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(54) **Garment hanger.**

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EP 0 427 552 B1

Description

This invention relates to garment hangers. It is particularly concerned with hangers adapted for the display in a retail store of garments such as lingerie.

It is the common practice in retail stores to display garments for sale from a hanging rail. This practice, formerly restricted to jackets, suits, coats and other items of outer wear is now of almost universal application even for relatively light weight garments such as swimwear and lingerie which, formerly, would have been packaged in a film wrapping or a cardboard box. Nowadays, customers wish to see and to touch a garment before they purchase it.

Whether the garment hanger is removed from the garment at the point of sale or is left on the garment, and therefore effectively given away with each purchase, the same ideal requirements exist. Any garment hanger should be inexpensive and of virtually universal application; in particular, it must be capable of supporting garments of different sizes, for example knickers with a different size waist band. It is simply unacceptable, both in terms of the labour cost involved and in terms of the need to maintain a variety of different stocks, to support garments of different sizes on hangers of different sizes.

One approach to this problem has been the development of various forms of telescopic or spring loaded hangers which can automatically adjust for different size waist bands. Such hangers are relatively expensive to manufacture, not always fully reliable with repeated use, and they tend to stretch the waist band.

An alternative approach has been the design of so-called "wish bone" hangers in which the springiness of the plastics material from which these hangers are made, combined with a generally bow shape provides for a degree of accommodation for garments of different size waist bands. Although such hangers have enjoyed a success, they tend to be relatively large and relatively flimsy in construction and so are not ideal for repeated use.

A further approach is exemplified by GB-A-2181046 in which there are a plurality of support elements inboard of the outer extremities of the hanger. Either the garment is suspended between two such support elements separated by a width corresponding to the size of the waist band (obviously there must be a degree of stretch or the garment will not be supported); or, as suggested in GB-A-2181046, the garment may be mounted about the outer most support element, with the return portion looped about one of the more inboard supports.

Hangers with such constructions have also achieved a measure of success though they, too, also entail a necessary stretch of the waist band in order to support the garment adequately. Retailers tend to err on the side of over-stretching the waist band when mounting the garment to the hanger since there is nothing so discouraging in a retail store as to find a pool of garments beneath a display stand which have become detached from their hangers. One problem encountered with hangers of the kind illustrated in GB-A- 2181046 is that whereas the retailer can readily mount garments on the hanger, looping the end of the waist band around an appropriate inboard support on its return, this manner of support is not so obvious to the retail customer who may detach a garment from the hanger in order better to see whether any particular garment is the right size or suits the wearer. Thereafter they may attempt to place the garment back on the hanger if they decide not to purchase it but, without being aware that the end of the waist band must be looped about an inboard support element, they sometimes find that they simply cannot see how to fit the garment back on the hanger and, may simply allow the garment to fall on the floor.

Another deficiency inherent in the hanger described and illustrated in GB-A-2181046 is that it is suitable only for garments with a waist band. There is no way in which such a garment hanger may be used to mount, say, a bikini top and pants.

A garment hanger designed to mount a set of garments, such as a bikini top and pants or to mount any one of a variety of garments is proposed in GB-A-2,206,041. To achieve this it is provided with a plurality of gripping means or clips at each end of a support bar. Thus GB-A-2,206,041 discloses a hanger comprising: a support bar; suspensions means (in the form of a hook) for supporting a central portion of the support bar from a hanging rail or the like, so that the support bar is supported generally horizontally in operation; and respective gripping means (in the form of clips) at opposite distal extremities of the support bar, adapted to receive and releasably hold a thickness of material of a garment supported by the hanger. The hangers described in detail in GB-A-2,206,041 each have three clips at each end of the support bar, two of which extend lengthwise of the support bar (one above and one beneath), with their openings directed inwardly, and the third positioned vertically, with its opening directed downwardly. As explained, the purpose of this plurality of clips is that the hangers described may be used to support a variety of different garments. There is no provision expressly provided for the purpose of accommodating garments of widely different sizes.

