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(54) **SHOE DONNING APPARATUS AND
METHODS OF USE THEREOF**

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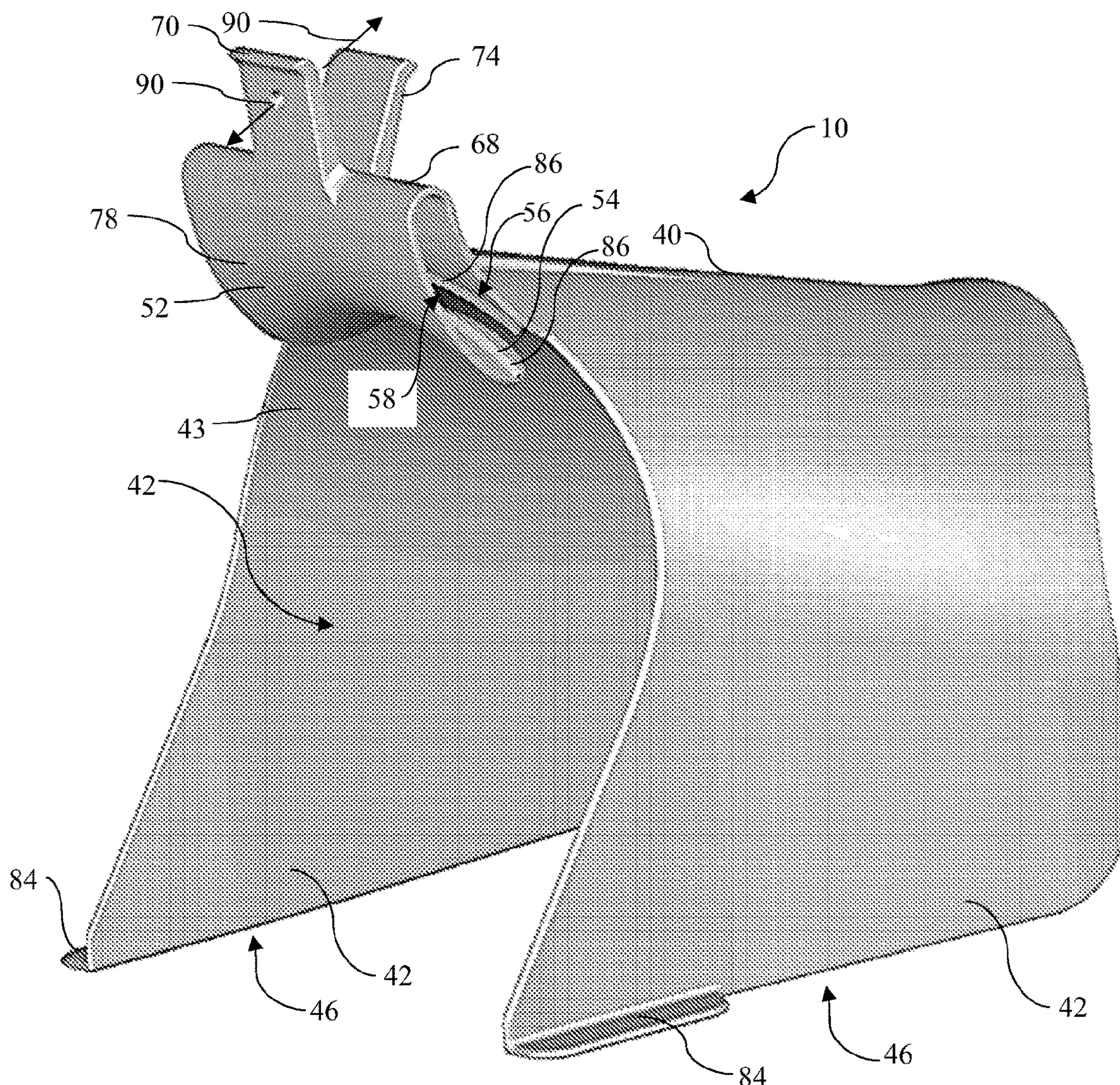
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11, 2022.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus for assisting a user in donning a shoe is disclosed. The apparatus can have a body defining a U-shaped receptacle that is configured to extend across an upper surface of the shoe. The body can have a pair of legs that extend downwardly on respective sides of the body to respective lower edges. The body can have a highest portion opposite the lower edges of the pair of legs that is spaced from the lower edges of the legs by at least 2 inches along a vertical axis. The apparatus can further have a clip that is coupled to the body, the clip comprising an arm that is pivotable relative to the body. The arm can define a first clamping surface. A second clamping surface can face the first clamping surface. The first and second clamping surfaces can receive the tongue therebetween.



