In general, the present disclosure reflects preferred embodiments of the invention. The attentive reader will note, however, that some aspects of the disclosed embodiments extend beyond the scope of the claims. To the respect that the disclosed embodiments indeed extend beyond the scope of the claims, the disclosed embodiments are to be considered supplementary background information and do not constitute definitions of the invention *per se*.

[0011] The present disclosure relates to a convertible shoe that consists of an insole with a foot bed and upper, and insert, and a sole. There is a standard attachment that connects the insole to the insert and the insert to the sole. The insole can be attached directly to the sole to create a flat or a shoe with a low heel, and the insert can be added between the insole and the sole to create a shoe with a higher heel. In one variation there can be two or more inserts to create a shoe with multiple and variable heights. In another variation there can be different tread configurations on the bottom of the sole to create different types of shoes with the same upper, for example a dress shoe and a golf shoe, by means of an interchangeable sole bottom.

[0012] The preferred embodiment of the convertible shoe will be a wedge style shoe. The wedge will have three separate components: an upper components consisting of an insoles; a middle component consisting of an insert; and a bottom component consisting of a sole. This wedge will go from a high heel, with an approximate height of four inches when all three components are fastened together, to a lower heel of approximately one to two inches when the middle insert is removed, and the insole is attached directly to the sole. The upper insole will always be the top of the shoe and the bottom sole will always be the bottom of the shoe. This version of the shoe will be available for women with a variety of style uppers.

[0013] The convertible shoe of the present invention will also have a sport shoe version, that has only the upper insole and the bottom sole. This version will feature convertible bottom soles with different treads, and will convert from a tennis shoe or dress shoe to a golf shoe by replacing the bottom sole. There would be at least two different versions of this sport shoes: One will be a men's wingtip or dress shoe that can convert to a golf shoe, and the other version would be a women's or men's tennis shoe that would convert to a golf shoe, by changing the sole and tread. This version of the shoe will be available in men, women, and children's versions and styles.

Advantageous Effects of the Invention

[0014] One of the technical difficulties of creating a removable attachment for components of a shoe is that it

has to be strong enough to withstand the dynamic forces on the shoe and keep the components securely attached, while at the same time also be easily and conveniently detachable. The present invention accomplishes this by means of the attachment mechanism which consists of the paired protruding perimeter ridge and recessed perimeter channel and the attachment material. The perimeter ridge is on the underside of the upper component and the recessed channel is on the top side of the lower component. There is attachment material on both components. The attachment material holds the two components together, while the paired perimeter ridge and perimeter channel allow the attachment to withstand the forces on the shoe and keep the components securely attached. The combination of the paired ridge and channel and the attachment material has proven so secure that in some cases it has been difficult to separate the components. This led to the creation of the additional element of the concave cross section on the sole and insert, and the flared cross section on the insole, which create both an attractive look on the back of the shoe, and a convenient hand grip to hold the components for attachment and disassembly.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015]

FIG 1 is a side view of the convertible shoe with the insole attached to the insert and the insert attached to the sole.

FIG 2 is an exploded side view of the convertible shoe showing the insole in position to be attached to the insert and the insert in position to be attached to the sole.

FIG 3 is a top perspective view of the first embodiment of the top attachment showing the channel and the top attachment field.

FIG 4 is a bottom perspective view of the first embodiment of the bottom attachment, showing the protruding ridge and the bottom attachment field.

FIG 5 is an exploded perspective from the underside of the convertible shoe showing the first embodiment of the bottom attachment of the insole and insert, and the tread of the sole.

FIG 6 is an exploded perspective from above the convertible shoe showing the footbed of the insole and the first embodiment of the top attachment of the insert and sole.

FIG 7 is a partial cross section showing the perimeter ridge inserted within the perimeter channel, and the attachment material.

FIG 8 is a top perspective view of the second embodiment of the top attachment showing the channel, the prong recesses, and the top attachment field.

FIG 9 is a bottom perspective view of the second embodiment of the bottom attachment, showing the protruding ridge, the protruding prongs, and the bot-

tom attachment field.

FIG 10 is an exploded perspective from the underside of the convertible shoe showing the second embodiment of the bottom attachment of the insole and insert, and the tread of the sole.

FIG 11 is an exploded perspective from above the convertible shoe showing the footbed of the insole and the second embodiment of the top attachment of the insert and sole.

FIG 12 is a rear view of the convertible shoe showing the concave cross section of the heel of the sole and insert, and the flared cross section of the heel of the insole.

FIG 13 is a side view of the convertible shoe showing the insole attached directly to the sole for the low heel version of the shoe.

FIG 14 is an exploded side view of the convertible shoe showing the insole in position to be attached directly to the sole.

FIG 15 is a bottom view of the tread on the bottom of the sole of the convertible shoe.

FIG 16 is a bottom view of a golf shoe version of the tread.

FIG 17 is a side view of a different embodiment of the upper of the convertible shoe.

FIG 18 is a side view of a different embodiment of the upper of the convertible shoe.

FIG 19 is a detail of the bow and clip on the heel of the insole and sole of the convertible shoe.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0016] Detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein. It is to be understood, however, that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention and that the invention may be embodied in various and alternative forms. Therefore, specified structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limitations, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present invention.

[0017] The convertible shoe 100 will go from a low heel to a high heel by simply adding an insert 30 between the top insole 10 and the bottom sole 50. In the preferred embodiment, the convertible shoe 100 will consist of three different components; a top portion consisting of an insole 10 with a foot bed 11 and a styled upper 60; a middle portion consisting of an insert 30; and the bottom portion consisting of the sole 50. The components are attached by a uniform attachment means, described in detail below, that allows the insole 10 to attach directly to the sole 50 for a low heel, or include the insert 30 for a shoe with a higher heel. In an alternate version there can be multiple inserts each with uniform thickness, of approximately one inch thickness at the rear in the preferred embodiment, which allows the creation of a shoe with a heel from 1 inch to 4 inch thickness in one inch increments. In a second embodiment the insole 10 can

attach directly to the sole 50, but there will be a number of interchangeable soles 50 with differing tread components 52 on the bottom, so that by changing the sole 50 the type of shoe can be changed. This will allow, for example, the ability to change from a dress shoe to a golf shoe. Details of these embodiments will be described in conjunction with the attached figures.

[0018] As seen in FIG 1 & FIG 2 the convertible shoe 100 consists of an insole 10, an insert 30, and a sole 50. The insole 10 has a footbed 11, which is on the top of the insole 10 and where the wearer's foot will rest. There is an insole toe end 13 and an insole heel end 14, which correspond to the wearer's heel and toe, and to standard footwear terminology. And there is an insole perimeter 15 which runs around the perimeter of the insole 10, and corresponds to what is commonly called the outsole. The insole 10 also has a bottom surface 12 which includes the bottom surface 20 attachment components, which will be described below. The insert 30 has a top surface 31, a bottom surface 32, an insert toe end 33, an insert heel end 34, and an insert perimeter 35, which is the outside surface of the insert 30. The insert bottom surface 32 includes the bottom surface 20 attachment components, described below. The insert top surface 31 includes the top surface 40 attachment components described below. The sole 50 has a top surface 51, an underside, often called and referred to herein the tread 52, a sole toe end 53, a sole heel end 54, and a sole perimeter 55 or outer surface or outsole. The sole top surface 51 includes the top surface 40 attachment components as described below. The convertible shoe 100 is designed so that the insole bottom surface 12 and the insert bottom surface 32 are identical, and the insert top surface 31 and sole top surface 51 are identical, with both bottom surfaces having the same bottom surface 20 attachment components, and both top surfaces having the same top surface 40 attachment components. And, as described below, the bottom surface 20 attachment components correspond to the top surface 40 attachment components so that the insole 10 can be attached directly to the sole 50 to create a low heeled shoe, or attached to the insert 30 and the insert 30 attached to the sole 50 to create a high heel shoe.

[0019] The insole 10, as best seen in FIG 2 has an essentially uniform thickness between the footbed 11 and the bottom surface 12 running from the insole toe 13 to the insole heel 14. The insole 10 of all variations of the shoe 100 has a uniform thickness. In the preferred embodiment the insert 10 is 7.0 mm thick, but can run between approximately one quarter inch thick to three quarters of an inch thick. The insert 30 has a wedge shaped between the top surface 31 and the bottom surface 32, which is thin at the insert toe 33 and thick at the insert heel 34. The insert 30 of all variations of the shoe 100 has a wedge shaped thickness. The insert 30 of the preferred embodiment has a thickness at the insert toe 33 of approximately 7 mm thick, and has a thickness at the insert heel 54 of approximately 45 mm thick. The thick-

ness as the insert toe end 33 will always be roughly one quarter of an inch thick, but the thickness at the insert heel end 34 can range between approximately one inch and approximately three inches. The sole 50, depicted in FIG 2, has a wedge shape between the top surface 51 and the tread 52, which is thin at the sole toe 53 and thicker at the sole heel 54. In the preferred embodiment the thickness of the sole 50 is approximately 7 mm at the sole toe 53 and approximately 58 mm at the sole heel 54. The thickness of the sole 50 at the sole toe 53 will always be approximately one half of an inch, but the thickness at the sole heel end 54 can range from between one half inch, for the convertible sports version as described below, to approximately three inches for the high heel version. FIGS 1 & 2 also show that the toe end of the shoe (13, 33 and 53) also is curved up slightly. This is common among shoes, and is referred to as the "kick up." The kick up allows the wearer to roll forward on the ball of the foot, and is necessary to allow the wearer of the shoe 100 to walk comfortably and normally.

[0020] The first embodiment of the attachment means are shown in FIGS 3, 4, 5, & 6. The bottom surface attachment 20 is shown in FIG 4. The bottom surface attachment 20 is the same on the insole 10 bottom surface 12 and the insert 30 bottom surface 32. The bottom surface attachment 20 has a toe end 23 and a heel end 24, and consists of a protruding perimeter ridge 21, and a bottom attachment field 25 which is located within the perimeter ridge 21. The perimeter ridge 21 has an essentially rectangular cross section and is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ (one quarter) of an inch wide and approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ (one quarter) of an inch thick, but this size can vary slightly. In the preferred embodiment the perimeter ridge 21 is 8.0 mm at the top and tapers slightly to 8.3 mm at the bottom, where the perimeter ridge 21 attaches to the surface 20. The height of the perimeter ridge 21 is 6.0 mm. There is a sheet of attachment material 26 located in the bottom attachment field 25. In one variation the attachment material 26 is standard hook and loop material common known as Velcro, and in another embodiment the attachment material 26 is "Mushroom Velcro" such as that sold under the brand name 3-M™ Dual Lock™ fastener. This material is known as mushroom Velcro because its cross section resembles a mushroom with a head protruding from a stem. When two corresponding sheets of mushroom Velcro are pressed together the heads snap into the space created by the stems to produce a very secure fit. The attachment material 26 is adhered to the attachment field 25 by gluing or other conventional and well known means.

[0021] The top surface attachment 40 is shown in FIG 3, and is the same in the top surface of the insert 30 and the sole 50. The top surface attachment 40 has a toe end 43 and a heel end 44, and consists of a perimeter channel 41, and a top attachment field 45 which is located on the top surface within the perimeter channel 41. The perimeter channel 41 of the top surface 40 corresponds to the perimeter ridge 21 of the bottom surface 20 so that the

perimeter ridge 21 protrudes downward and fits into the perimeter channel 41. The perimeter channel 41 has a roughly rectangular cross section and is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ (one quarter) of an inch wide and approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ (one quarter) of an inch thick. In the most preferred embodiment the channel 41 is 8.2 mm wide at the bottom and 8.5 mm wide at the top, and is 6.0 mm deep. There is a sheet of attachment material 46 attached to the top attachment field 45, by gluing or other well known attachment means. In one variation the attachment material 46 is standard hook and loop material common known as Velcro, and in another embodiment the attachment material 46 is Mushroom Velcro. Obviously the top attachment material 46 will correspond to the bottom attachment material 26, so both will either be standard hook and loop material or both will be mushroom Velcro.

