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(54) **STETHOSCOPE RESTRAINT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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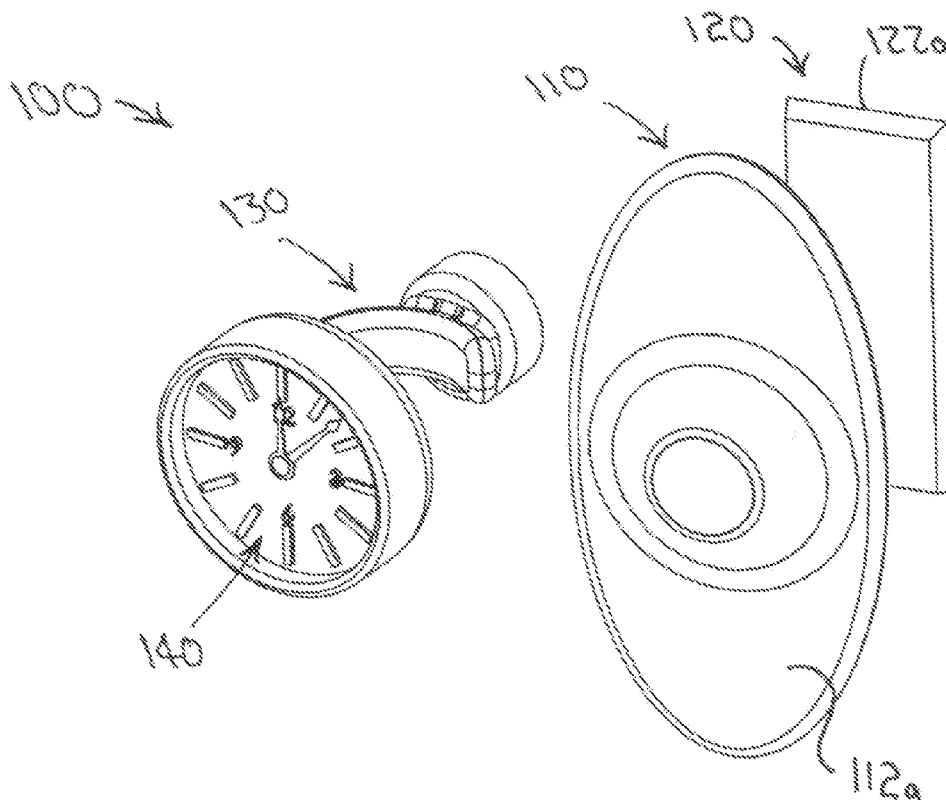
A stethoscope restraint for selectively maintaining a stethoscope tube near a user's body includes a base member having front and rear faces. The stethoscope restraint includes at least one of a magnet, a pin, and a clip for selectively coupling the base member to an article of clothing. Further, the stethoscope restraint device includes a tube clip coupled to the base member for selectively coupling a stethoscope tube to the base member. The front face of the base member may include a planar configuration and may include indicia. The tube clip may be removably coupled to the base member and may be semi-permanently attachable to a stethoscope tube. More particularly, the tube clip may be magnetically coupled to the base member. In one embodiment, a timepiece may be coupled to the tube clip.

