A garment carrier and support device is provided for collecting, carrying, supporting, and transporting dry cleaning or other clothing hung on hangers.
GARMENT CARRIER AND SUPPORT DEVICE

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] There are no previously filed, nor currently any co-pending applications, anywhere in the world.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention
[0003] The present invention relates generally to an apparatus for supporting hangers and, more particularly, to a device for collecting, carrying, supporting, and transporting garments hung on hangers.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art
[0005] In traveling or in simply picking up and dropping off one's dry cleaning, it is often necessary to carry hangers laden with clothes to and from the dry cleaner store, airport, train station, or bus terminal. Grasping and holding a number of hangers, particularly where the clothing which they support is heavy or bulky, can be very uncomfortable, especially for persons having small hands. In addition, the hangers tend to bite into the hand and fingers generating discomfort, thereby compelling the carrier to switch the hangers from each hand to the other in order to minimize the discomfort.

[0006] Accordingly, a need has arisen for a device adapted for collecting, carrying, supporting, and transporting dry cleaning and other garments or clothing hung on hangers in a manner which is quick, easy, and efficient. The development of the garment carrier and support device fulfills this need.

[0007] A search of the prior art did not disclose any patents that read directly on the claims of the instant invention; however, the following references were considered related.

[0008] The following patents disclose various devices for carrying and supporting clothes hangers:
[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 4,709,954, issued in the name of Beyda et al.;
[0010] U.S. Pat. No. 4,153,189, issued in the name of Hughes;
[0011] U.S. Pat. No. 5,971,458, issued in the name of Contreras et al.;
[0012] U.S. Pat. No. 4,824,156, issued in the name of Greene;
[0013] U.S. Pat. No. 5,405,067, issued in the name of Hughes;
[0014] U.S. Pat. No. 4,029,212, issued in the name of Udiski;
[0015] U.S. Pat. No. 6,003,918, issued in the name of Hulyk;
[0016] U.S. Pat. No. 4,278,177, issued in the name of Falhi;
[0017] U.S. Pat. No. 5,833,184, issued in the name of Scola;
[0018] U.S. Pat. No. D440,147 S, issued in the name of Rimbock;
[0019] U.S. Pat. No. 5,957,518, issued in the name of Elliott; and

[0021] Consequently, a need has been felt for a device adapted for collecting, carrying, supporting, and transporting dry cleaning and other garments or clothing hung on hangers in a manner which is quick, easy, and efficient.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0022] Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to provide a device adapted for collecting, carrying, and supporting dry cleaning and other garments or clothing hung on hangers.

[0023] It is another object of the present invention to provide a garment carrier and support device which allows clothes hung on hangers to be quickly, easily, and efficiently transported to one's vehicle.

[0024] It is another object of the present invention to provide a garment carrier and support device adapted to allow clothes hung on hangers to hang from a vehicle hook member or a vehicle hand support, thereby allowing for the convenient transport thereof.

[0025] It is another object of the present invention to provide a portable, lightweight garment carrier and support device.

[0026] It is another object of the present invention to provide a garment carrier and support device having a cushioned handle grip.

[0027] It is another object of the present invention to provide a garment carrier and support device having a rotatable upper curved arm.

[0028] It is still another object of the present invention to provide a garment carrier and support device having a spherical abutment element adapted to prevent a plurality of hangers and clothes supported thereby from disengaging from the device during the transport thereof to a vehicle.

[0029] Briefly described according to one embodiment of the present invention, a garment carrier and support device is disclosed. The garment carrier and support device, hereinafter device, is adapted for collecting, carrying, and supporting clothing hung on hangers. The device comprises an upper curved arm and a lower curved arm joined by an elongated handle member.

[0030] Elongated handle member is provided with a circular handle grip constructed of a flexible, shape-memory, cellular foam material. The upper curved arm extends integrally from an upper end of elongated handle member and forms generally a C-shape. The upper curved arm is adapted for positioning over a vehicular hook member or a vehicular hand support. The lower curved arm extends integrally from a lower end of elongated handle member and forms generally a C-shape. A distal end of lower curved arm is suitably mounted with a spherical abutment element. The spherical abutment element is constructed of a lightweight material suitable so as to produce friction engagement between a hanger hook and spherical abutment element upon contact by hanger hook with spherical abutment element.

[0031] A first alternate embodiment is provided wherein the upper curved arm of the device is rotatably mounted to elongated handle member about the upper end thereof. The upper curved arm is adapted to rotate and be releasably secured in a first position (forward position) and a second position (rearward position) about elongated handle member.

[0032] A second alternate embodiment is provided wherein the present invention is fabricated as a tubular, unitary apparatus. The device of the second alternate embodiment is constructed preferably of a lightweight, tubular flexible material. The device comprises an elongated mid section joined integrally by a lower curved leg and an upper curved leg. The mid
section defines a curvilinear configuration forming a convex portion protruding above a concave portion. The mid section includes an upper bight portion and a lower bight portion.