Document BE-A-1000523 discloses the prior art portion of claim 1 and offers a partial solution to the problem of accommodating larger sized garments by providing a pair of auxiliary clips inboard of the clips at the distal ends of the support bar. The garment is held by the clips at the distal ends and excess material is held under the auxiliary clips. The clipping occurs only at one discrete position inboard from the distal extremity. For only moderately oversized gar-

ments, the excess material will not reach inboard to the auxiliary clips and so will leave an untidy loose flap of material. For substantially oversized garments, while the excess material will be held by the auxiliary clips, there will still be an untidy flap of excess material inboard of the auxiliary clip.

There is a continuing need for new and improved garment hangers particulary adapted for the mounting of garments such as lingerie or swimwear for retail sale, which hangers are relatively inexpensive, relatively robust, readily adaptable to the mounting of garments of different sizes without leaving unsightly excess material hanging free and which, preferably, are capable of mounting a variety of different garments, and preferably several garments of a set simultaneously.

The present invention has arisen from our work in seeking to resolve these difficulties in the provision of improved garment hangers.

In accordance with the present invention as claimed in claim 1, we provide a garment hanger comprising: a support bar; suspension means adapted for supporting a central portion of the support bar from a hanging rail or the like, the support bar being supported generally horizontally in operation; respective gripping means coupled to the support bar at or adjacent the opposite distal extremities of the support bar and adapted to receive and releasably hold a thickness of material of a garment supported by the hanger; and location means integral with the support bar and arranged to receive widthwise excess material of a garment exceeding the length of the support bar from one gripping means to another; the hanger being characterised in that said location means comprise location bars which are connected to the said central portion and extend generally alongside the support bar on either side of the central portion towards the opposite distal extremities of the support bar for a major portion of the length of the support bar, the spacing between each location bar and the associated portion of support bar and the resilience of each location bar being such that the location bar is adapted for locating a garment in the spacing defined between each location bar and the associated portion of the support bar.

Preferred features of the invention are set out in the dependent claims.

The hanger is conveniently moulded in one piece from plastics material. In preferred constructions, the suspension means comprises a hook; the gripping means comprises a one-piece plastics crocodile clip with its opening directed downwardly when the hanger is suspended and adapted for receiving a waist band of a garment of the kind formed with a waist band; further gripping means, also preferably in the form of one-piece plastics crocodile clips, are formed on the upper surface of the support bar, preferably with their openings directed inwardly towards the central portion of the support bar, which further gripping means are adapted for receiving, for example, straps of a second garment, whereby the said garment hanger is adapted alternatively for supporting a garment of the kind having a waist band or a garment of a kind having a pair of straps, or a set of garments comprising one of each, such as a camisole top and French knickers set or a two-piece bathing suit.

The invention is hereinafter more particularly described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Fig. 1 shows a side elevational view of a preferred embodiment of garment hanger constructed in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2 shows an end elevational view of the hanger of Fig. 1 as seen from the left in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 shows an underneath plan view of the hanger of Figs. 1 and 2;

Fig. 4 shows a scrap sectional view to an enlarged scale taken along the line IV-IV in Fig. 1; and

Fig. 5 shows a scrap sectional view to an enlarged scale taken along the line V-V in Fig. 1.

The preferred embodiment of garment hanger constructed in accordance with the present invention illustrated in the accompanying drawings is suitably moulded from plastics material such as polypropylene or nylon and comprises a support bar generally indicated 1 and a suspension means, here in the form of a conventional hook 2. The support bar 1 has a central portion 3 to which the hook 2 is attached and portions 4 extending outwardly from the central portion on opposite sides thereof. At the distal extremity of each such portion 4 of the support bar are located respective gripping means 5.

The gripping means 5 may take various forms but are preferably, as here illustrated, of a conventional form, namely a one-piece plastics crocodile clip in which the respective jaws 6 and 7 which are formed with serrations 8 may be separated to insert a thickness of material of a garment to be supported by the hanger, the inherent resilience of the material of the clip serving to bias the clip 5 towards its closed configuration, thereby releasably to hold the said thickness of material. In the preferred arrangement illustrated, the opening between jaws 6 and 7 points generally downwardly when the hanger is suspended from the hanging rail or the like by means of the hook 2.

Extending generally alongside the portions of the support bar 4 on opposite sides of the central portion 3 are respective location bars 9. As can be seen, the location bars extend along a substantial portion of the length of the support bar on either side of the central portion. As the extreme distal end portion 10 of the support bar forming in effect one jaw 7 of the crocodile clip 5 points generally downwardly, the end portion 11 of each location bar 9 is similarly curved to ex-

tend downwardly.