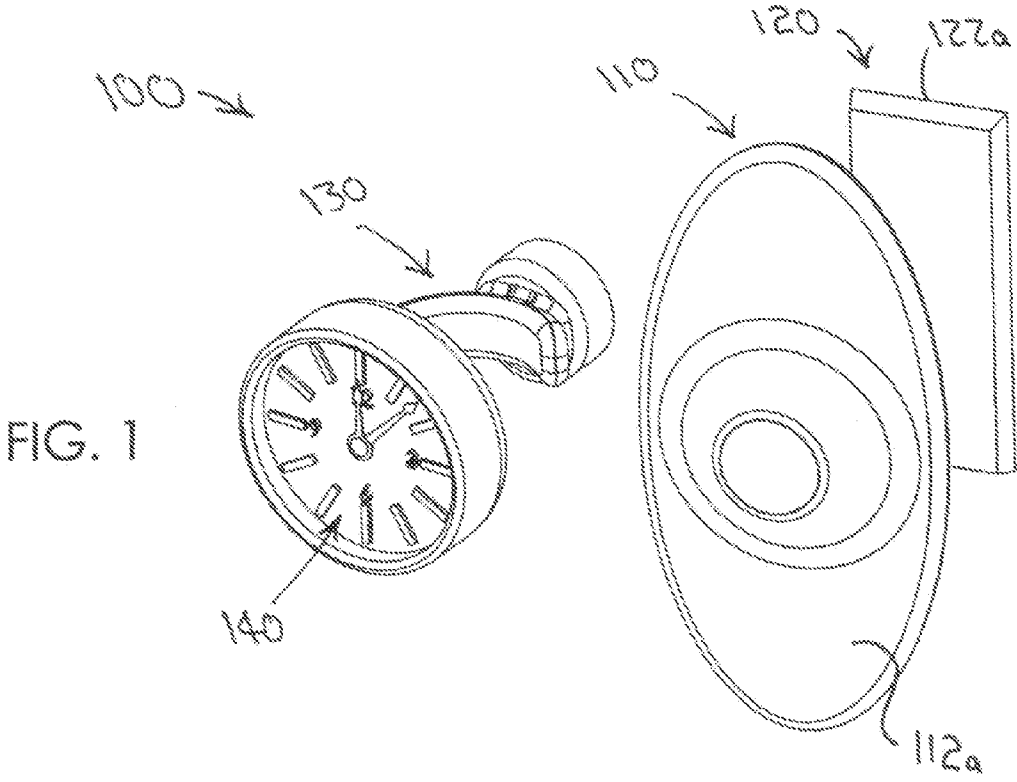
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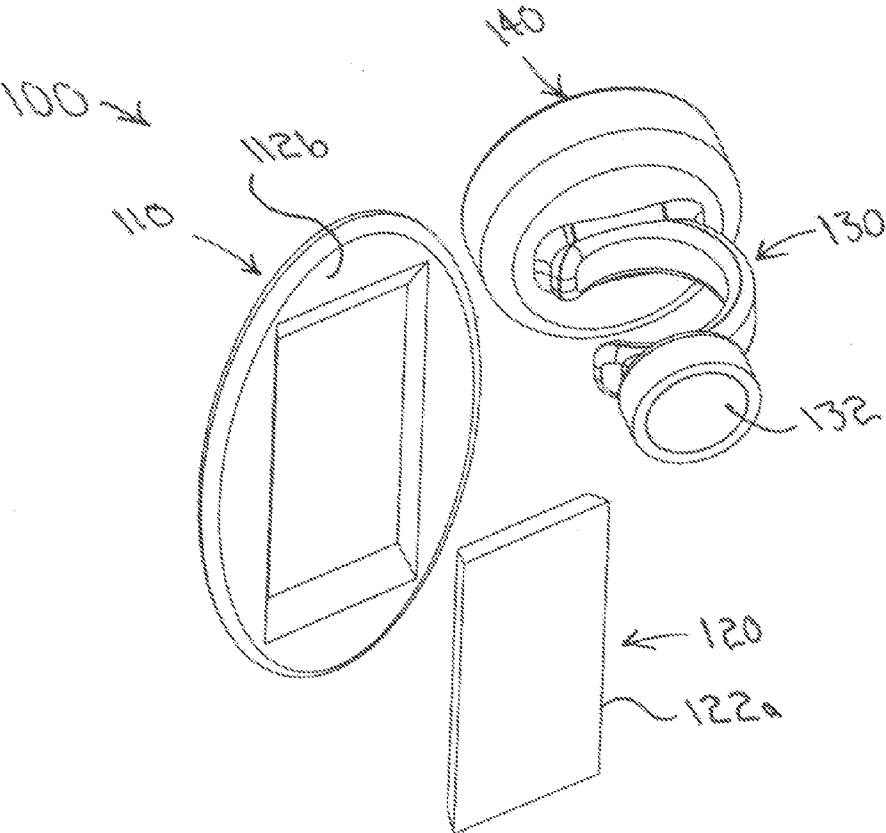


