March 20, 1956 F. INGA 2,738,598

FLEXIBLE SHOWER SHOE HAVING GROUND-GRIPPING MEANS

Filed March 9, 1953

Fig. 1

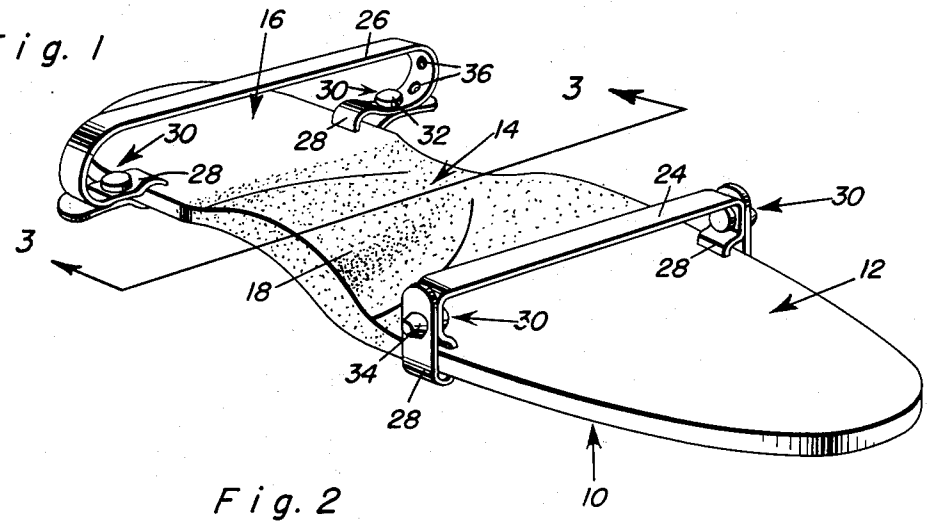


Fig. 2

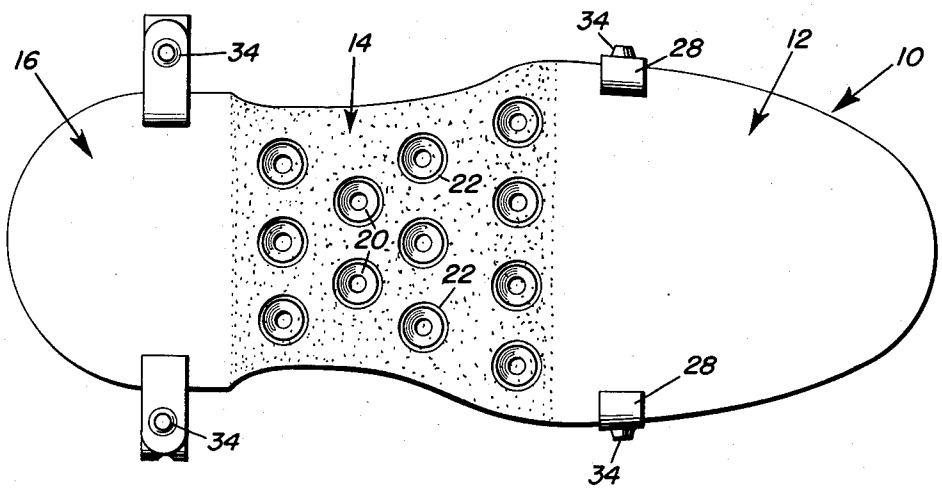
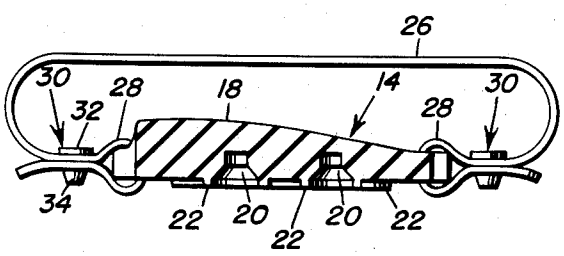


Fig. 3



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FLEXIBLE SHOWER SHOE HAVING GROUND-GRIPPING MEANS

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3 Claims. (Cl. 36—11.5)

This invention relates to footwear and more particularly to a shoe for use in showers and the like which will effectively prevent a user from slipping or falling while standing or walking on a wet surface.