[0022] The perimeter ridge 21 of the bottom surface 20 is configured to align with and fit into the perimeter channel 41 of the top surface 40, as shown in the cut away cross sectional view of FIG 7. Modern molding techniques allow for very precise molds so that the perimeter ridge 21 can be almost precisely sized and configured to fit within the perimeter channel 41. When molded properly the two components can snap together to create a relatively secure attachment. When the perimeter ridge 21 is inserted into the channel 41, the top attachment material 46 will engage the bottom attachment material 26 to secure the two components together.

[0023] There are a variety of pressures and forces on a shoe when the person wearing the shoe is walking. There are obviously vertical, or up and down, forces created by the wearer stepping onto the shoe and exerting downward pressure, as well as upward pressure when the wearer steps forward and pulls up on the upper. This is known in the shoe making and design field as "peel forces" because these forces can cause the various layers of a shoe to peel apart. There are also dynamic forces as the wearer walks in the shoe. Many people step first onto their heel, which creates forward forces that slide the various layers of a shoe (any shoe) against each other. This is different for high heel shoes, where it is common for the person to step onto the ball of the foot. All people walk differently, and many twist their foot slightly while walking to create twisting forces. There are also lateral forces and the components of the shoe slide on each other. Many people also have a slight twisting motion from the ball of the foot to the toes as they step off of their trailing foot as they step forward. This causes torque forces on and near the front portion of the shoe. These various forces are known as shear forces. The combination of the shear and peel forces, and the fact that they are dynamic forces, makes it difficult to keep separate components of a shoe attached.

[0024] The paired attachment material 26 and 46 prevents the components from coming apart due to up and down or "peel" forces, and the placement of the perimeter ridge 21 within the perimeter channel 41 is designed to account for all of the other shear forces. Since the paired

ridge 21 and channel 41 runs just inside the perimeter of the components, it can withstand lateral and twisting forces, and thus ensure the components of the shoe can stay together. The shoe components, as seen in FIGS 3 & 4 and 8 & 9, are non-uniform in shape, and are similar in shape to most shoes, with the shoe widest near the toe where the ball of the wearers foot rests against the footbed 11, and narrowest towards the heel 13. This non-uniform configuration allows the paired ridge 21 and channel 41 to account for all of the various non-vertical shear forces that are present on the shoe 100. The channel 41 and ridge 21 are a uniform distance from the perimeter 15, 35 or 55 of the insole 10, insert 30 and sole 50 respectively. This distance ranges from an eighth of an inch (1/8") to half an inch (1/2") depending on the size of the shoe 100 and the configuration of the ridge 21 and channel 41. This prevents any overlap of material, but more allows the material on the outside of the channel 41 to withstand lateral and transverse shear forces on that component of the shoe 100. This is an improvement over Gross and the other cited prior art which include multiple alignment and attachment posts which do not account for the dynamic nature of the forces on a shoe.

[0025] The second embodiment of the attachment means are shown in FIGS 8, 9, 10 & 11. The bottom surface attachment 20 is shown in FIG 8. The bottom surface attachment 20 is the same in the bottom surface of the insole 10 and the insert 30. The bottom surface attachment 20 has a toe end 23 and a heel end 24, and consists of a perimeter ridge 21, a multiplicity of downwardly protruding prongs 22, and a bottom attachment field 25 which is located within the perimeter ridge 21. There is a sheet of attachment material 26 located in the bottom attachment field 25 and around the prongs 22. In one variation the attachment material 26 is standard hook and loop material common known as Velcro, and in another embodiment the attachment material 26 is Mushroom Velcro like brand named 3-M™ Dual Lock™ fastener. The bottom surface attachment 20 of the second embodiment is identical to the first embodiment but with the addition of the downwardly protruding prongs 22.

[0026] The top surface attachment 40 of the second embodiment is shown in FIG 9, and is the same in the top surface of the insert 30 and the sole 50. The top surface attachment 40 has a toe end 43 and a heel end 44, and consists of a perimeter channel 41, a multiplicity of alignment recesses 42, and a top attachment field 45 which is located on the top surface within the perimeter channel 41. The alignment recesses 42 are approximately 6.2 mm in diameter, but the actual diameter can vary slightly depending on the size and configuration of the shoe 100. In general there is one recess 42 located near the heel end, one recess located at the waist, or narrowest part of the shoe, one recess 42 located behind the ball of the foot area, two recesses 42 located approximately where the ball of the wearers foot will exert the most pressure, and one recess 42 located near the toe. The depth of the recess 42 corresponds to the height of

the prongs 22 which vary according to location. The recess 42 at the waist is deepest, about 6 mm, while the recesses near the toe are shallowest, about 4 mm. The top surface attachment 40 of the second embodiment is identical to the first embodiment but with the addition of the alignment recesses 42. The perimeter channel 41 of the top surface 40 corresponds to the perimeter ridge 21 of the bottom surface 20 so that the perimeter ridge 21 protrudes downward and fits into the perimeter channel 41. The prongs 22 of the second embodiment of the bottom surface 20 are sized and aligned to fit within the alignment recesses 42 of the second embodiment of the top surface 40. There is a prong 22 near the toe, two prongs 22 located under the ball of the wearer's foot, one prong 22 located behind the ball of the foot area, one prong 22 located in the waist and one prong 22 located near the heel. The prong 22 at the waist is the highest, of approximately 6 mm. This is to account for the need for extra sheer protection at that location. With modern molding techniques, the perimeter ridge 21 can be molded as an almost exact fit for the perimeter channel 41 such that the perimeter ridge 21 can snap into place inside the perimeter channel 41. When molded properly the two components can snap together to create a relatively secure attachment. There is a sheet of attachment material 46 located in the top attachment field 45. In one variation the attachment material 46 is standard hook and loop material common known as Velcro, and in another embodiment the attachment material 46 is Mushroom Velcro. Obviously the top attachment material 46 will correspond to the bottom attachment material 26, so both will either be standard hook and loop material or both will be mushroom Velcro.

[0027] In the preferred embodiment the components, the insole 10, the insert 30 and the sole 50, are made of injection molded plastic in a process well known in the art. The components can be made from a variety of molded plastic materials, including, but not limited to EVA plastic, PE plastics, PU plastic, or any other molded plastic materials well known in the art. The upper insole 10 will have a shoe upper 60 to hold the foot against the footbed 11. The shoe upper 60 can be any number of common styles and variations, ranging from a simple toe strap to more elaborate enclosed shoe uppers. A couple of different variations are seen in FIGS 17 & 18, but it is possible, and within the conception of the invention, for the upper 60 to be in any style of woman's shoes. There is also a man's version with changeable sole 50 and tread 52, so the upper 60 can come in a wide variety of men's styles. The shoe upper 60 can be made of any common material for making shoe uppers including cloth and leather, as well as a variety of other natural or synthetic materials. The upper 60 is attached to the insole 10 by well known and conventional means, including but not limited to sewing and gluing. The visible outsides perimeters of the upper insole 10, middle insert 30, and bottom sole 50 can be covered with a veneer or other decorative material to create a decorative and stylish shoe. For ex-

ample, one common veneer for wedge shoes is cork. The underside of the bottom sole 50, or tread 52, can be any type of conventional shoe bottom sole material from synthetics and plastics to leather.

[0028] Referring now to FIG 12, a rear view of the convertible shoe 100, the insole heel end 14 of the insole 10 has a slightly flared cross section, with the edge near the footbed 11 wider than the edge near the bottom surface 12. The flared cross section creates a gripping surface to allow the user to grip the heel end 14 of the insole 10 in one hand. The insert heel end 34 of the insert 30 has a concave cross section to create a convenient gripping area. The sole heel end 54 also has a concave cross section to create a convenient gripping area. This allows the user to grasp the flared insole heel end 14 in one hand and the concave sole heel end 54 in the other hand and pull the components apart.

[0029] The attachment means described above are designed to hold the components (the insole 10, insert 30, and sole 50) securely together to deal with the dynamic forces of walking. In the current design the combination of the paired attachment material 26 & 46, and the paired perimeter ridge 21 and perimeter channel 41, has proven to have sufficient holding strength to hold the components together during walking. Unfortunately the strength of the bond created makes it difficult to separate the components. The flared insole heel end 14 was designed to provide a handgrip at the heel end 14, and the concave insert heel end 34 and concave sole end 54 were designed to create a handgrip to allow the wearer to hold the shoe to separate the components. The flared end and concave ends are not only functional but also add an additional style element to the convertible shoe 100. When all three components are together the user can grasp the flared insole heel end 14 in one hand and the concave cross section of the sole heel end 54 in the other hand and pull the components apart. In this position the sole 50 might come off the insert 30 or the insert 30 might separate from the insole 10. Once these two components are separated, the user can repeat the process with the remaining two components.

[0030] The main purpose of the convertible shoe 100 is to be able to change from a high heel to a lower heel for comfort. FIGS 13 & 14 show the convertible shoe 100 in the low heel version, without the addition of the insert 30. In this version the insole 10 is attached directly to the sole 50. FIG 1 depicts the convertible shoe 100 in the high heel version, and FIG 13 depicts the same shoe in the low heel version. These figures show the sole 50 with a heel 54 that is slightly thicker than the toe 53. It is possible, and within the conception of the invention, for the heel 54 and toe 53 of the sole 50 to be of nearly the same thickness to create a flat style shoe. Because of the geometry of the perimeter channel 41, the sole must be at least one inch thick to accommodate the channel 41 and still retain sufficient strength. FIG 14 shows a perspective of the insole 10 in place to be attached to the sole 50 for the low version of the shoe. FIG 14 shows the first em-

bodiment, without prongs 22 and recesses 42, but it is also possible to use the second embodiment with prongs 22 and recesses 42 for the low version of the shoe 100. FIG 6 shows the shoe 100 with the insert 30, to create the high heel version of the shoe 100, and FIG 14 shows the same shoe 100 without the insert 30 to create the low heel version of the shoe 100.

[0031] It is possible, and within the conception of the invention to use a variety of different treads 52 on the soles 50. In one configuration, shown in FIG 16, the tread 52 will include golf spikes. In this embodiment the user will have two bottom soles 50 with one insole 10 with an upper 60. One bottom sole 50 will have a standard shoe sole tread, such as seen in FIG 15, and the other bottom sole 50 will have a golf shoe sole with spikes, as seen in FIG 16. In this variation of the shoe 100 the sole 50, as described above, will have a relatively uniform thickness, which is generally necessary for sport shoes, and is generally common for men's shoes. This will allow the user to wear the same pair of shoes for golf and for non-golf wear. Other combinations include a dressier leather of faux leather tread 52 and a sport or tennis shoe style tread 52, which will allow the wearer to convert from a dress shoe to a casual shoe.

[0032] FIG 19 shows a removable bow 70. The bow 70 is attached to the upper 60 by means of a clip 76 attached to the bow 70, which slides into a tab 62 that is attached to the upper 60. In the preferred embodiment, the tab 62 is attached to the upper on two ends, leaving a slip space 63 in the middle to allow bow clip 76 to slide in to attach the bow 70 to the upper 60. In one variation the bow clip 76 includes a spring to allow easy opening of the clip, and teeth on the clip 76 to ensure that the bow 70 cannot slip off the tab 62. It is possible to use any decorative feature, or heel jewelry, in place of the bow 70 and use the tab 62 to attach the decorative feature. The heel jewelry can come in a wide variety of configurations from flowers to metallic letters to allow personalization of the shoe. The embodiment depicted in FIG 19 shows the tab 62 attached to the upper, but it is possible, and within the conception of the invention, to attach a tab 62 to the sole 50 or the insert 30. This allows the owner of the shoe 100 to fully personalize the shoe 100 with a variety of decorative features.

[0033] The present invention is well adapted to carry out the objectives and attain both the ends and the advantages mentioned, as well as other benefits inherent therein. While the present invention has been depicted, described, and is defined by reference to particular embodiments of the invention, such reference does not imply a limitation to the invention, and no such limitation is to be inferred. The depicted and described embodiments of the invention are exemplary only, and are not exhaustive of the scope of the invention. Consequently, the present invention is intended to be limited only by the scope of the claims, giving full cognizance to equivalents in all respects.