FIG. 2

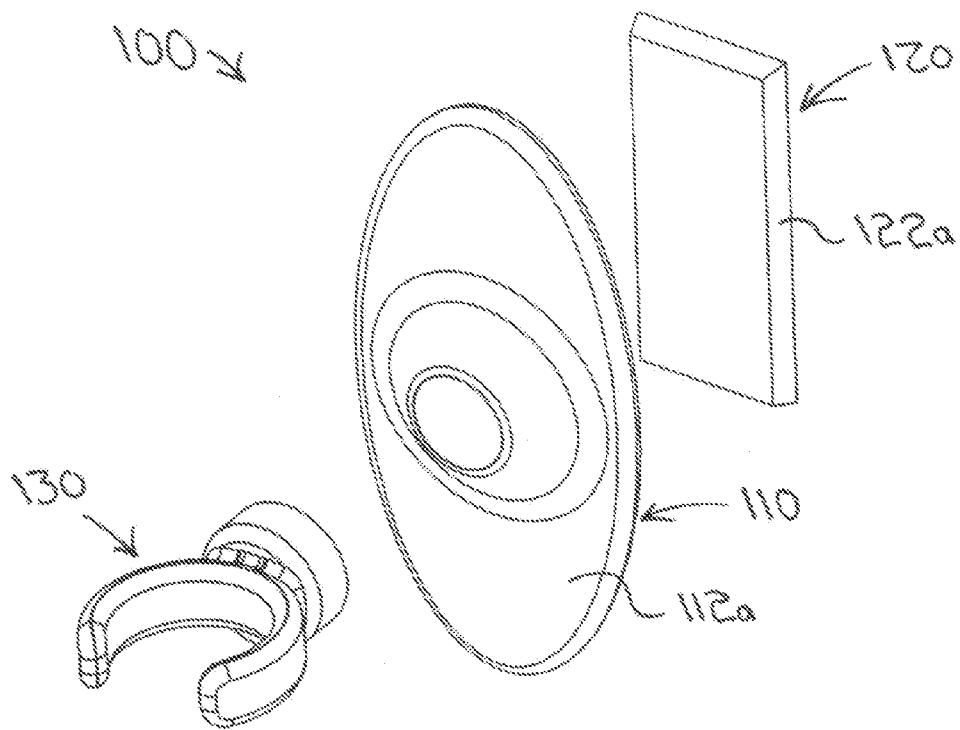


FIG. 3

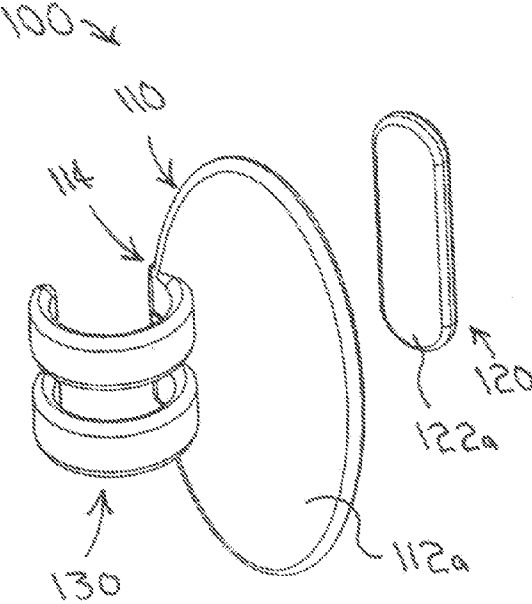


FIG. 4

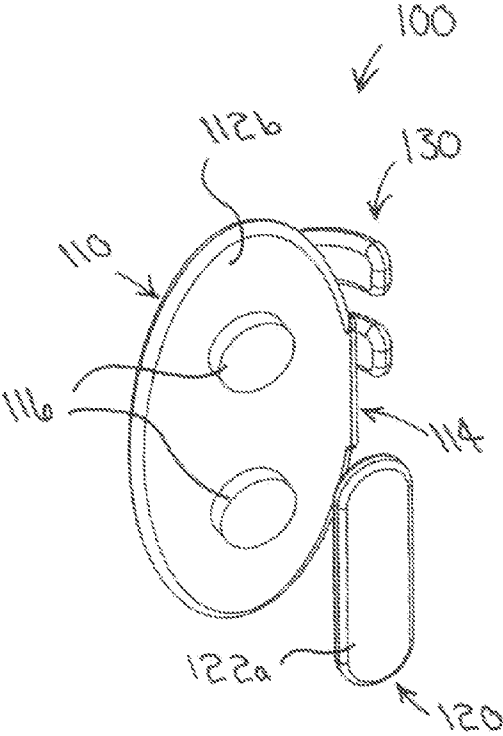


FIG. 5

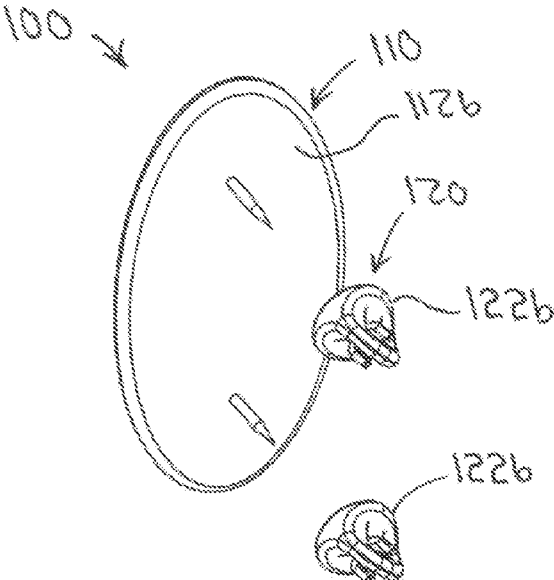


FIG. 6

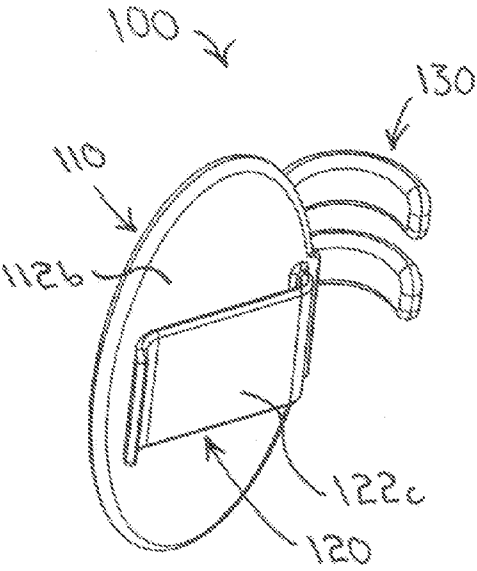


FIG. 7

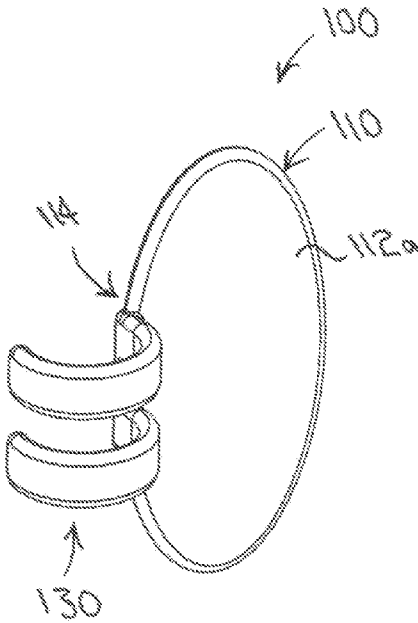


FIG. 8

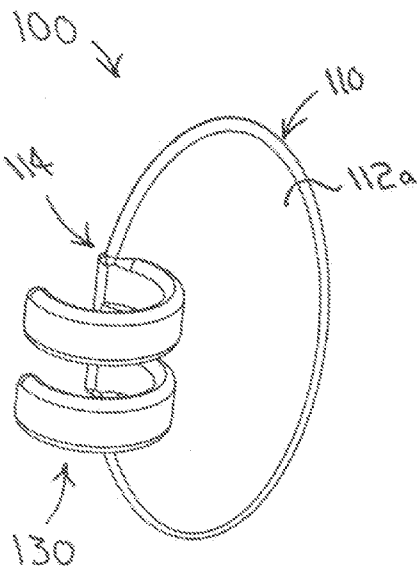


FIG. 9

STETHOSCOPE RESTRAINT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to medical accessories and, more particularly, to a device for selectively maintaining a stethoscope tube near a user's body.

[0002] For medical professionals such as physicians and nurses, wearing a stethoscope around one's neck is very common, perhaps even more common than the wearing of a tie in the business world. A common problem, however, is that the stethoscope tube often hangs in the user's way when the stethoscope is not in active use. In other words, when a user is not extending the stethoscope chest piece to a patient's body (e.g. for listening to a patient's heart or lungs), the user may want to leave the stethoscope hanging on his neck but does not want the stethoscope tube to dangle or be in the way.

[0003] Although various devices have been proposed in the art for restraining a stethoscope tube, the existing devices and proposals do not provide a device that maintains a stethoscope tube tightly against a user's body in a manner that also allows it to be removed with very little effort. Further, the existing proposals do not provide a stethoscope tube restraint device that is actually coupled to a user's shirt.