A hook portion extends upward integrally from the upper curved leg. Hook portion is adapted for positioning over the vehicular hook member or vehicular hand support.

The use of the present invention allows dry cleaning and other garments or clothing hung on hangers to be collected, carried, supported, and transported in a manner which is quick, easy, efficient, and convenient.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The advantages and features of the present invention will become better understood with reference to the following more detailed description and claims taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like elements are identified with like symbols, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a garment carrier and support device, according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the present invention shown hanging from a vehicular hook member, according to the preferred embodiment thereof;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the present invention shown hanging from a vehicular hand support, according to the preferred embodiment thereof;

FIG. 4 is a side elevational view of a first alternate embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of the first alternate embodiment taken along lines V-V of FIG. 4 illustrating the rotatable, releasably securable upper curved arm, shown mounted to the inner circumferential sidewall of elongated handle member;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view illustrating garments supported on a support rod;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view illustrating a second alternate embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of the second alternate embodiment which includes a spherical abutment element.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

1. Detailed Description of the Figures

Referring now to FIGS. 1-3, and 6, a garment carrier and support device 10, hereinafter carrier device 10, according to the present invention, is provided for collecting, carrying, and supporting clothing 15 hung on hangers 12. The carrier device 10 comprises an upper curved arm 20 and a lower curved arm 30 joined by an elongated handle member 40. The upper curved arm 20, lower curved arm 30, and elongated handle member 40 are constructed preferably of a lightweight, tubular flexible material, such as plastic, plastic polymer, and thermoplastic polymer, e.g. polyvinyl chloride (PVC). The upper curved arm 20, lower curved arm 30, and elongated handle member 40 may also be constructed of a solid, flexible, lightweight material defined of any slender cross-sectional shape, e.g. circular, square, hexagonal, or any other polygonal shape. The carrier device 10 defines an overall length of approximately four to eighteen inches.

Elongated handle member 40 includes an elongated, circular handle grip 44 enveloped circumferentially therearound. Handle grip 44 is attached to elongated handle member 40 using an adhesive being suitable so as to firmly secure handle grip 44 to handle member 40. Handle grip 44 is constructed of a flexible, shape-memory, cellular foam material adapted to resume its original shape if compressed. Handle grip 44 provides user with a comfortable grip during use of the present invention.

The upper curved arm 20 extends integrally from an upper end 42 of elongated handle member 40 and forms generally a C-shape. The upper curved arm 20 is adapted for positioning over a vehicular hook member 16 or a vehicular hand support 17. More specifically, when positioning upper curved arm 20 over a vehicular hand support 17, the proximal end 22 of upper curved arm 20 is inserted through the void 17a of vehicular hand support 17, and a hand support contact surface 24 of upper curved arm 20 is engaged against an interior upper surface 17b of hand support 17. The hand support contact surface 24 of upper curved arm 20 is defined as the arcuate or concave-shaped lower surface 24a portion thereof.

The lower curved arm 30 extends integrally from a lower end 41 of elongated handle member 40 and forms generally a C-shape. A distal end 32 of lower curved arm 30 is suitably mounted with a spherical abutment element 35. The spherical abutment element 35 is constructed of a lightweight material suitable so as to produce friction engagement between a hanger hook 13 and spherical abutment element 35 upon contact by hanger hook 13 with spherical abutment element 35. It is envisioned that spherical abutment element 35 is constructed of a soft, rubber material. Spherical abutment element 35 imports important functional utility to the present invention as will be described hereinafter.

In using the carrier device 10, the handle grip 44 is gripped using a desired hand, and spherical abutment element 35 is passed through a number of clothes hanger hooks 13 of hangers 12 wherein each hanger 12 is supporting garments 15, such as dry cleaning, hung on a support rod 18 or similar support structure configured for supporting a number of garments 15 or dry cleaning. After passing distal end 32 of lower curved arm 30 through selected clothes hanger hooks 13, the carrier device 10 is raised so as to lift hangers 12 from the support rod 18, thereby allowing the clothes 15 to be readily transported, and handle member 40 is held generally at a horizontal orientation allowing clothes 15 to depend downwardly from lower curved arm 30 via gravitational pull. Spherical abutment element 35 acts as a stop against which the hooks 13 of hangers 12 engage, thereby retaining the hangers 12 and clothes 15 supported thereby along the lower curved arm 30 of carrier device 10 and preventing slippage therefrom. The upper curved arm 20 is then positioned over a vehicular hook member 16 or a vehicular hand support 17, thereby allowing the clothes 15 to be hung in a convenient manner, ready for transport without further adjustment.