Claims**1.** A convertible shoe (100) comprising:

a top portion (10) having a foot bed (11) and an upper (60), and a bottom side attachment means;

a middle insert portion (30) having a top side attachment means (40) and a bottom side attachment means (20); and

a bottom portion (50) having a top side attachment means (40) and a tread (52); wherein said bottom side attachment means of said top portion and said middle insert are identical and said top side attachment means of said middle insert and bottom portion are identical, and wherein said top side attachment means are sized, spaced and configured to correspond and removably attach to said bottom side attachment means such that said top portion can attach directly to said bottom portion to create a low heeled shoe or said top portion can attach to said middle insert and said middle insert can attach to said bottom portion to create a high heeled shoe, and

said bottom side attachment means includes a protruding perimeter ridge (21) and bottom attachment material (26) and said top side attachment means includes a recessed perimeter channel (41) and top attachment material (46), and wherein said top attachment material mates with said bottom attachment material to securely hold said bottom side to said top side and wherein said perimeter ridge is sized and configured to fit within said perimeter channel to create a secure yet removable attachment.

2. The convertible shoe of claim 1 wherein:

said bottom side attachment has a non-uniform curved perimeter and said perimeter ridge is spaced a uniform distance from said perimeter thereby giving said perimeter ridge a non-uniform curved shape;

said top side attachment has a non-uniform curved perimeter and said perimeter channel is spaced a uniform distance from said perimeter thereby giving said perimeter channel a non-uniform curved shape.

3. The convertible shoe of claim 1 or 2, wherein said shoe is exposed to vertical peel forces and lateral shear forces, and wherein when attached said attachment material is designed to withstand said peel forces, and wherein said perimeter ridge is fit within said perimeter channel to withstand said shear forces.

4. The convertible shoe of any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein said top side attachment material and said bottom side attachment material is hook and loop material.

5. The convertible shoe of any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein said top side attachment material and said bottom side attachment material is mushroom Velcro.

6. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims further comprising a multiplicity of bottom portions having different treads wherein said top portion can be attached to one of said multiplicity of bottom portions to provide a shoe for different uses.

7. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims wherein:

said top portion has a toe end (13) and a heel end (14), said middle insert portion has a toe end (33) and a heel end (34), and said bottom portion has a toe end (53) and a heel end (54), wherein said top portion heel end has a flared cross section to provide a gripping area, said middle insert heel end has a concave cross section to provide a gripping area, and said bottom portion heel end has a concave cross section to provide a gripping area.

8. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims wherein:

said perimeter ridge extends along an entire perimeter (15, 35) of said top portion /said middle insert portion.

9. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims further comprising:

an attachment tab (62) attached to the heel end of said upper, said attachment tab having an attachment slot (63) for attachment of a multiplicity of heel jewelry (70).

10. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims wherein:

said bottom attachment material fills an area (25) surrounded by said perimeter ridge.

11. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims wherein:

said top attachment material fills an area (45) surrounded by said perimeter channel.

12. The convertible shoe of any one of claims 1-9, where-

in:

said bottom side attachment means further includes a multiplicity of downwardly protruding prongs (22) and said top side attachment means further includes a multiplicity of recesses (42) wherein said recesses are sized, spaced and configured to correspond to and connect with said prongs.

13. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims wherein:

said middle insert portion has a wedge shape between a top surface (31) and a bottom surface (32) thereof, which wedge shape is thin at a toe (33) of said middle insert portion and thick at a heel (34) of said middle insert portion.

14. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims wherein:

said bottom portion has a wedge shape between a top surface (51) and a tread (52) thereof, which wedge shape is thin at a toe (53) of said bottom portion and thick at a heel (54) of said bottom portion.

15. The convertible shoe of any one of the preceding claims wherein:

said bottom side attachment means comprises a sheet of said bottom attachment material and/or said top side attachment means comprises a sheet of said top attachment material.

Patentansprüche

1. Wandelschuh (100), der umfaßt:

einen oberen Abschnitt (10) mit einem Fußbett (11) und einem Obermaterial (60) und mit einem Unterseitenbefestigungsmittel;
einen mittleren Einsatzabschnitt (30) mit einem Oberseitenbefestigungsmittel (40) und mit einem Unterseitenbefestigungsmittel (20); und
einen unteren Abschnitt (50) mit einem Oberseitenbefestigungsmittel (40) und mit einer Lauffläche (52); wobei
das Unterseitenbefestigungsmittel des oberen Abschnitts und des mittleren Einsatzes gleich sind und das Oberseitenbefestigungsmittel des mittleren Einsatzes und des unteren Abschnitts gleich sind und wobei die Oberseitenbefestigungsmittel so bemessen, beabstandet und konfiguriert sind, daß sie den Unterseitenbefestigungsmitteln entsprechen und lösbar daran

befestigt sind, so daß der obere Abschnitt direkt an dem unteren Abschnitt befestigt werden kann, um einen Schuh mit flachem Absatz zu erzeugen, oder der obere Abschnitt an dem mittleren Einsatz befestigt werden kann und der mittlere Einsatz an dem unteren Abschnitt befestigt werden kann, um einen Schuh mit hohem Absatz zu erzeugen, und

wobei das Unterseitenbefestigungsmittel einen vorstehenden Umfangssteg (21) und das untere Befestigungsmaterial (26) enthält und das Oberseitenbefestigungsmittel einen ausgesparten Umfangskanal (41) und das obere Befestigungsmaterial (46) enthält und wobei das obere Befestigungsmaterial zu dem unteren Befestigungsmaterial paßt, um die Unterseite an der Oberseite festzuhalten, und wobei der Umfangssteg so bemessen und konfiguriert ist, daß er in den Umfangskanal paßt, um eine sichere, aber lösbare Befestigung zu erzeugen.

2. Wandelschuh nach Anspruch 1, wobei:

die Unterseitenbefestigung einen ungleichförmigen gekrümmten Umfang aufweist und der Umfangssteg durch eine gleichförmige Entfernung von dem Umfang beabstandet ist, um dadurch dem Umfangssteg eine ungleichförmig gekrümmte Form zu verleihen;
die Oberseitenbefestigung einen ungleichförmigen gekrümmten Umfang aufweist und der Umfangskanal durch eine gleichförmige Entfernung von dem Umfang beabstandet ist, um dadurch den Umfangskanal eine ungleichförmig gekrümmte Form zu verleihen.

3. Wandelschuh nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei der Schuh vertikalen Ablösekräften und seitlichen Scherkräften ausgesetzt ist und wobei das Befestigungsmaterial, wenn es befestigt ist, dafür ausgelegt ist, die Ablösekräfte auszuhalten, und wobei der Umfangssteg in den Umfangskanal paßt, um die Scherkräfte auszuhalten.

4. Wandelschuh nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, wobei das Oberseitenbefestigungsmaterial und das Unterseitenbefestigungsmaterial ein Klettmaterial sind.

5. Wandelschuh nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, wobei das Oberseitenbefestigungsmaterial und das Unterseitenbefestigungsmaterial Pilzklett sind.

6. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, der ferner eine Vielzahl unterer Abschnitte mit unterschiedlichen Laufflächen umfaßt, wobei der obere Abschnitt an einem der Vielzahl unterer Abschnitte befestigt werden kann, um einen Schuh für

verschiedene Verwendungen bereitzustellen.

7. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei:

der obere Abschnitt ein Spitzenende (13) und ein Absatzende (14) aufweist, wobei der mittlere Einsatzabschnitt ein Spitzenende (33) und ein Absatzende (34) aufweist und wobei der untere Abschnitt ein Spitzenende (53) und ein Absatzende (54) aufweist, wobei das Absatzende des oberen Abschnitts einen ausgestellten Querschnitt aufweist, um eine Grifffläche bereitzustellen, wobei das Absatzende des mittleren Einsatzes einen konkaven Querschnitt aufweist, um eine Grifffläche bereitzustellen, und wobei das Absatzende des unteren Abschnitts einen konkaven Querschnitt aufweist, um eine Grifffläche bereitzustellen.

8. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei:

der Umfangssteg entlang eines gesamten Umfangs (15, 35) des oberen Abschnitts/des mittleren Einsatzabschnitts verläuft.

9. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, der ferner umfaßt:

einen Befestigungsstreifen (62), der an dem Absatzende des Obermaterials befestigt ist, wobei der Befestigungsstreifen einen Befestigungsschlitz (63) für die Befestigung von einer Vielzahl von Absatzschmuck (70) aufweist.

10. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei:

das untere Befestigungsmaterial einen Bereich (25) füllt, der von dem Umfangssteg umgeben ist.

11. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei:

das obere Befestigungsmaterial einen Bereich (45) füllt, der von dem Umfangskanal umgeben ist.

12. Wandelschuh nach einem der Ansprüche 1-9, wobei:

das Unterseitenbefestigungsmittel ferner eine Vielzahl nach unten vorstehenden Stifte (22) enthält und das Oberseitenbefestigungsmittel ferner eine Vielzahl von Aussparungen (42) enthält, wobei die Aussparungen so bemessen, beabstandet und konfiguriert sind, daß sie den Stif-

ten entsprechen und mit ihnen verbinden.

13. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei:

der mittlere Einsatzabschnitt zwischen einer oberen Oberfläche (31) und einer unteren Oberfläche (32) davon eine Keilform aufweist, wobei die Keilform bei einer Spitze (33) des mittleren Einsatzabschnitts dünn ist und bei einem Absatz (34) des mittleren Einsatzabschnitts dick ist.

14. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei:

der untere Abschnitt zwischen einer oberen Oberfläche (51) und einer Laufläche (52) davon eine Keilform aufweist, wobei die Keilform bei einer Spitze (53) des unteren Abschnitts dünn ist und bei einem Absatz (54) des unteren Abschnitts dick ist.

15. Wandelschuh nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei:

das Unterseitenbefestigungsmittel eine Lage des unteren Befestigungsmaterials umfaßt und/oder das Oberseitenbefestigungsmittel eine Lage des oberen Befestigungsmaterials umfaßt.

Revendications

1. Chaussure convertible (100), comprenant :

une partie supérieure (10) présentant une semelle intérieure (11) et une claque (60), et un moyen de fixation latéral inférieur ;
une partie d'insert central (30) présentant un moyen de fixation latéral supérieur (40) et un moyen de fixation latéral inférieur (20) ; et
une partie inférieure (50) présentant un moyen de fixation latéral supérieur (40) et une surface de marche (52) ;
dans lequel
ledit moyen de fixation latéral inférieur de ladite partie supérieure et ledit insert central sont identiques et ledit moyen de fixation latéral supérieur dudit insert central et la partie inférieure sont identiques, et dans lequel ledit moyen de fixation latéral supérieur est dimensionné, espacé et configuré pour correspondre et se fixer de façon amovible audit moyen de fixation latéral inférieur de façon à ce que ladite partie supérieure puisse se fixer directement sur ladite partie inférieure pour créer une chaussure à talons bas ou bien que ladite partie supérieure puisse se fixer audit

insert central et que ledit insert central puisse se fixer à ladite partie inférieure pour créer une chaussure à talons hauts, et ledit moyen de fixation latéral inférieur comprend une nervure (21) périmétrique en saillie et un matériau (26) de fixation inférieur et ledit moyen de fixation latéral supérieur comprend un canal (41) périmétrique évidé et un matériau (46) de fixation supérieur, et dans lequel ledit matériau de fixation supérieur s'accouple avec ledit matériau de fixation inférieur pour maintenir solidement ledit côté inférieur sur ledit côté supérieur et dans lequel ladite nervure périmétrique est dimensionnée et configurée pour s'insérer à l'intérieur dudit canal périmétrique pour créer une fixation solide tout en étant amovible.

2. Chaussure convertible selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle :

ladite fixation latérale inférieure présente un périmètre incurvé non-uniforme et ladite nervure périmétrique est espacée d'une distance uniforme dudit périmètre donnant ainsi à ladite nervure périmétrique une forme incurvée non-uniforme ;
ladite fixation latérale supérieure présente un périmètre incurvé non-uniforme et ledit canal périmétrique est espacé d'une distance uniforme dudit périmètre donnant ainsi audit canal périmétrique une forme incurvée non-uniforme.