As can be seen from Fig. 4, both the support bar and the location bar are formed with a generally I-shape in section. This configuration provides a good balance between strength and lightness. The hook is generally similarly formed. It will be noted from Fig. 5, however, that end portion 11 of each location bar is formed with a lesser overall thickness than the location bar over the greater part of its length, being connected with the main portion of the location bar by a region 12 which has a tapered overall width.

In use of the hanger, for example to support a pair or knickers, the garment is laid across the hanger and received by the crocodile clips 5. Either the full thickness of the garment (i.e. two layers) may be received between the jaws 6 and 7 of clip 5, or jaw 6 may extend down within the waist band so that only one thickness of material is received between the jaws, the other passing around the outside of the clip. In either event, since the length of the support bar is less than the width of the garment, this will leave a return portion which is taken behind the hanger and then pushed back through the gap between the support bar and the location bar. The spacing between the support bar and each location bar and the resilience of each location bar (which, at least in the end portion 11 is determined by the extent by which the thickness of this region is reduced compared with the main length of the location bar) is such that when the extreme portions of the garment width are received between the support bar and location bar as described above, this is sufficient to hold the said extreme portions in position.

In this way, the garment hanger can readily accommodate garments of widely varying width. Moreover, the illustrated garment hanger can achieve this without stretching a waist band. There are no moving parts which might go wrong, as in the case of a telescopic hanger. The illustrated hanger is readily adaptable to moulding in one piece from plastics material and is therefore essentially inexpensive in construction.

A further preferred feature is the provision of further gripping means 13 which may be of similar construction to the gripping means 5 but are formed on the upper surface 14 of the support bar. In the preferred construction as illustrated, the jaws of the gripping means 13 open towards the central portion of the hanger. This construction is particularly adapted for supporting garments of the kind having a strap, such as the strap of a full-length slip, bikini top, or so on. The embodiment of hanger illustrated is sufficiently inexpensive to produce that one and the same hanger may be used alternatively for supporting garments having a waist band or for supporting garments having a strap when previously two quite different constructions of hanger would have been required by a retailer for supporting these different types of garment. A particularly preferred feature of the illustrated embodiment is that a single hanger can support a set of garments such as a set of camisole top and French knickers, or a two-piece bathing costume. In each case the garment with a waist band is held by the clips 5 with the return portions located between the locating bars and the support bar and the garment of the set having straps is supported from the clips 13.

Claims

1. A garment hanger comprising: a support bar (1); suspension means (2) adapted for supporting a central portion (3) of the support bar (1) from a hanging rail or the like, the support bar (1) being supported generally horizontally in operation; respective gripping means (5) coupled to the support bar at or adjacent the opposite distal extremities (4) of the support bar (1) and adapted to receive and releasably hold a thickness of material of a garment supported by the hanger; and location means integral with the support bar and arranged to receive widthwise excess material of a garment exceeding the length of the support bar from one gripping means to the other; the hanger being characterised in that said location means comprise location bars (9) which are connected to the said central portion (3) and extend generally alongside the support bar on either side of the central portion (3) towards the opposite distal extremities (4) of the support bar for a major portion of the length of the support bar (1), the spacing between each location bar (9) and the associated portion of support bar (1) and the resilience of each location bar (9) being such that the location bar (9) is adapted for locating a garment in the spacing defined between each location bar (9) and the associated portion of the support bar (1).

2. A garment hanger according to Claim 1, wherein the support bar (1) and respective garment location bars (9) are generally parallel.

3. A garment hanger according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 wherein the support bar (1) has extreme distal end portions (10) which extend generally downwardly when the hanger is suspended as aforesaid.

4. A garment hanger according to Claim 3, wherein each location bar (9) has a corresponding extreme distal end portion (11) which extends generally downwardly when the hanger is suspended as aforesaid.

5. A garment hanger according to Claim 4, wherein said distal end portion of each location bar has a

lesser overall thickness than the location bar over the greater part of its length.

6. A garment hanger according to Claim 5, wherein said distal end portion of each location bar is connected with the main portion thereof by a region having a tapered overall width.

7. A garment hanger according to any preceding claim, wherein each gripping means is in the form of a crocodile clip with its opening directed downwardly when the hanger is suspended.