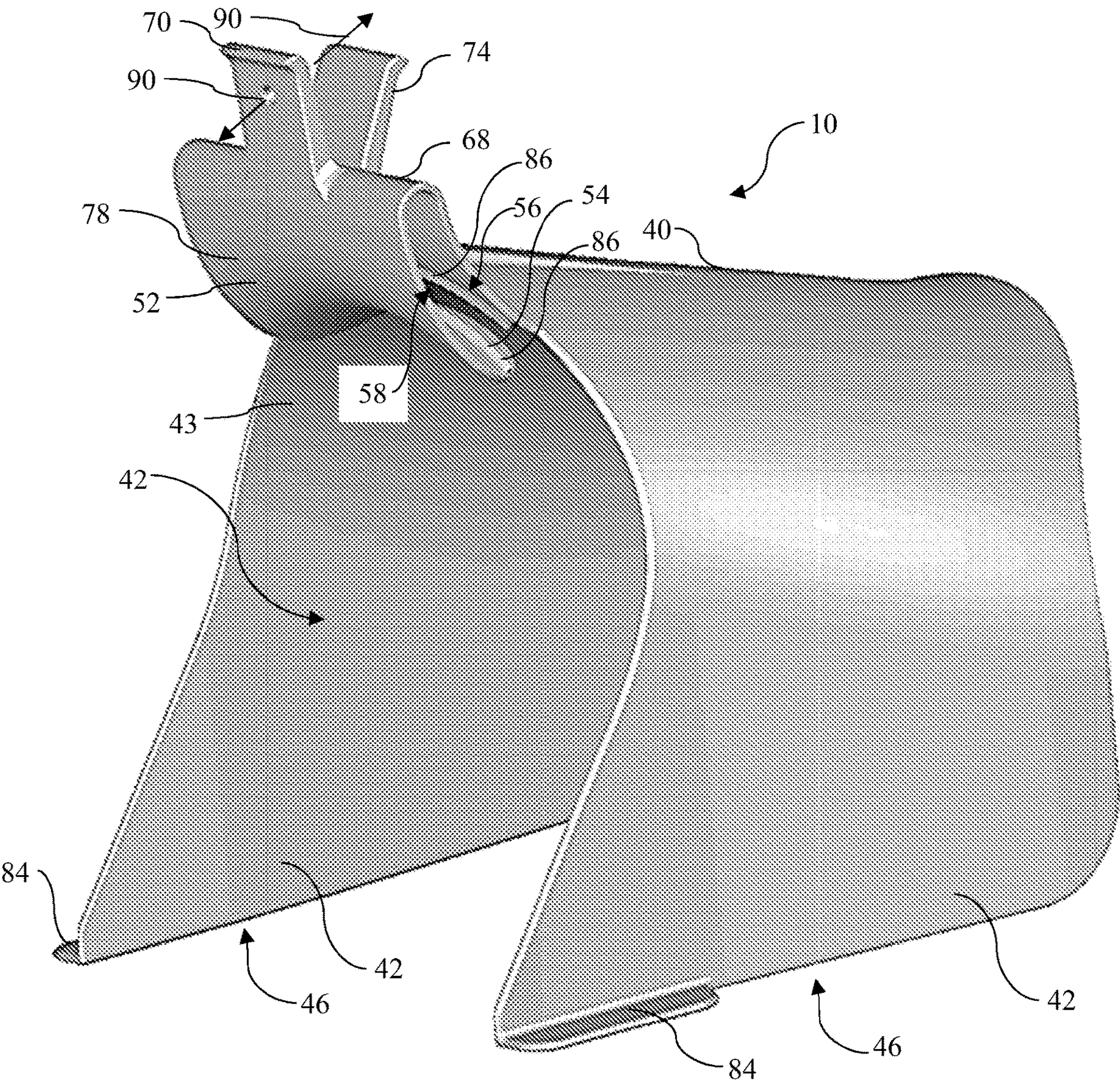


FIG. 1