3. Chaussure convertible selon la revendication 1 ou 2, dans laquelle ladite chaussure est exposée à des forces de pelage verticales et à des forces de cisaillement latérales, et dans lequel lorsque fixé, ledit matériau de fixation est conçu pour résister auxdites forces de pelage, et dans lequel ladite nervure périmétrique est insérée à l'intérieur dudit canal périmétrique pour résister auxdites forces de cisaillement.

4. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, dans laquelle ledit matériau de fixation latéral supérieur et ledit matériau de fixation latéral inférieur est un matériau de crochets et de boucles.

5. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, dans laquelle ledit matériau de fixation latéral supérieur et ledit matériau de fixation latéral inférieur est du Velcro.

6. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, comprenant en outre une multiplicité de parties inférieures présentant différentes surfaces de marche, dans laquelle ladite partie supérieure peut être fixée à l'une de ladite multiplicité de parties inférieures pour fournir une chaus-

sure pour différentes utilisations.

7. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes :

ladite partie supérieure présente une extrémité de doigts de pied (13) et une extrémité de talon (14), ladite partie d'insert central présente une extrémité de doigts de pied (33) et une extrémité de talon (34), et ladite partie inférieure présente une extrémité de doigts de pied (53) et une extrémité de talon (54), dans laquelle ladite extrémité de talon de la partie supérieure à une section transversale évasée pour fournir une zone de préhension, ladite extrémité de talon de l'insert central présente une section transversale concave pour fournir une zone de préhension et ladite extrémité de talon de la partie inférieure présente une section transversale concave pour fournir une zone de préhension.

8. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle :

ladite nervure périmétrique s'étend le long d'un périmètre entier (15, 35) de ladite partie supérieure/ladite partie d'insert central.

9. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, comprenant en outre :

une languette de fixation (62) fixée à l'extrémité de talon de ladite claque, ladite languette de fixation présentant une fente de fixation (63) pour la fixation à une multiplicité de bijouterie de talon (70).

10. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle :

ledit matériau de fixation inférieur remplit une zone (25) entourée par ladite nervure périmétrique.

11. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle :

ledit matériau de fixation supérieur remplit une zone (45) entourée par ledit canal périmétrique.

12. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 9, dans laquelle :

ledit moyen de fixation latéral inférieur comprend en outre une multiplicité de branches (22) en saillie vers le bas et ledit moyen de fixation latéral supérieur comprend en outre une multiplicité de creux (42), dans lequel lesdits creux

sont dimensionnés, espacés et configurés pour correspondre et se raccorder auxdites branches.

13. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle :

ladite partie d'insert central est cunéiforme entre une surface supérieure (31) et une surface inférieure (32) de celle-ci, laquelle forme en coin est fine à un doigt de pied (33) de ladite partie d'insert central et épaisse à un talon (34) de ladite partie d'insert central.

14. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle :

ladite partie inférieure est cunéiforme entre une surface supérieure (51) et une surface de marche (52) de celle-ci, laquelle forme en coin est fine à un doigt de pied (53) de ladite partie inférieure et épaisse à un talon (54) de ladite partie inférieure.

15. Chaussure convertible selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle :

ledit moyen de fixation latéral inférieur comprend une couche dudit matériau de fixation inférieur et/ou ledit moyen de fixation latéral supérieur comprend une couche dudit matériau de fixation supérieur.