An object of this invention is to provide a shower shoe having a portion thereof formed of highly flexible material so as to present both a comfortable and safe accessory.

A more specific object of this invention is to provide with a shower shoe having a central portion of highly flexible material and which is provided on its underside with a plurality of ground engaging suction cups to prevent slippage on a wet surface, the flexible portion being formed in the shank area of the shoe allowing such portion to conform more naturally to a user's foot.

Another object of this invention is to provide a shower shoe formed of a unitary sole having its shank portion of greater flexibility than the remainder of the sole so as to provide a better gripping surface and a more comfortable shoe.

These together with other objects and advantages which will become subsequently apparent reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereinafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the shower shoe showing the flexible shank portion in the stippled area;

Figure 2 is a bottom plan view of the shoe as shown in Figure 1, showing the positioning of the gripping means; and,

Figure 3 is a transverse vertical section taken substantially along the plane of section line 3—3 of Figure 1 and showing the details of construction of the gripping means.

Referring now more particularly to the drawings, reference numeral **10** indicates generally the sole portion of the shower shoe which includes a toe portion **12**, a shank portion **14** and a heel portion **16**.

The upper surface of the shank portion is provided with an arcuately upraised area **18** which slopes downwardly from one side to the other to conform to the arch of a user's foot and gives support thereto.

The entire sole is made of a single piece of rubber, synthetic rubber or the like, and the various portions depicted are of a different hardness, the heel and toe portions being of 55 to 60 Shore hardness and the shank portion being of 25 to 30 Shore hardness. Therefore, the heel and toe portions are relatively stiff while the shank portion is a great deal more flexible than the former portions.

The under surface of the shank portion is provided with a plurality of recesses **20** which are substantially of inverted cup-shape as clearly shown in Figure 3 and which are bounded by annular lip portions **22** depending from the bottom surface of the shank portion. The recesses and their annular lips present suction cups which, when deformed by the weight of a user, will effect a gripping action on any smooth surface, either wet or dry surfaces.

In order to secure the shoe to a user's foot, a toe strap **24** and an arch strap **26** are provided which have their opposite ends looped, as at **28**, through the sole and overlying themselves to be secured by the buttons **30**. One end of the buttons are provided with enlarged flat heads **32** while the other ends are provided with tapered heads **34**. The purpose of the tapered heads is to allow the free ends of the straps to be easily snapped over the buttons while presenting difficulty in removing the free ends from the buttons. The arch strap **26** may be provided with a plurality of apertures **36** adjacent one of its ends so that the effective length of the strap may be varied to fit the foot or arch of the various users.

During use, the relatively soft flexible shank portion not only serves to comfortably support the arch of a user's foot, but also allows effective gripping action by the suction cup gripping means as well as permitting the shoe to flex at that point which is normal during walking operations. Additionally, the upraised area of the shank portion not only comfortably supports the user's foot, but also effects an added pressure to the suction cup gripping elements when the weight of a person wearing these shoes is placed on the device.

From the foregoing, the construction and operation of the device will be readily understood and further explanation is believed to be unnecessary. However, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed as new is as follows:

1. A shower shoe comprising a sole formed of resilient material throughout and having a toe portion, a shank portion and a heel portion, said shank portion having a built-up area of greater thickness than the heel and toe portions, said shank portion being of greater flexibility than the toe and heel portions, means for attaching the shoe to a user's foot.

2. A shower shoe comprising a sole formed of resilient material throughout and having a toe portion, a shank portion and a heel portion, said shank portion having a built-up area of greater thickness than the heel and toe portions, said shank portion being of greater flexibility than the toe and heel portions, means for attaching the shoe to a user's foot, and surface-gripping means on said shank portion presenting downwardly opening suction cups.

3. A shower shoe comprising a sole having a ground-engaging bottom surface, said sole being formed of resilient material throughout and having toe and heel portions of substantially uniform and equal thicknesses and a built-up shank portion, the bottom surface of said shank portion being provided with recesses presenting suction cups, said shank portion also being of greater flexibility than the remainder of the sole to simultaneously conform to a user's foot and permit a gripping action by the suction cups.

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