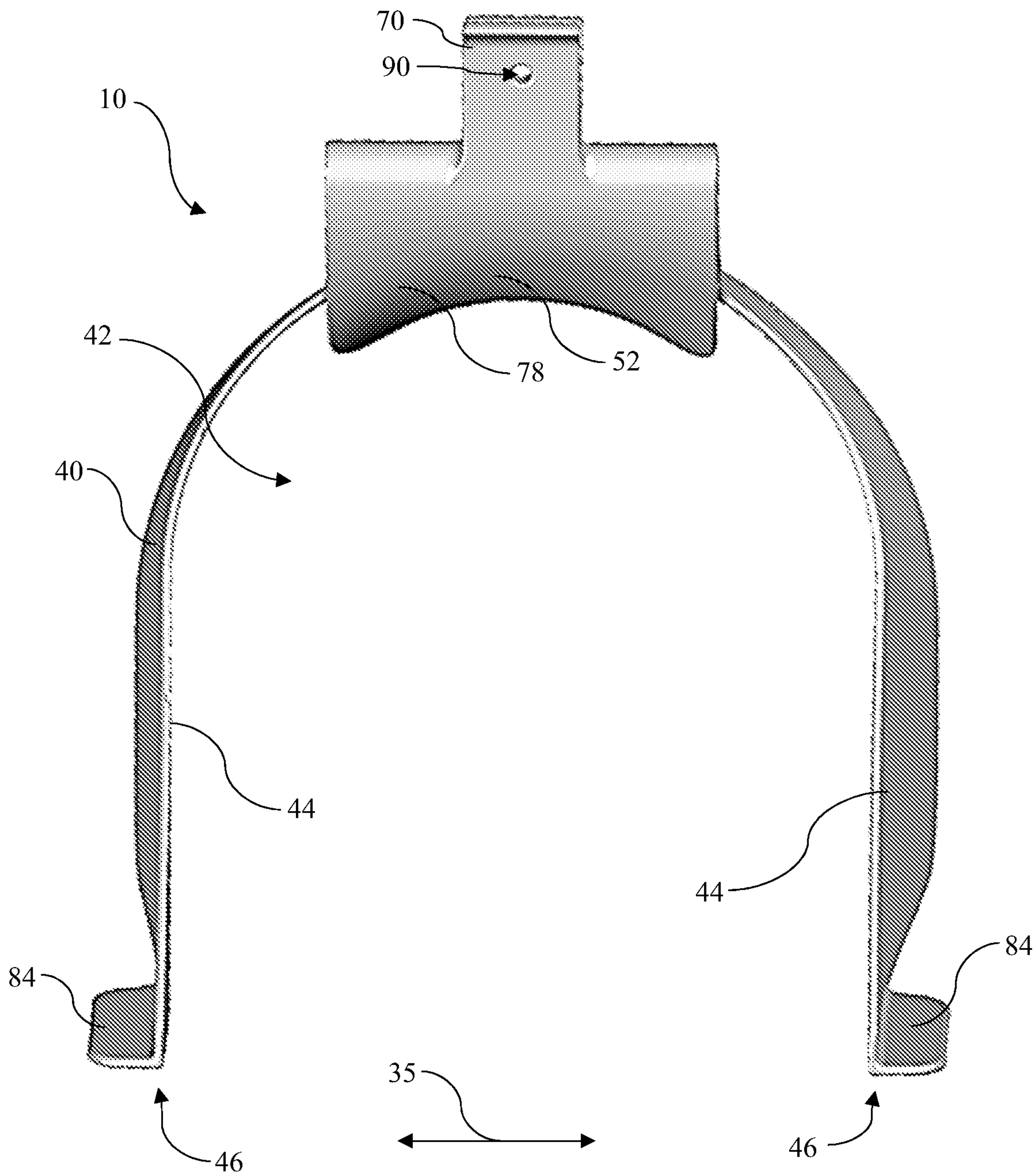


FIG. 2