35

40

45

50

55

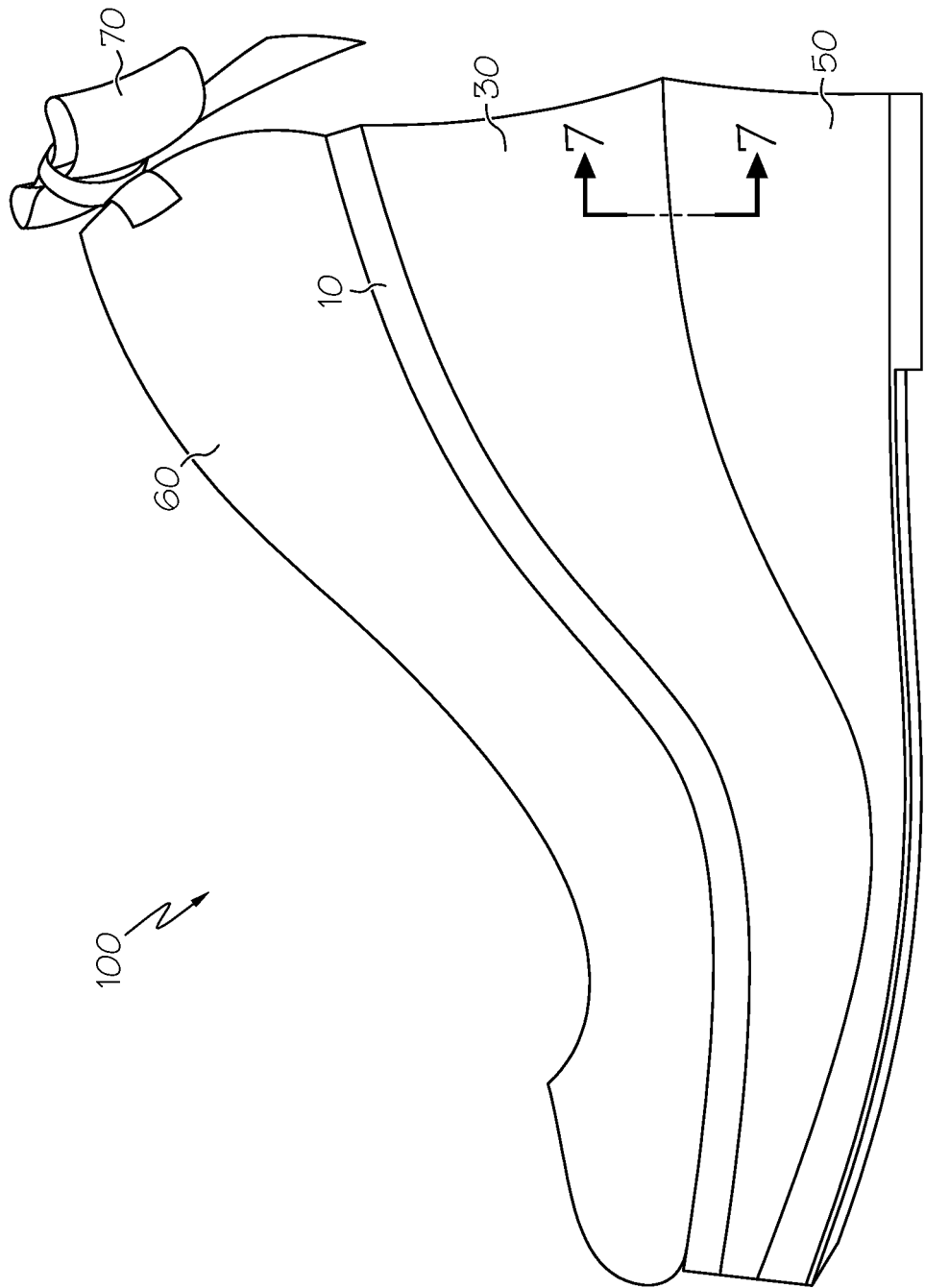


FIG. 1

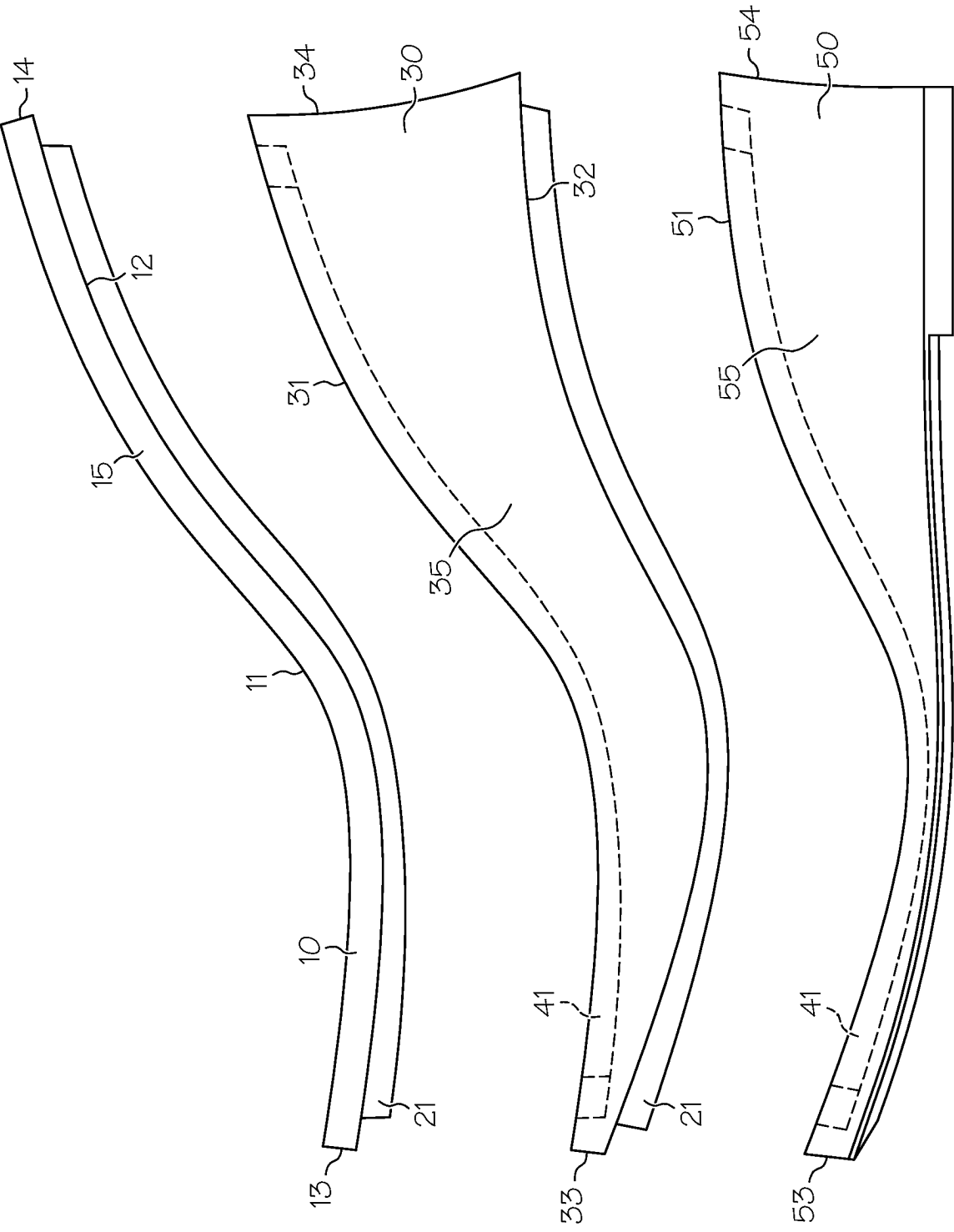


FIG. 2

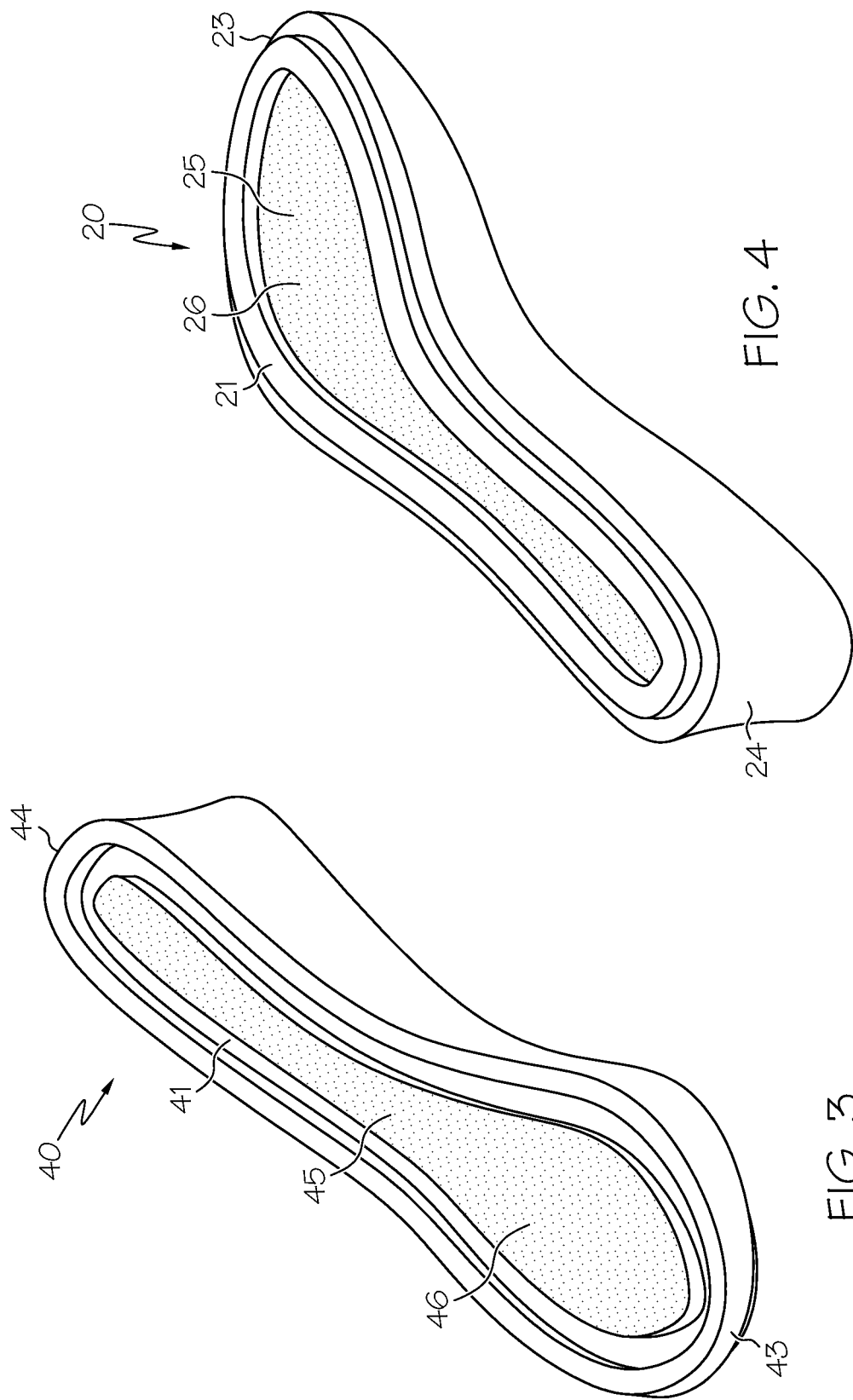


FIG. 4

FIG. 3

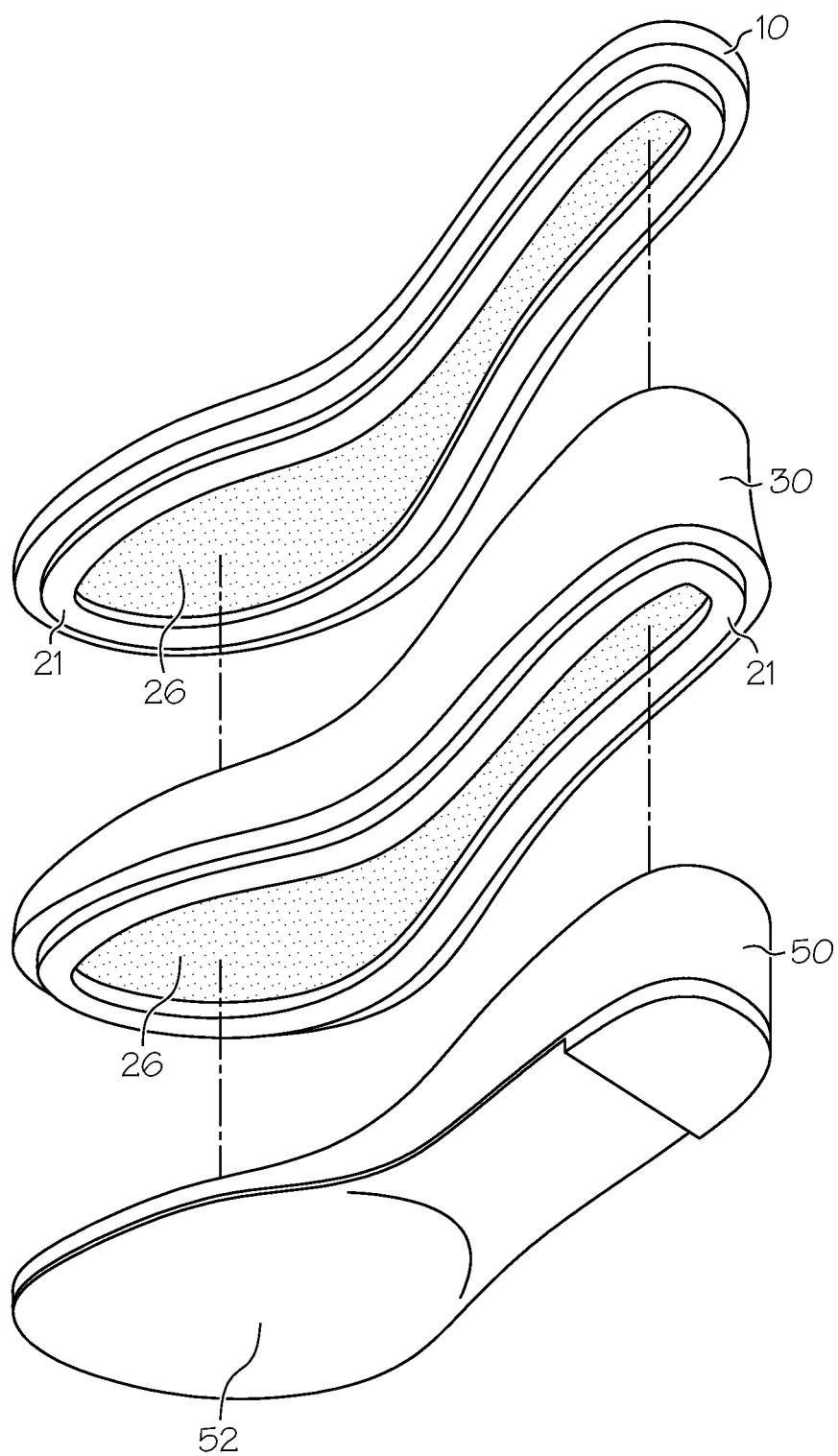
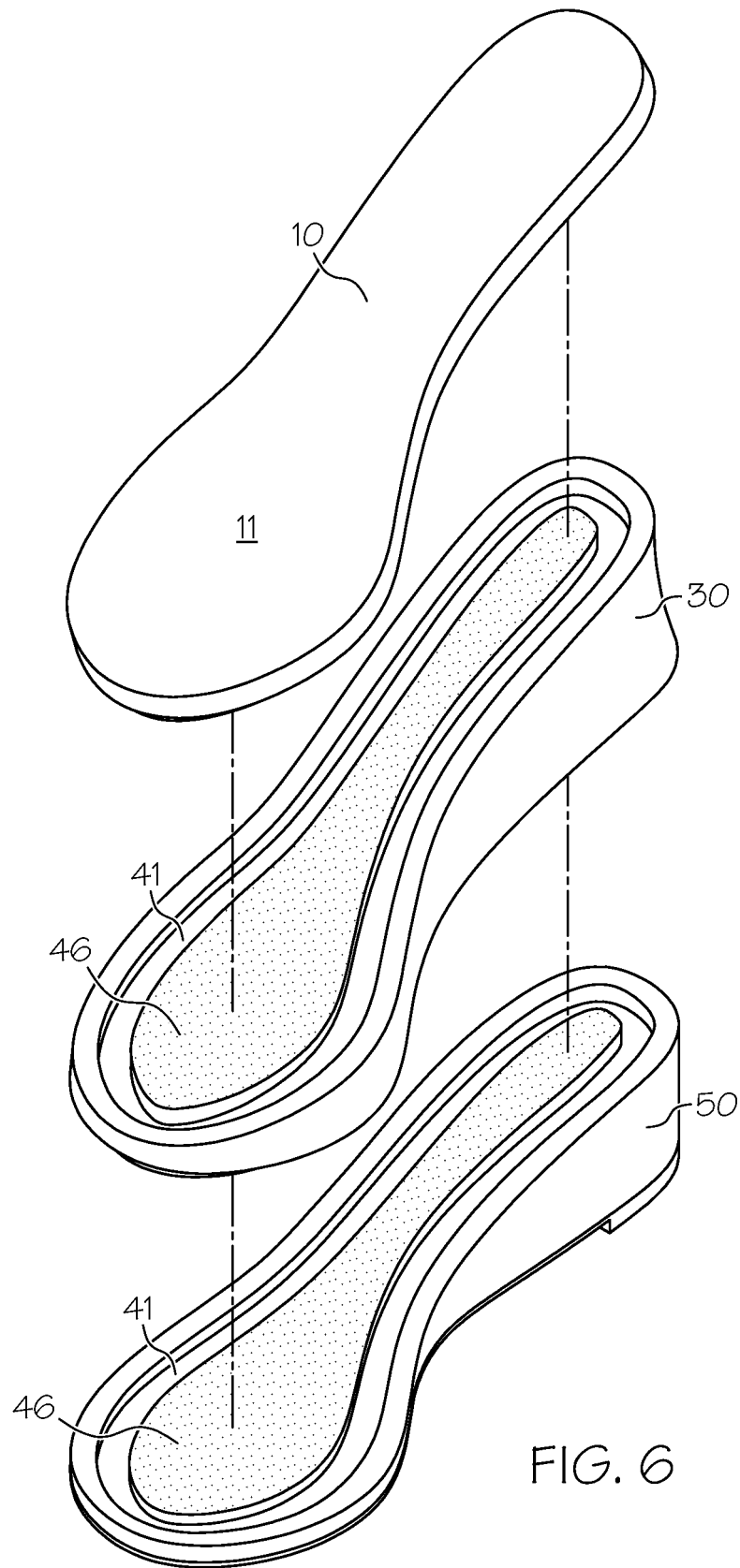