8. A garment hanger according to Claim 7 as appendant to Claim 3, wherein the extreme distal end portions of the support bar each form one jaw of a said crocodile clip.

9. A garment hanger according to any preceding claim, wherein there are further gripping means formed on the upper surface of the support bar, the further gripping means comprising two crocodile clips one disposed at each end of the support bar, and each having its opening directed inwardly towards the central portion of the support bar.

10. A garment hanger according to Claim 8 or 9, and integrally moulded in one piece from plastics material, each said crocodile clip comprising two jaws each having a plurality a teeth, the jaws being interconnected by a flexible portion whereby a portion of a garment may be inserted between the teeth of said jaws with release of said garment portion from said clip being resisted by an interference effect of said teeth.

Patentansprüche

1. Kleiderbügel, umfassend: einen Trägerbügel (1); eine Aufhängvorrichtung (2) zur Halterung eines Mittelabschnittes (3) des Trägerbügels (1) an einer Hängeschiene oder dergleichen, wobei der Trägerbügel (1) bei Gebrauch allgemein horizontal ausgerichtet hängt; entsprechende Greif- (bzw. Klemmvorrichtungen) (5), die mit dem Trägerbügel an bzw. in der Nähe von einander gegenüberliegenden distalen (äußersten) Enden (4) des Trägerbügels (1) gekoppelt sind und zur Aufnahme und lösbaren Halterung einer Materialstärke eines von dem Kleiderbügel gehaltenen Kleidungsstückes ausgelegt sind; und
Fixiervorrichtungen, die einstückig mit dem Kleiderbügel ausgeführt und so ausgelegt sind, daß sie der Breite nach überstehendes Material eines Kleidungsstückes aufnehmen, das die Länge des Trägerbügels von einer Klemmvorrichtung zur anderen überschreitet; wobei der Kleiderbügel dadurch gekennzeichnet ist, daß die Fixiervorrichtungen Fixierbügel (9) aufweisen, die mit dem Mittelabschnitt (3) verbunden sind und allgemein entlang dem Trägerbügel auf jeder Seite des Mittelabschnittes (3) in Richtung auf die einander gegenüberliegenden distalen (äußersten) Enden (4) des Trägerbügels über einen Hauptabschnitt der Länge des Trägerbügels (1) verlaufen, wobei der Abstand zwischen jedem Fixierbügel (9) und dem damit verbundenen Abschnitt des Trägerbügels (1) und die Nachgiebigkeit eines jeden Fixierbügels (9) so gewählt sind, daß der Fixierbügel (9) zur Halterung eines Kleidungsstückes in dem zwischen jedem Fixierbügel (9) und dem zugehörigen Abschnitt des Trägerbügels (1) definierten Zwischenraum ausgelegt ist.

2. Kleiderbügel gemäß Anspruch 1, worin der Trägerbügel (1) und die entsprechenden Fixierbügel (9) für Kleidung allgemein zueinander parallel sind.

3. Kleiderbügel gemäß Anspruch 1 oder 2, worin der Trägerbügel (1) distale (äußerste) Endabschnitte (10) hat, die bei voranstehend beschriebener Aufhängung des Kleiderbügels allgemein nach unten verlaufen.

4. Kleiderbügel gemäß Anspruch 3, worin jeder Fixierbügel (9) einen entsprechenden distalen (äußersten) Endabschnitt (11) hat, der bei voranstehend beschriebener Aufhängung des Kleiderbügels allgemein nach unten verläuft.

5. Kleiderbügel gemäß Anspruch 4, worin der distale Endabschnitt (11) eines jeden Fixierbügels (9) über den größten Teil seiner Länge eine geringere Gesamtdicke hat als der Fixierbügel (9).

6. Kleiderbügel gemäß Anspruch 5, worin der distale Endabschnitt (11) eines jeden Fixierbügels (9) über einen Bereich (12), dessen Gesamtbreite sich verjüngt, mit dem Hauptabschnitt des Bügels (9) verbunden ist.

7. Kleiderbügel gemäß einem der voranstehenden Ansprüche, worin jede Klemmvorrichtung (5) die Form einer Krokodilklemme hat, deren Öffnung bei aufgehängtem Kleiderbügel nach unten gerichtet ist.

