BRASSIERE LAUNDRY DEVICE

Inventor: Laureen Gibeau, North Andover, MA (US)

Correspondence Address:
Doughin Law Offices
Suite 365
9 Bartlett Street
Andover, MA 01810 (US)

Appl. No.: 10/832,201
Filed: Apr. 26, 2004

A laundry device for protecting underwire brassieres includes a water permeable enclosure having a rigid frame for restricting torsional movement of the enclosure and the clothing contained therein during laundering.
BRASSIERE LAUNDRY DEVICE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention is directed generally to laundering devices for brassieres and more particularly to a laundering device particularly suited for laundering brassieres containing underwire stays and for protecting and preventing the deformation thereof during laundering.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Clothing is often damaged when it comes into contact with the moving parts of a washing machine, clothes dryer and/or other clothing during a laundering operation. Thus, delicate clothing is often washed by hand or in a retaining device, such as a laundry net for protection and hung out to dry.

[0003] Laundry retaining devices for brassieres, such as disclosed by U.S. Pat. No. 6,478,464 (2002) to Toyosawa, are known in the art. The “laundry net” disclosed therein includes a dome-shaped bag designed to accommodate the curved shape of a brassiere. This and other brassiere laundering devices include wires, resilient fabrics and/or other means to establish an elastic vessel, which after passing through a laundering cycle allows the laundering device to return to its original shape. While these devices are somewhat effective in reducing the stresses and damage often caused to the fabric of a brassiere during laundering, these devices fail to eliminate the external stresses imposed by a washing machine or clothes dryer during laundering from damaging or deforming the underwire stays found in many brassieres.

[0004] There remains a need to provide a rigid laundering device that protects both the fabric and underwire stays of a brassiere during laundering.

[0005] There also remains a need to provide a rigid laundering device that has few parts and which is simple and inexpensive to manufacture.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a rigid laundering device that is capable of enclosing and protecting one or more articles of clothing from the damaging effects encountered during laundering in a washing machine or clothes dryer.

[0007] It is another object of the present invention to provide a rigid laundering device that has few parts, which is durable in nature and that is simple and inexpensive to manufacture.

[0008] Other objects will, in part, be obvious and will, in part, appear hereinafter. The invention accordingly, comprises the features of construction, combination of elements and arrangements of parts, which will be exemplified in the following detailed description and the scope of the invention will be indicated in the claims.

[0009] According to one aspect of the invention, a laundering device for limiting the external forces encountered during laundering from affecting an article of clothing comprises a water permeable enclosure capable of containing at least one article of clothing and a rigid member operatively disposed within said water permeable enclosure, wherein said rigid member limits the torsional effects caused during laundering from adversely affecting the at least one article of clothing.

[0010] As to another aspect of the invention the rigid member further comprises a plastic ring.

[0011] As to yet another aspect of the invention the rigid member further comprises a metal ring.

[0012] As to yet another aspect of the invention the laundering device further comprises access means for inserting at least one brassiere into the laundering device.

[0013] As to yet another aspect of the invention the access means further comprises a zipper.

[0014] As to yet another aspect of the invention the access means further comprises a Velcro fastener.

[0015] According to yet another aspect of the invention a laundering device for limiting the external forces encountered during laundering from affecting an article of clothing comprises a rigid water permeable plastic enclosure capable of containing at least one article of clothing and limiting the torsional effects on the at least one article of clothing normally caused during laundering.

[0016] The present invention achieves those and other objectives by providing a rigid water permeable enclosure that prevents articles of clothing from being twisted or compressed in a washing machine, which has few parts and that is durable in nature and simple and inexpensive to manufacture.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] The preferred embodiments of the invention will hereinafter be described in conjunction with the appended drawings provided to illustrate and not to limit the invention, wherein like designations denote like elements, and in which:

[0018] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a brassiere laundering device employing a rigid ring in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

[0019] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the rigid ring of the brassiere laundering device of FIG. 1;

[0020] FIG. 3 is a top elevational view of the brassiere laundering device of FIG. 1;