[0004] Therefore, it would be desirable to have a stethoscope restraint that is attached to a user's shirt and which selectively maintains a stethoscope tube adjacent a wearer's shirt when not in use. Further, it would be desirable to have a stethoscope restraint having a tube clip that may actually be removed from a base unit.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] A stethoscope restraint for use with a stethoscope tube according to the present invention includes a base member having front and rear faces. The stethoscope restraint includes at least one of a magnet, a pin, and a clip for selectively coupling the base member to an article of clothing. Further, the stethoscope restraint device includes a tube clip coupled to the base member for selectively coupling a stethoscope tube to the base member. The front face of the base member may include a planar configuration and may include indicia.

[0006] The tube clip may be removably coupled to the base member and may be semi-permanently attachable to a stethoscope tube. More particularly, the tube clip may be magnetically coupled to the base member. In one embodiment, a timepiece may be coupled to the tube clip.

[0007] Therefore, a general object of this invention is to provide a stethoscope restraint for maintaining a stethoscope tube near a user's body when not in use.

[0008] Another object of this invention is to provide a stethoscope restraint, as aforesaid, having a base member that is attachable to a user's clothing.

[0009] Still another object of this invention is to provide a stethoscope restraint, as aforesaid, having a tube clip for selectively engaging a stethoscope tube and which may optionally be removable from the base member.

[0010] Yet another object of this invention is to provide a stethoscope restraint, as aforesaid, in which the base member may include indicia for personalizing the stethoscope restraint.

[0011] A further object of this invention is to provide a stethoscope restraint, as aforesaid, that is durable and economically feasible to manufacture.

[0012] Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings,

wherein is set forth by way of illustration and example, embodiments of this invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of a stethoscope restraint according to one embodiment of the present invention;

[0014] FIG. 2 is a rear perspective view of the stethoscope restraint as in FIG. 1;

[0015] FIG. 3 is a front perspective view of a stethoscope restraint according to still another embodiment of the present invention;

[0016] FIG. 4 is a front perspective view of a stethoscope restraint according to still another embodiment of the present invention;

[0017] FIG. 5 is a rear perspective view of the stethoscope restraint as in FIG. 4 in which magnets are utilized to attach a base member to a user's clothing;

[0018] FIG. 6 is a rear view of a base member as in FIG. 1 wherein pins are utilized to attach the base member to a user's clothing;

[0019] FIG. 7 is a rear view of a base member as in FIG. 4 wherein a clip is utilized to attach the base member to a user's clothing;

[0020] FIGS. 8 and 9 are additional perspective views of the base member of the stethoscope restraint as in FIG. 4.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0021] A stethoscope restraint **100** according to the present invention will now be described in detail with reference to FIGS. 1 through 9 of the accompanying drawings. More particularly, according to the current invention, a stethoscope restraint **100** for use with a stethoscope tube (i.e., a tube that connects a stethoscope chestpiece to a stethoscope earpiece) includes a base member **110**.

[0022] As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the base member **110** may have front and rear faces **112a**, **112b**. The base member **110** may be rectangular, oval, circular, or of any appropriate shape, and the base member **110** may have a side **114** as shown in FIGS. 4, 5, 8, and 9. The front face **112a** may include indicia, and the front face **112a** in particular may be generally planar to display the indicia. The indicia may provide personalization and may include, for example, pictures, characters, mascots, trademarks, landmarks, landscapes, etc. The indicia may be permanently or removably attached to the base member **110**.

[0023] The stethoscope restraint **100** includes means for selectively coupling the base member **110** to an article of clothing. More particularly, a fastener **120** is coupled to the base member **110** to selectively couple the base member **110** to an article of clothing. The fastener **120** may be permanently or removably coupled to the base member **110**, and the fastener **120** may be, for example, a magnet **122a** (FIGS. 1 through 5), a pin **122b** (FIG. 6), or a clip **122c** (FIG. 7). If the base member **110** is constructed of non-ferrous material and the fastener **120** is a magnet **122a**, an additional magnet **116** may be affixed to the base member **110** for interaction with the magnet **122a** (FIG. 5).

[0024] The stethoscope restraint **100** further includes means for selectively coupling a stethoscope tube to the base member **110**. More particularly, a tube clip **130** (any device appropriate for attachment to a stethoscope tube) is coupled to the base member **110** for selectively coupling a stethoscope tube to the base member **110**. The tube clip **130** may be permanently or removably coupled to the base member **110**.