FIG. 5



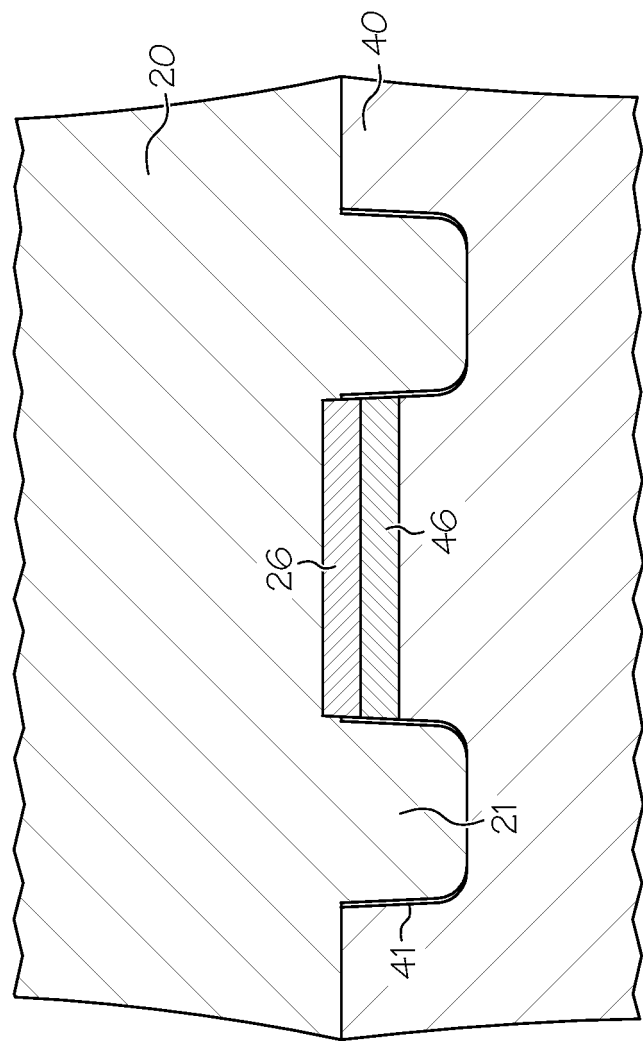
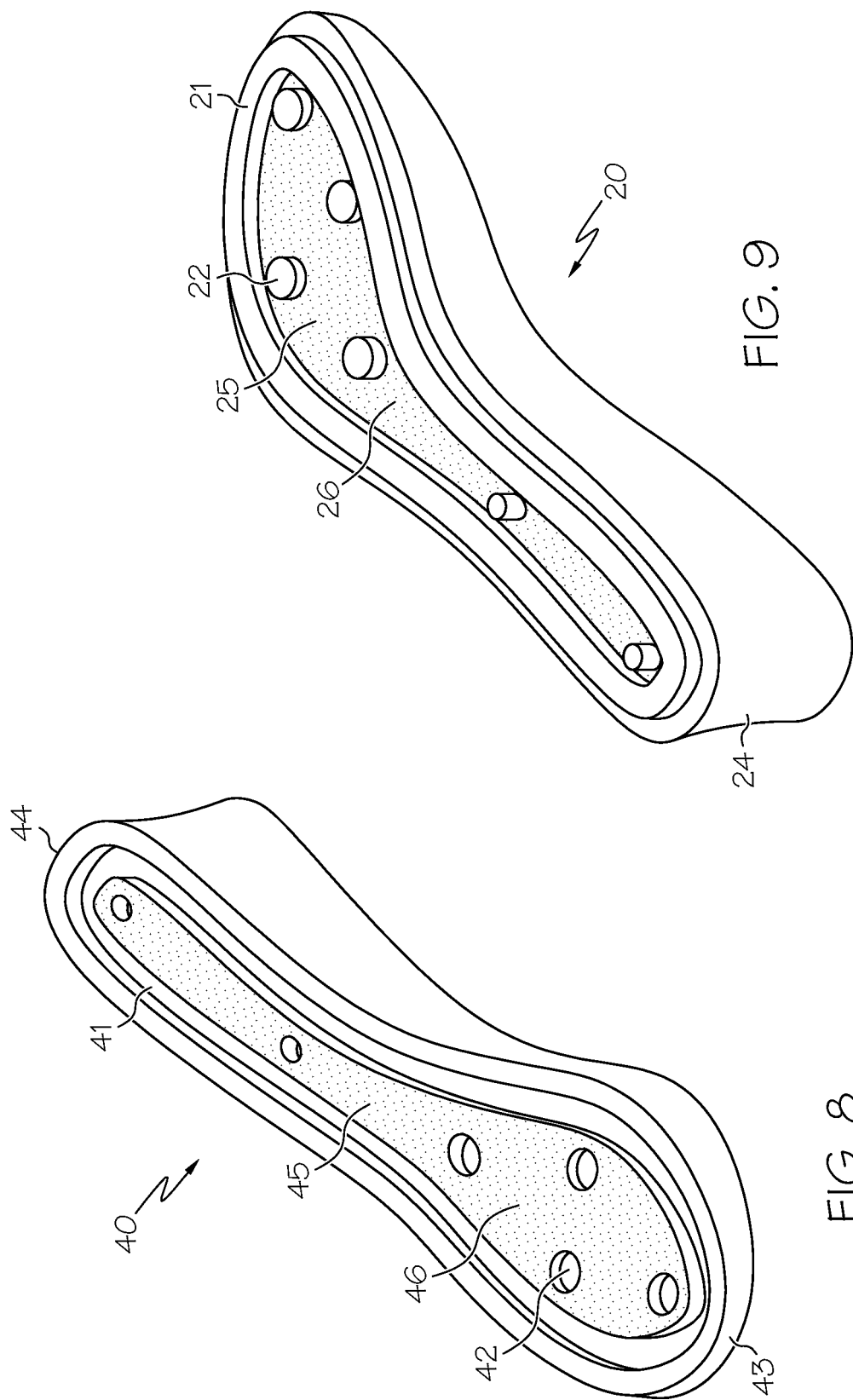