Referring now to FIGS. 4 and 5, in accordance with an alternate embodiment, upper curved arm 20 of carrier device 10 is rotatably mounted to elongated handle member 40 about the upper end 42 thereof. Upper curved arm 20 is adapted to rotate and be releasably secured in a first position (forward position) and a second position (rearward position) about elongated handle member 40. The upper curved arm 20 is provided with a first tab 26 opposing a second tab 27, each tab 26 and 27 is formed integral to the lower end 23 of upper curved arm 20. Each tab 26 and 27 protrudes perpendicular with respect to the lower end 23 of upper curved arm 20. The lower end 23 of upper curved arm 20 is adapted to be inserted inside the open upper end 42 of elongated handle member 40.
The first tab 26 and second tab 27 are adapted to mate interchangeably with a first slot 46 and a second slot 47, defined along the inner circumferential sidewall of elongated handle member 40, proximal an upper end 42 thereof. Engagement by first tab 26 with first slot 46 and second tab 27 with second slot 47, or first tab 26 with second slot 47 and second tab 27 with first slot 46 allows upper curved arm 20 to be releasably secured about elongated handle member 40 via a friction-fit connection. In order to release upper curved arm 20 from its friction-fit connection, upper curved arm 20 is rotated clockwise or counterclockwise using a degree of force necessary to facilitate release of first and second tab 26, 27 from a corresponding first and second slot 46, 47.

[0050] Referring now to FIG. 7, in accordance with another alternate embodiment, garment carrier and support device 10a is fabricated as a tubular, unitary apparatus 100 capable of injection molding and having a generally round cross-section. The garment carrier and support device 10a is constructed preferably of a lightweight, tubular flexible material, such as plastic, plastic polymer, and thermostoplastic polymer. Unitary apparatus 100 comprises an elongated mid section 102 joined integrally by a lower curved leg 106 and an upper curved leg 110. Mid section 102 defines a curvilinear configuration forming a convex portion 102a protruding above a concave portion 102b. Mid section 102 includes an upper bight portion 103 and a lower bight portion 104, wherein upper bight portion 103 functions as a palm rest 105.

[0051] Upper curved leg 110 defines a shorter length than a length defining lower curved leg 106. Upper curved leg 110 defines a generally crispate external circumferential sidewall 112 complementary to upper bight portion 103. Crispate external circumferential sidewall 112 provides a finger-gripping surface area 113.

[0052] A hook portion 120 extends upwardly integrally from the upper curved leg 110. Hook portion 120 is adapted for positioning over the vehicular hook member 16 or vehicular hand support 17.

[0053] Lower curved leg 106 may be provided with a spherical abutment element 35a suitably mounted or formed integral to a distal end 107 thereof, as shown in FIG. 8.

[0054] In using the garment carrier and support device 10a, the palm (not shown) of user is engaged against upper bight portion 103 of mid section 102 while simultaneously gripping the finger-gripping surface area 113 using the fingers (not shown), and distal end 107 of lower curved leg 106 is passed through a number of clothes hanger hooks 13 of hangers 12 supporting clothes 15 hung on a support rod 18 or similar support structure. After passing distal end 107 of lower curved leg 106 or spherical abutment element 35a through selected clothes hanger hooks 13, the carrier device 10a is raised so as to lift hangers 12 from the support rod 18, thereby allowing the clothes 15 to be readily transported, and elongated mid section 102 is held generally at a horizontal orientation allowing clothes 15 to depend downwardly from lower curved leg 106 via gravitational pull. The hangers 12 and clothing 15 supported thereby are retained along lower curved leg 106. The upper curved leg 110 is then positioned over a vehicular hook member 16 or a vehicular hand support 17, thereby allowing the clothes 15 to be hung in a convenient manner, ready for transport without further adjustment.

2. Operation of the Preferred Embodiment

[0055] To use the present invention, user grips handle grip 44 in a desired hand, and passes spherical abutment element 35 through a number of clothes hanger hooks 13 of hangers 12 supporting clothes 15 on a support rod 18. After passing spherical abutment element 35 through selected clothes hanger hooks 13, user raises the carrier device 10 to lift hangers 12 from the support rod 18, thereby allowing the clothes 15 to be readily transported. User next positions the upper curved arm 20 over a vehicular hook member 16 or a vehicular hand support 17, thereby allowing the clothes 15 to be hung in a convenient manner, ready for transport without further adjustment.

[0056] The use of the present invention allows dry cleaning and other garments or clothing hung on hangers to be collected, carried, supported, and transported in a manner which is quick, easy, efficient, and convenient.