[0021] FIG. 4 is a bottom elevational view of the brassiere laundering device of FIG. 1;

[0022] FIG. 5 is an enlarged top elevational view of the brassiere laundering device of FIG. 1 showing the rigid ring positioned within the outer diameter of the brassiere laundering device; and

[0023] FIG. 6 is a side view of the brassiere laundering device of FIG. 1 showing the rigid ring positioned within the outer diameter of the brassiere laundering device the brassiere laundering device of FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0024] Preferred embodiments of the present invention are illustrated in FIGS. 1-6. Referring now to FIGS. 1-6, a disk shaped brassiere laundering device employing a rigid ring
20 for limiting torsional motion of the device during laundering and the external forces associated therewith is designated generally by numeral 10. The present description is directed primarily to brassieres having underwear stays; however, the laundering device 10 can readily be adapted and or used with other clothing items that would benefit from a sturdy or rigid laundering compartment.

In the present embodiment, the laundering device 10 includes a covering 28, having an upper surface 30 and a lower surface 32. Upper and lower surfaces 30, 32 are preferably fabricated from a water permeable material 40, which allows water and detergent to pass through the laundering device 10 during laundering.

As shown, the water permeable membrane 40 is a netting material that is joined along a seam 42 to a solid material 44, which wraps around the rigid ring 20. It should be noted that other configurations of material might be used for covering 28, which would accomplish the same function of forming a water permeable pouch for accommodating brassieres. For example, the covering 28 may be fabricated entirely from a netting material. In addition, a portion or all of the covering 28 may be elastic in nature. In these and other configurations, the rigid ring 20 may be permanently or removably fixed within or to the laundering device 10.

In operation, one or more brassieres (not shown) are inserted into the laundering device 10 through the upper surface 30 via an opening 50. In the present embodiment, the opening 50 is formed using a zipper 52. Other means for providing access to the interior of laundering device 10, such as Velcro, snaps, ties and other fastening means, are contemplated. Once inserted into the laundering device 10, the zippered opening 50 is closed for laundering.

As previously discussed, as an article of clothing is washed in a washing machine or dried in a clothes dryer, torsional forces are imparted on the clothing by the moving parts of the washing machine, the dryer and by other clothing coming into contact with it. In the present embodiment, the rigid ring 20 is sufficiently rigid such that it maintains the flat disc shape of the laundering device prior to, during and after laundering. The rigid ring 20, and therefore the underwear stays, are substantially maintained in a single plane during laundering, preventing the underwear stays from twisting and or deforming.

In the present embodiment, the rigid ring 20 is fabricated from plastic; however, other materials such as metal, rubber, composites or wood are contemplated. In addition, although the present embodiment of the laundering device 10 is directed to a round shaped disk, other various shapes are contemplated. It is also contemplated that the entire laundering device 10 could be formed from a rigid material, such as plastic.

Although the preferred embodiments of the present invention have been described herein, the above descriptions are merely illustrative. Further modifications of the invention herein disclosed will occur to those skilled in the respective arts and all such modifications are deemed to be within the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:
1. A laundry device for limiting the external forces encountered during laundering from affecting an article of clothing comprising:
   (a) a water permeable enclosure capable of containing at least one article of clothing; and
   (b) a rigid member operatively disposed within said water permeable enclosure, wherein said rigid member limits the torsional effects caused during laundering from affecting the at least one article of clothing.
2. The laundry device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said rigid member is a metal ring.
3. The laundry device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said rigid member is a metal ring.
4. The laundry device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising access means for inserting at least one brassiere into the laundering device.
5. The laundry device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the access means is a zipper.
6. The laundry device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the access means further includes a Velcro fastener.
7. A laundry device for limiting the external forces encountered during laundering from affecting an article of clothing comprising a rigid water permeable enclosure capable of containing at least one article of clothing and limiting the torsional effects on the at least one article of clothing normally caused during laundering.
8. The laundry device as claimed in claim 7, wherein the rigid water permeable enclosure is a cage fabricated from plastic.

* * * *