8. Kleiderbügel gemäß Anspruch 7, wenn auf Anspruch 3 rückbezogen, worin die distalen (äußersten) Endabschnitte (10) des Trägerbügels jeweils eine Klemmbacke (7) der Krokodilklemme bilden.

9. Kleiderbügel gemäß einem der voranstehenden

Ansprüche, worin weitere Klemmvorrichtungen (13) auf der oberen Oberfläche (14) des Trägerbügels ausgebildet sind, wobei die weiteren Klemmvorrichtungen zwei Krokodilklemmen anfassen, von denen jeweils eine an jedem Ende des Trägerbügels angeordnet, und jede mit ihrer Öffnung nach innen auf den Mittelabschnitt des Trägerbügels hin gerichtet ist.

10. Kleiderbügel gemäß Anspruch 8 oder 9, integral in einem Stück aus Kunststoffmaterial gegossen, wobei jede Krokodilklemme zwei Klemmbacken umfaßt, welche jeweils eine Vielzahl von Zähnen aufweisen, und die Klemmbacken durch einen flexiblen Abschnitt miteinander verbunden sind, wodurch ein Abschnitt eines Kleidungsstückes zwischen die Zähne der Klemmbacken eingeführt werden kann und eine Eingriffwirkung der Zähne ineinander dem Lösen des Kleidungsstückabschnitts aus der Klemme entgegenwirkt.

Revendications

1. Un cintre caractérisé par: un support en forme de barre; un moyen d'accrochage à une tringle suspendue ou à un objet ayant la même fonction, tous deux solidaires de la partie centrale du support, celui-ci étant généralement en position horizontale lors de son utilisation; des moyens de préhension accouplés aux extrêmités opposées de la barre support ou adjacents à celle-ci, congrus pour recevoir, maintenir et libérer une épaisseur de tissu d'un vêtement suspendu au cintre; un dispositif de présentation partie intégrante du support et congru de façron à recevoir en largeur l'excès de tissu d'un vêtement plus grand que l'espace séparant sur le support les moyens de préhension, ledit dispositif de présentation comportant deux barres parties intégrantes du support, avec lequel elles sont solidaires en sa partie centrale, s'étendant de part et d'autre de ladite partie centrale vers les extrêmités opposées dudit support, l'espacement entre chaque barre de présentation et la partie correspondante du support ainsi que l'élasticité de chaque barre étant tels que les barres de présentation permettent de placer un vêtement dans l'espace défini entre ces dernières et la partie correspondante du support.

2. Un cintre selon la revendication 1 dans lequel la barre support et les barres respectives de présentation des vêtements sont généralement parallèles.

3. Un cintre selon les revendications 1 ou 2, dans lequel la barre support a des extrêmités recourbées dirigées généralement vers le bas lorsque le cintre est suspendu.

4. Un cintre selon la revendication 3 dans lequel chaque barre de présentation a des extrêmités recourbées dirigées généralement vers le bas lorsque le cintre est suspendu.

5. Un cintre selon la revendication 4 dans lequel l'extrêmité recourbée de chaque barre de présentation a une épaisseur d'ensemble moindre que celle de la partie horizontale de ladite barre.

6. Un cintre selon la revendication 5, dans lequel l'extrêmité recourbée de chaque barre de présentation est reliée à la partie principale de celle-ci par une partie ayant une forme d'ensemble fuselée.

7. Un cintre selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel chaque moyen de préhension est une pince en forme de mâchoire de crocodile dont l'ouverture est dirigée vers le bas lorsque le cintre est suspendu.

8. Un cintre selon la revendication 7 jointe à la revendication 3, dans lequel les extrêmités recourbées de la barre support sont en forme de pince à mâchoire de crocodile.

9. Un cintre selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel des moyens supplémentaires de préhension formés sur la surface supérieure de la barre support, comprennent deux pinces à mâchoire de crocodile disposées chacune à chaque extrêmité de la barre support, et chacune ayant son ouverture dirigée vers l'intérieur de la partie centrale de la barre support.

10. Un cintre selon les revendications 8 ou 9, intégralement moulé d'une seule pièce dans des matières plastiques, chaque pince en forme de mâchoire de crocodile comprenant deux mâchoires ayant une pluralité de dents, les mâchoires étant reliées entre elles par une partie flexible, une partie du vêtement pouvant être placée entre les dents desdites mâchoires, la libération de ladite portion de vêtement à partir de latide pince étant empêchée par un effet d'interférence entre lesdites dents.