FIG. 7



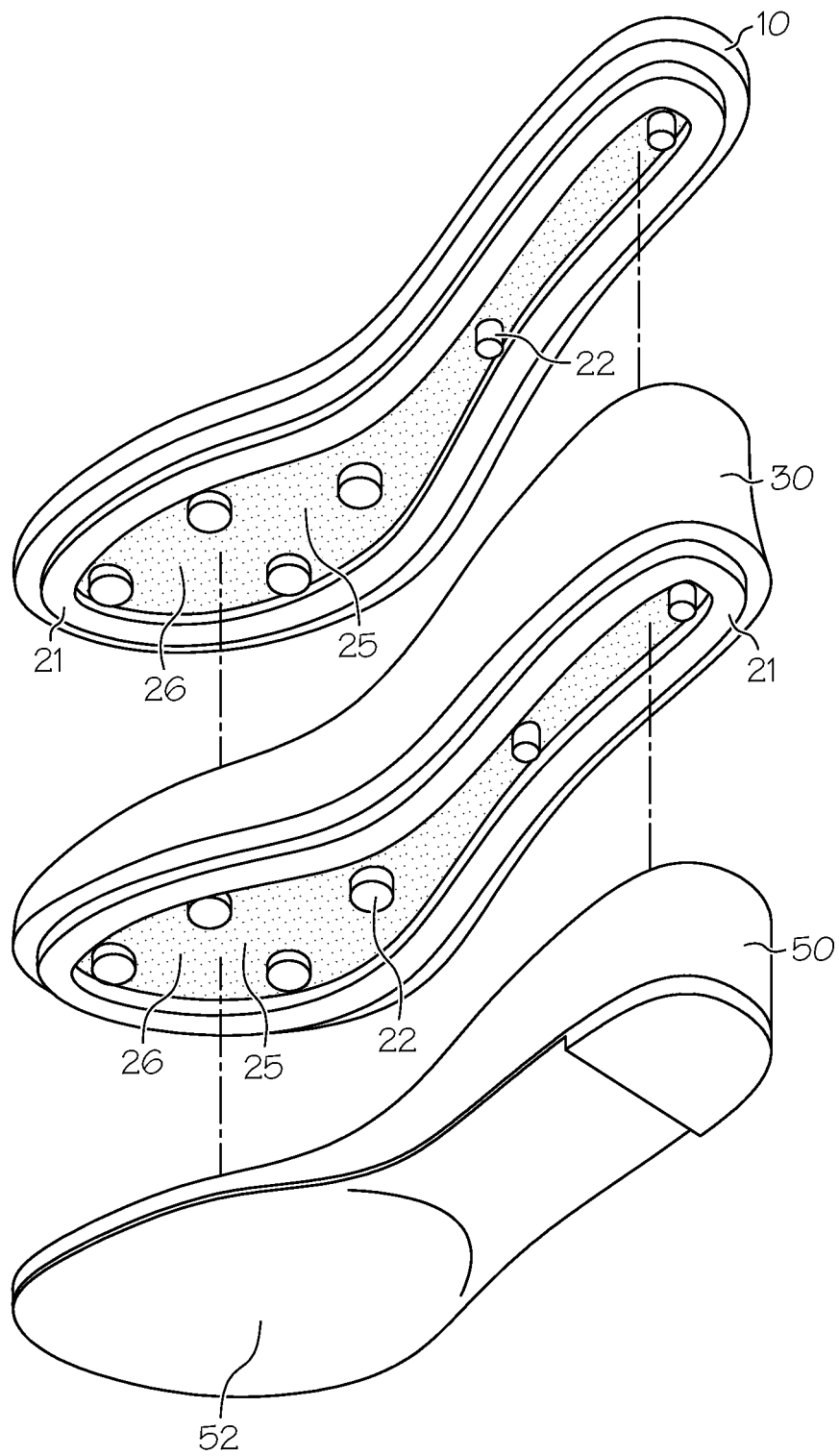


FIG. 10

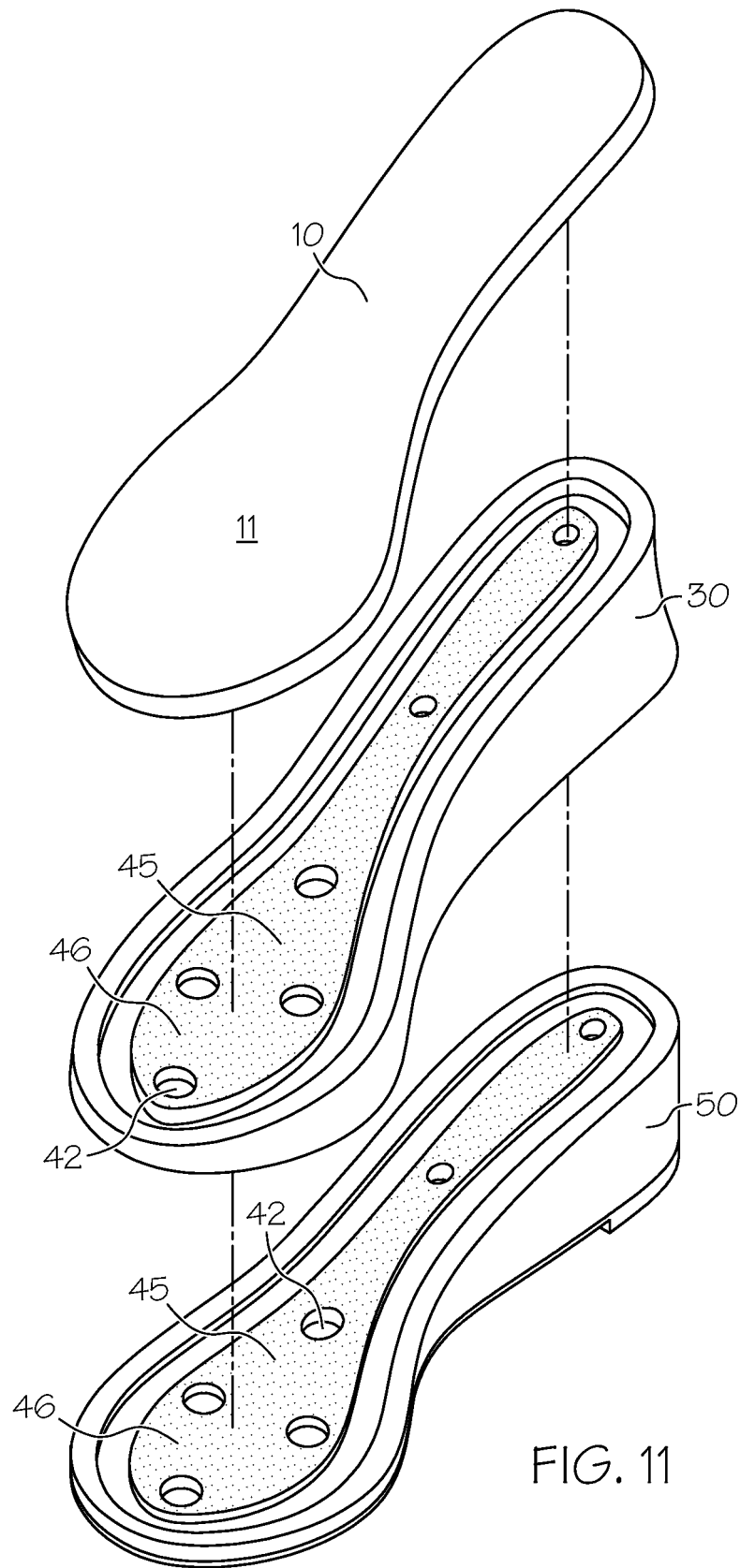


FIG. 11

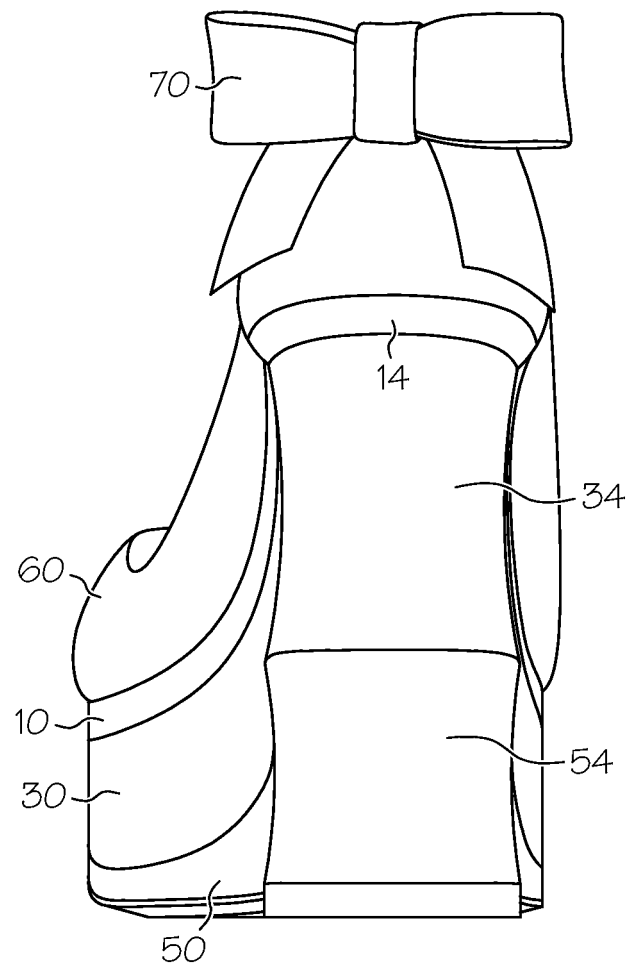


FIG. 12

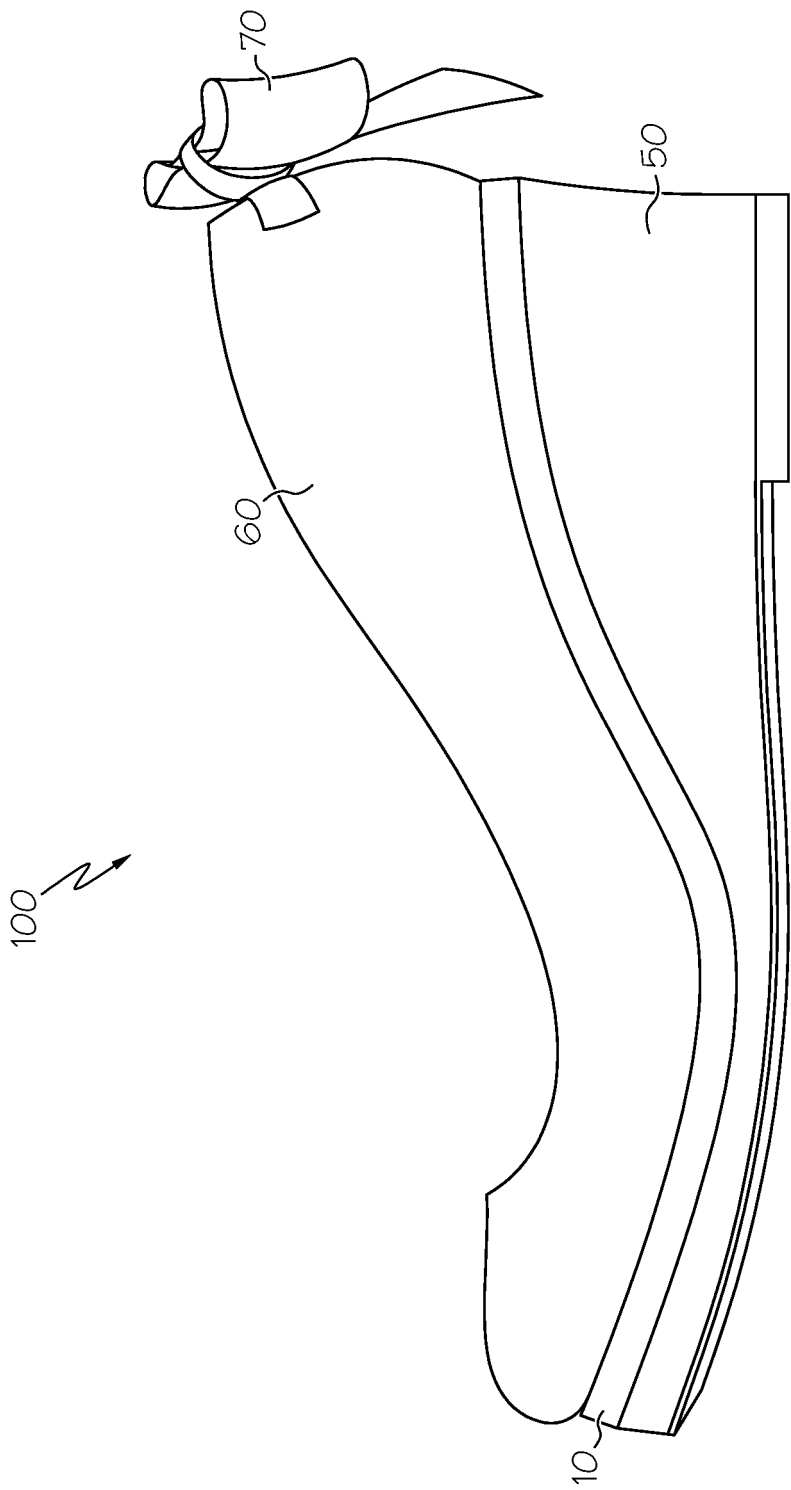
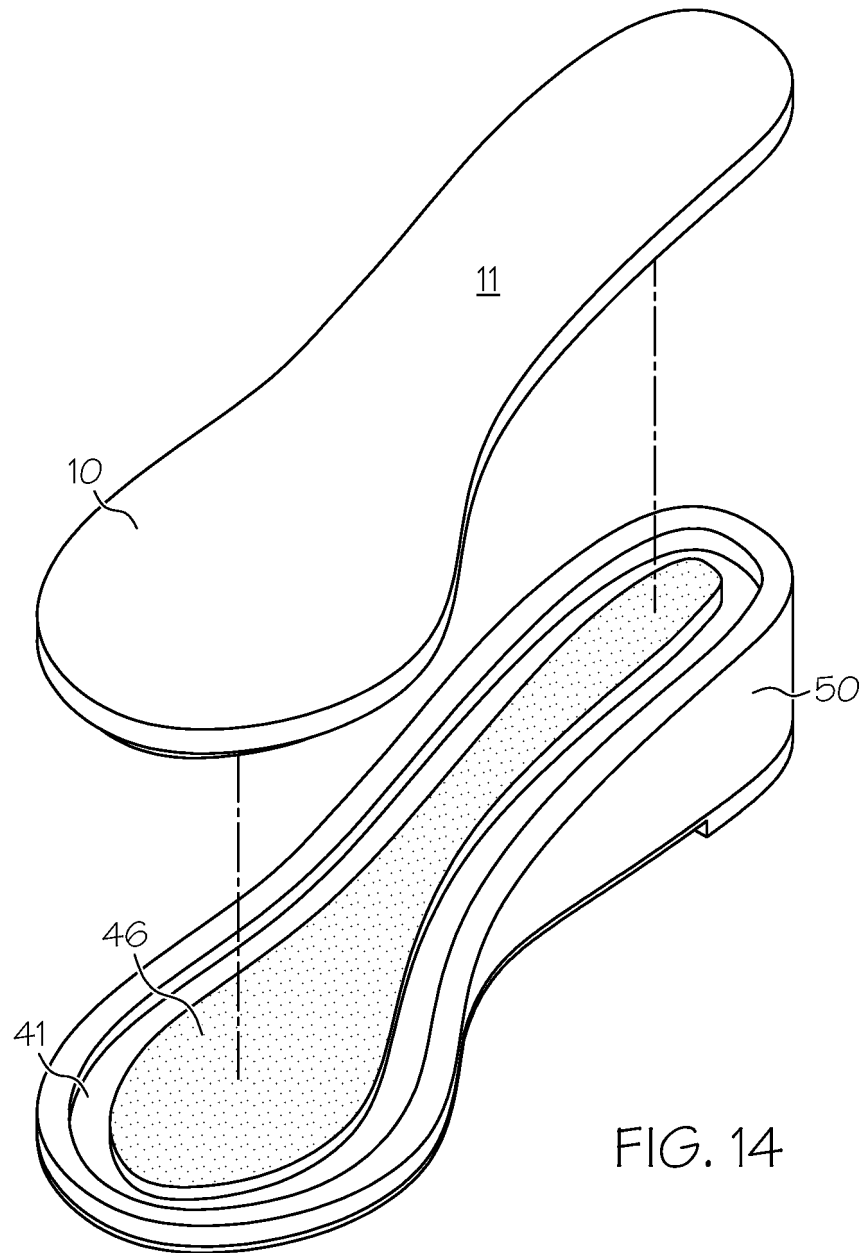