[0057] Therefore, the foregoing description is included to illustrate the operation of the preferred embodiment and is not meant to limit the scope of the invention. As one can envision, an individual skilled in the relevant art, in conjunction with the present teachings, would be capable of incorporating many minor modifications that are anticipated within this disclosure. The foregoing descriptions of specific embodiments of the present invention have been presented for purposes of illustration and description. They are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed, and obviously many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical application, to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention and various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the Claims appended hereto and their equivalents. Therefore, the scope of the invention is to be broadly limited only by the following Claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A garment carrier and support device comprising:
   - an upper curved arm and a lower curved arm, said upper curved arm and said lower curved arm are joined by an elongated handle member; and
   - a spherical abutment element, said spherical abutment element is suitably mounted to said lower curved arm.

2. The garment carrier and support device of claim 1, wherein said upper curved arm, said lower curved arm, and said elongated handle member are constructed of a lightweight, flexible material.

3. The garment carrier and support device of claim 1, wherein said elongated handle member includes an elongated, circular handle grip enveloped circumferentially therearound.

4. The garment carrier and support device of claim 3, wherein said handle grip is attached to said elongated handle member using an adhesive being suitable so as to fixedly secure said handle grip to said elongated handle member.

5. The garment carrier and support device of claim 4, wherein said handle grip is constructed of a flexible, shape-memory, cellular foam material.

6. The garment carrier and support device of claim 1, wherein said upper curved arm extends integrally from an upper end of said elongated handle member and forms generally a C-shape, said upper curved arm is adapted for positioning over a vehicular hook member or a vehicular hand support.
7. The garment carrier and support device of claim 1, wherein said lower curved arm extends integrally from a lower end of said elongated handle member and forms generally a C-shape, said lower curved arm having a distal end suitably mounted with said spherical abutment element, said spherical abutment element is constructed of a lightweight material suitable so as to produce friction engagement between a hanger hook and said spherical abutment element upon contact by the hanger hook with said spherical abutment element, said spherical abutment element is adapted to function as a stop against which a plurality of hanger hooks engage, thereby retaining a hangers and a clothes supported thereby along said lower curved arm.

8. The garment carrier and support device of claim 7, wherein said spherical abutment element is constructed of a soft, rubber material.

9. A garment carrier and support device comprising: a lower curved arm integrally joined to an elongated handle member about a lower end of said elongated handle member; an upper curved arm rotatably mounted to said elongated handle member about an open upper end of said elongated handle member; and a spherical abutment element, said spherical abutment element is suitably mounted to said lower curved arm.

10. The garment carrier and support device of claim 9, wherein said upper curved arm, said lower curved arm, and said elongated handle member are constructed of a lightweight, flexible tubular material.

11. The garment carrier and support device of claim 9, wherein said elongated handle member includes an elongated, circular handle grip enveloped circumferentially therearound.

12. The garment carrier and support device of claim 9, wherein said upper curved arm is adapted to rotate and be releasably secured in a first position and a second position about said elongated handle member.

13. The garment carrier and support device of claim 12, wherein said upper curved arm includes a first tab opposing a second tab, wherein said first tab and said second tab are each formed integral to a lower end of said upper curved arm, said first tab and said second tab protrude perpendicularly with respect to said lower end of said upper curved arm.

14. The garment carrier and support device of claim 13, wherein said lower end of said upper curved arm is adapted for insertion into said open upper end of said elongated handle member, said first tab and said second tab are adapted to mate interchangeably with a first slot and a second slot, said first slot and said second slot are defined along an inner circumferential sidewall of said elongated handle member, proximal said open upper end thereof, wherein engagement by said first tab with said first slot and engagement by said second tab with said second slot, or engagement by said first tab with said second slot and engagement by said second tab with said first slot allows said upper curved arm to be releasably secured about said elongated handle member via a friction-fit connection.

15. A garment carrier and support device comprising: a tubular, unitary apparatus having a generally round cross-section, said unitary apparatus comprises an elongated mid section joined integrally by a lower curved leg and an upper curved leg, said mid section defines a curvilinear configuration forming a convex portion protruding above a concave portion.

16. The garment carrier and support device of claim 15, wherein said mid section includes an upper bight portion and a lower bight portion, wherein said upper bight portion functions as a palm rest.

17. The garment carrier and support device of claim 15, wherein said upper curved leg defines a shorter length than a length defining said lower curved leg, said upper curved leg further defines a generally crispate external circumferential sidewall complementary to said upper bight portion, said crispate external circumferential sidewall provides a finger-gripping surface area.

18. The garment carrier and support device of claim 17, wherein said upper curved leg includes a hook portion extending upward integrally therefrom, said hook portion is adapted for positioning over a vehicular hook member or a vehicular hand support.

19. The garment carrier and support device of claim 15, wherein said lower curved leg includes a spherical abutment element suitably mounted or formed integral to a distal end thereof.

20. The garment carrier and support device of claim 15, wherein said tubular unitary apparatus is constructed of a lightweight, flexible material.

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