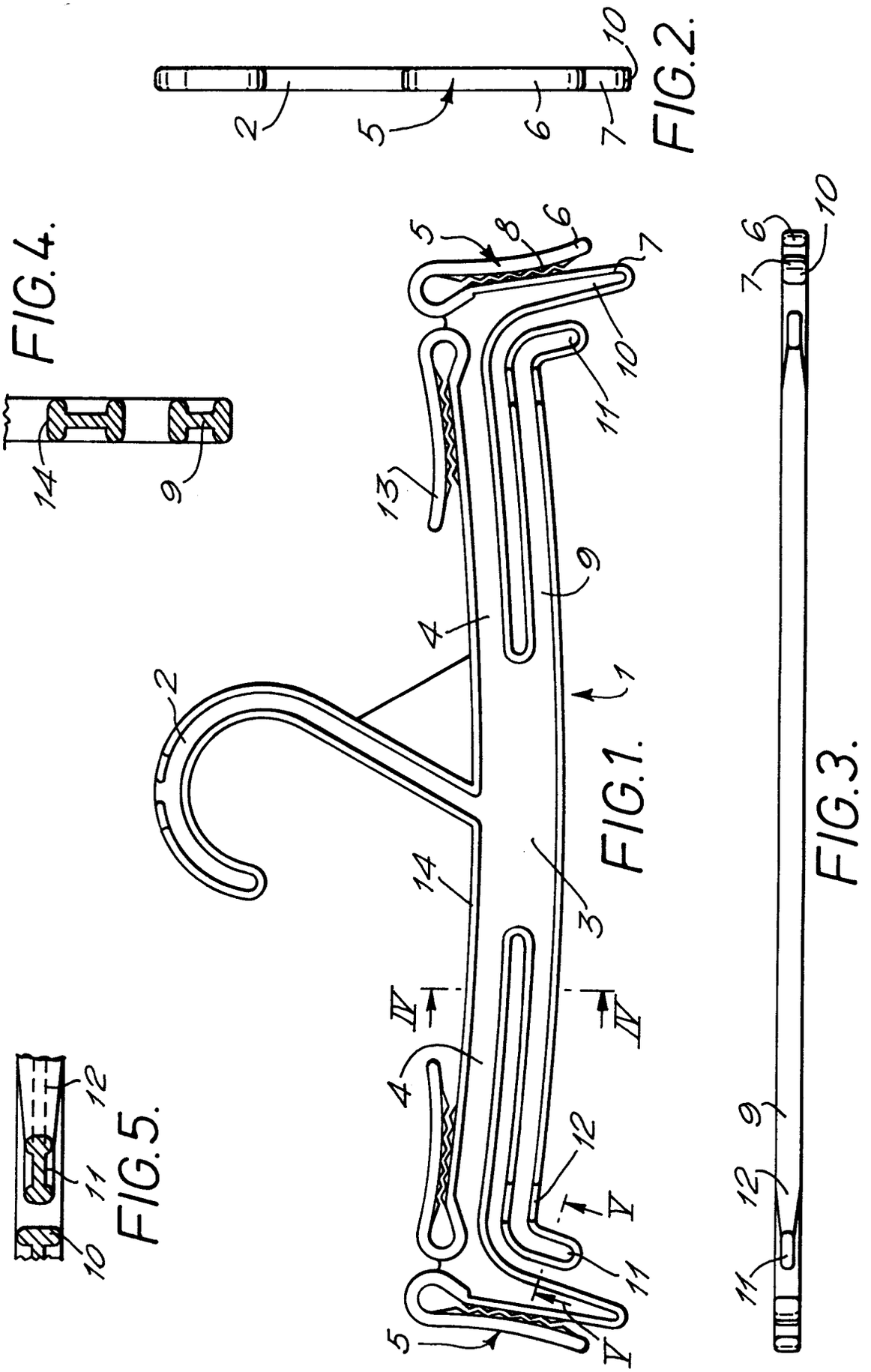

FIG.1.

FIG.2.

FIG.3.

FIG.4.

FIG.5.