FIG. 13



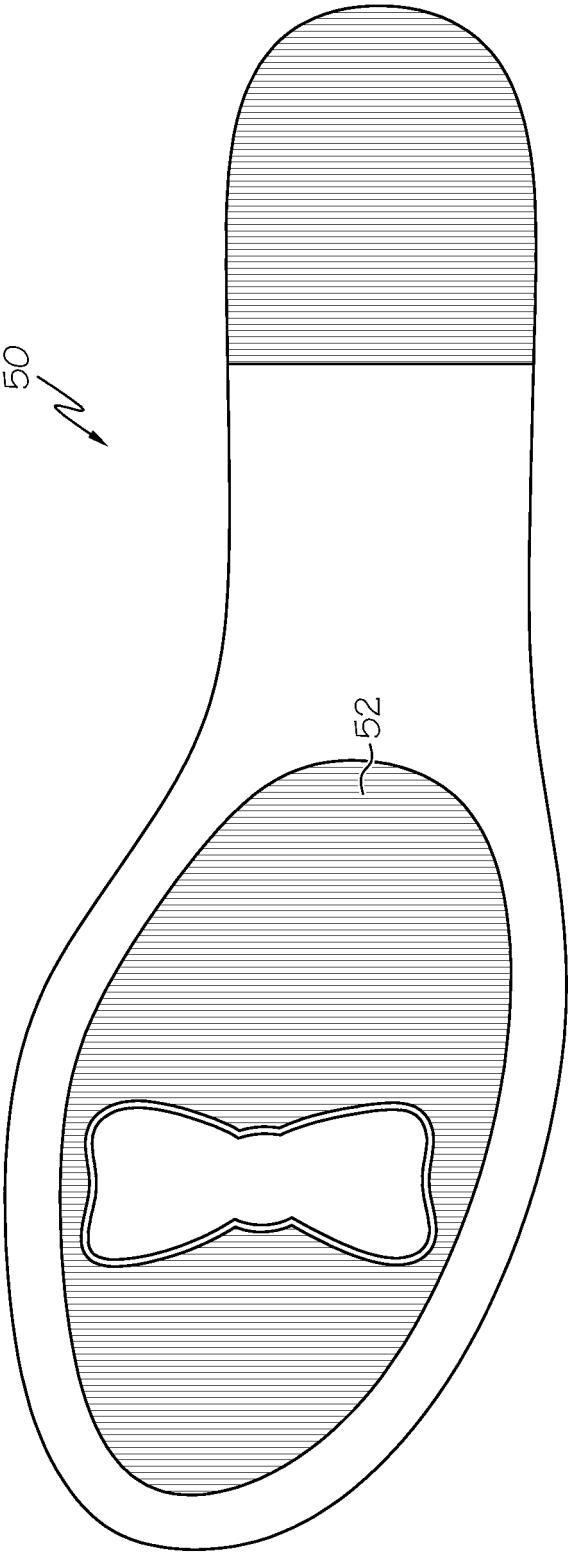


FIG. 15

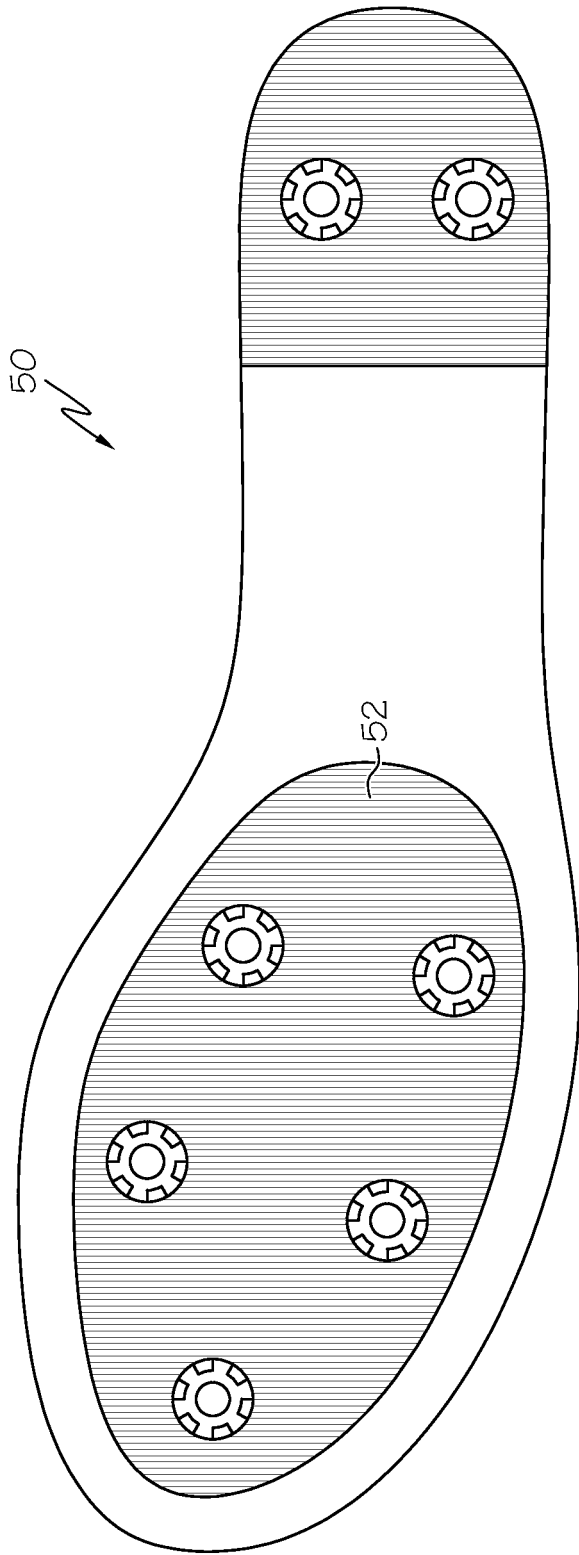


FIG. 16

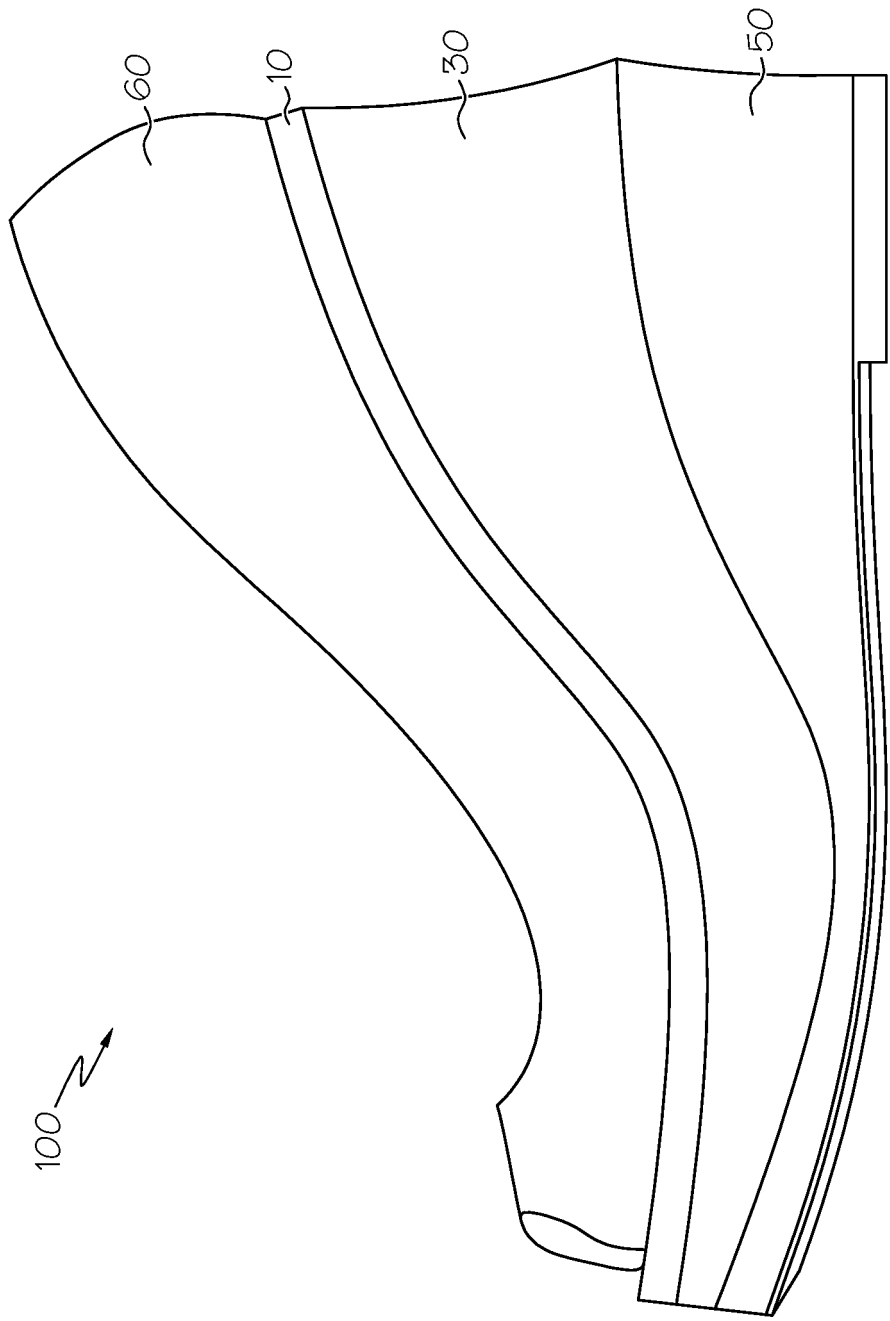


FIG. 17

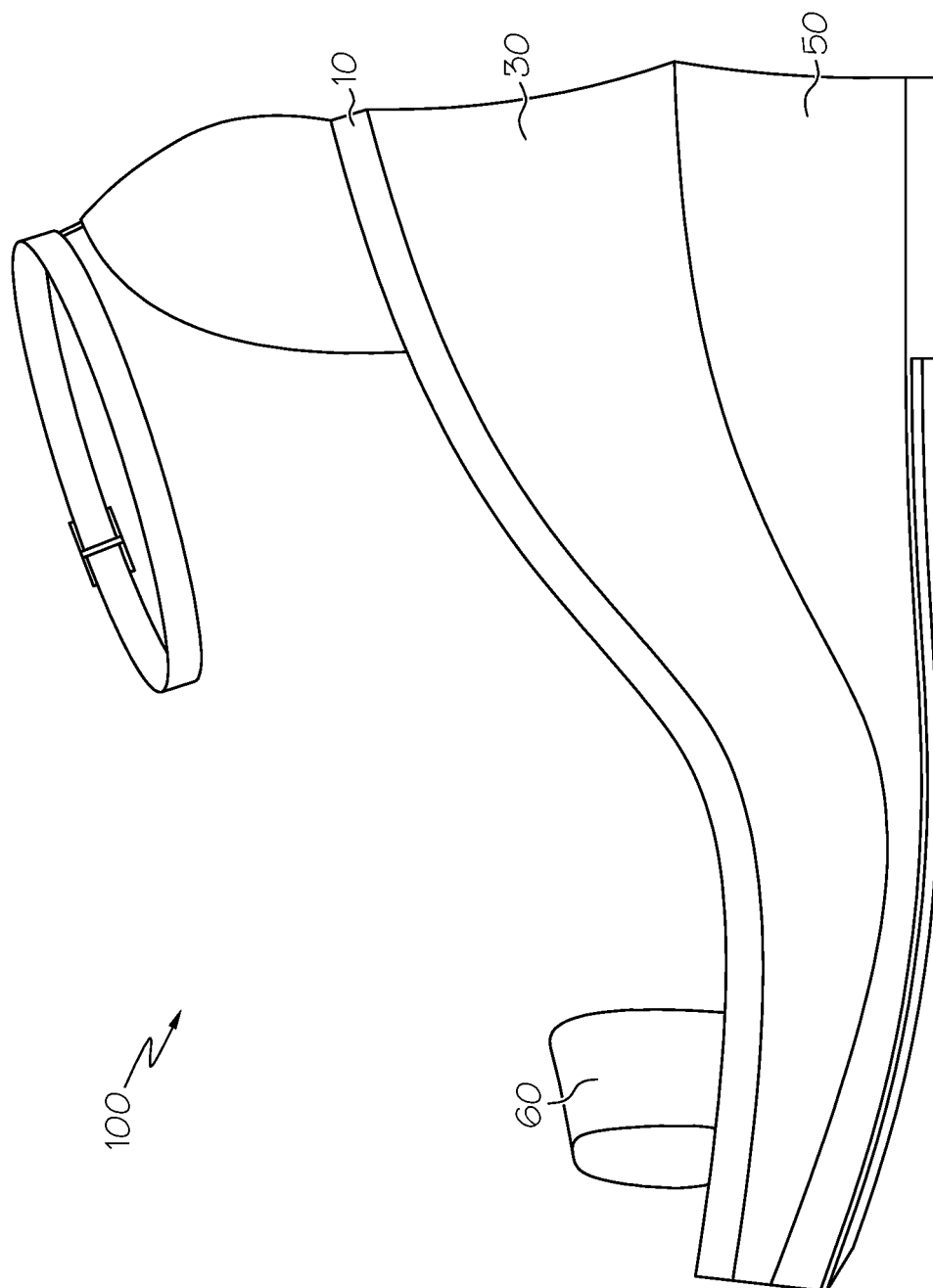


FIG. 18

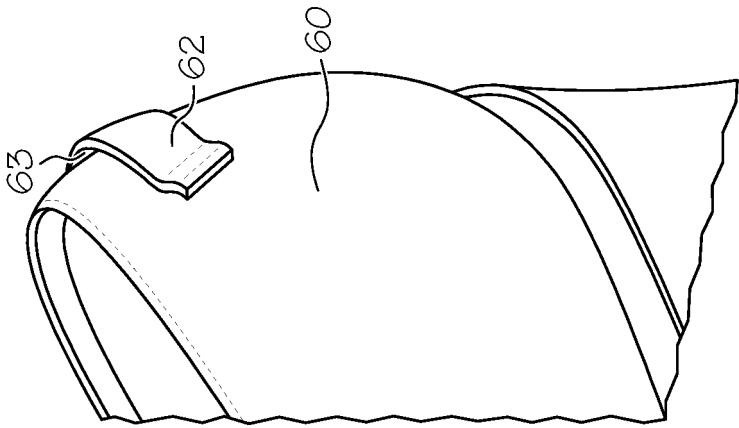
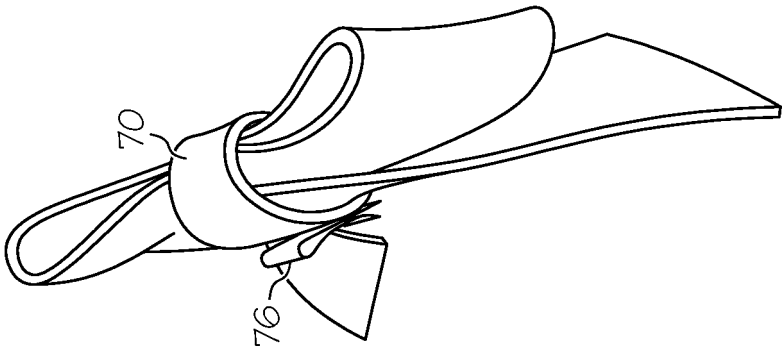


FIG. 19

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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