[0025] In the embodiment shown in FIGS. 4, 5, and 7 through 9, the tube clip 130 may be coupled to the base member 110 adjacent the side 114 and extend outside the side 114 so that the indicia on the base member front face 112a may be revealed. In such an embodiment, the tube clip 130 may be permanently coupled to the base member 110, though this may not be necessary. If the clip fastener 122c and the tube clip 130 are permanently coupled to the base member 110, the base member 110, the clip fastener 122c, and the tube clip 130 may collectively have a unitary plastic construction, though other constructions may also be appropriate.

[0026] A tube clip 130 that is removably coupled to the base member 110 is shown in FIGS. 1 through 3. In such an embodiment, the tube clip 130 may be, for example, magnetically coupled to the base member 110 (e.g., by magnet 132 shown in FIG. 2). It may be desirable for a removable tube clip 130 as shown in FIGS. 1 through 3 to be at least semi-permanently attachable to the stethoscope tube so that the tube clip 130 remains attached to the stethoscope tube when separated from the base member 110. As shown in FIG. 1, a timepiece 140 may be coupled to the tube clip 130 (and especially a removable tube clip 130) for use as described below.

[0027] In use, a stethoscope is generally worn around a physician's (or other user's) neck when not being employed. To maintain the stethoscope tube against the user's body, the fastener 120 may be coupled to an article of the user's clothing (e.g., a shirt, a jacket, a coat, etc.), and the tube clip 130 may be coupled to the stethoscope tube. Various fasteners may provide different benefits. For example, the pin 122b may provide very firm attachment, the magnet 122a may not damage the clothing, and the clip fastener 122c may be simple to attach. If the tube clip 130 is coupled to the base member 110 adjacent the side 114 and extends outside the side 114 as described above, the stethoscope tube may be restrained while the indicia on the base member front face 112a is revealed. If the tube clip 130 is removably coupled to the base member 110, it may be extremely easy to separate the stethoscope tube from (and attach the stethoscope tube to) the base member 110. The timepiece 140 may be used to help measure heart rate or in other situations in which time must be kept.

[0028] It is understood that while certain forms of this invention have been illustrated and described, it is not limited thereto except insofar as such limitations are included in the following claims and allowable functional equivalents thereof.

- 1. A stethoscope restraint, comprising:
 - a base member having front and rear faces;
 - at least one of a magnet, a pin, and a clip for selectively coupling said base member to an article of clothing; and
 - a tube clip coupled to said base member for selectively coupling a stethoscope tube to said base member.
- 2. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 1, wherein said tube clip is permanently coupled to said base member.
- 3. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 2, wherein said base member front face includes indicia.
- 4. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 3, wherein:
 - said base member has a side;
 - said tube clip is coupled to said base member adjacent said side; and
 - said tube clip extends outside said base member side to reveal said indicia.

5. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 4, wherein said base member front face is generally planar.

6. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 2, wherein:
said clip selectively couples said base member to said article of clothing; and
said clip, said base member, and said tube clip collectively have a unitary plastic construction.

7. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 1, wherein:
said tube clip is removably coupled to said base member; and
said tube clip is at least semi-permanently attachable to said stethoscope tube.

8. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 7, wherein said tube clip is magnetically coupled to said base member.

9. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 7, further comprising a timepiece coupled to said tube clip.

10. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 1, wherein said article of clothing is one of a shirt, a jacket, and a coat.

11. A stethoscope restraint for use with a stethoscope tube, comprising:

- a base member;
- a fastener coupled to said base member to selectively couple said base member to an article of clothing; and
- a tube clip coupled to said base member to selectively couple said stethoscope tube to said base member.

12. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 11, wherein said tube clip is permanently coupled to said base member.

13. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 12, wherein:
said base member has a front face that includes indicia;
said base member has a side;
said tube clip is coupled to said base member adjacent said side; and
said tube clip extends outside said base member side to reveal said indicia.

14. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 11, wherein said tube clip is removably coupled to said base member.

15. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 16, further comprising a timepiece coupled to said tube clip.

16. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 11, wherein said fastener is permanently coupled to said base member.

17. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 16, wherein:
said tube clip is permanently coupled to said base member; and
said fastener, said base member, and said tube clip have a unitary plastic construction.

18. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 11, wherein said fastener is removably coupled to said base member.

19. A stethoscope restraint, comprising:
a base member having front and rear faces;
means for selectively coupling said base member to an article of clothing; and
means for selectively coupling a stethoscope tube to said base member.

20. The stethoscope restraint as in claim 19, further comprising:
a timepiece coupled to said means for selectively coupling a stethoscope tube; and
indicia upon said base member front face.

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