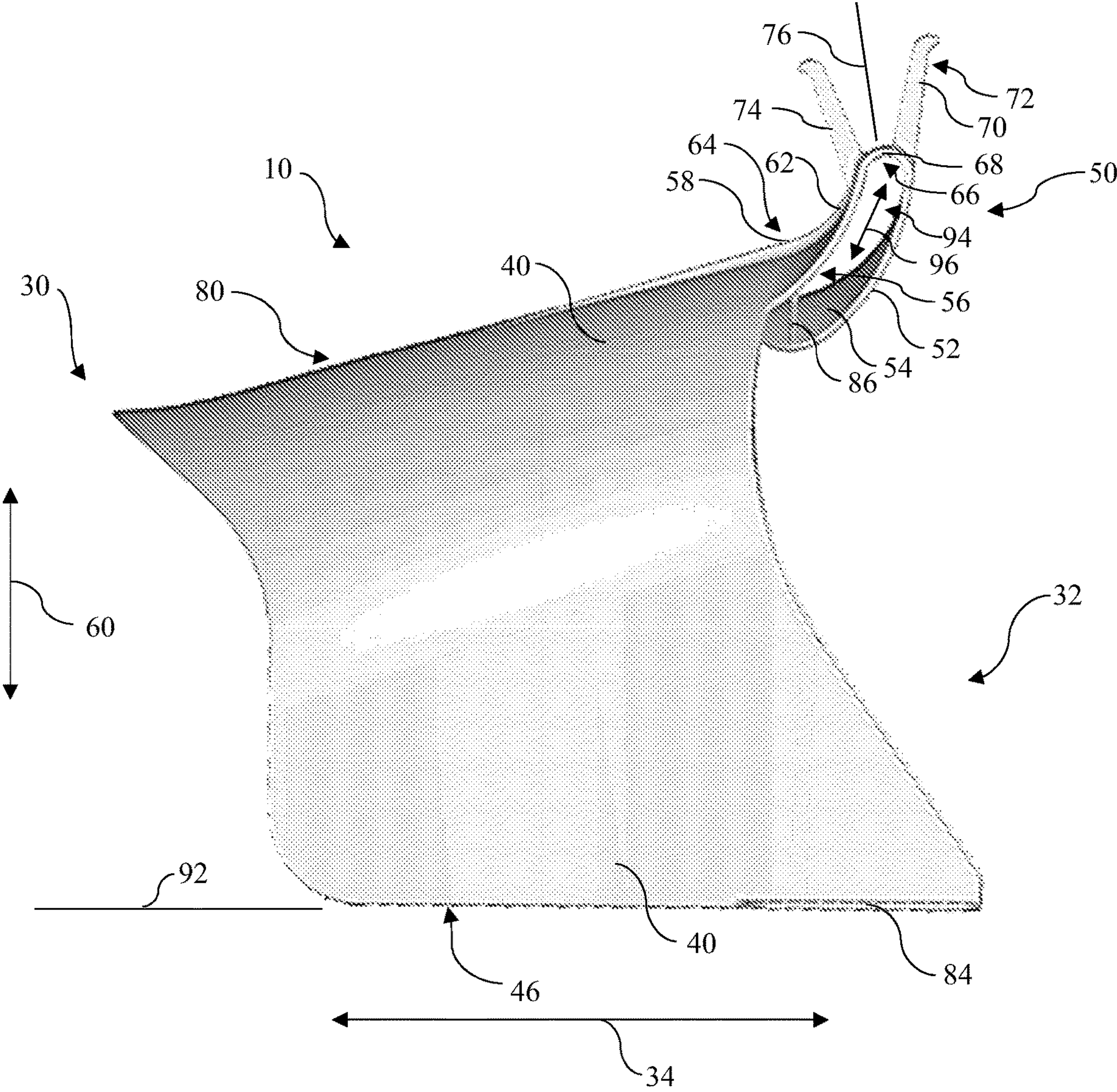


FIG. 3

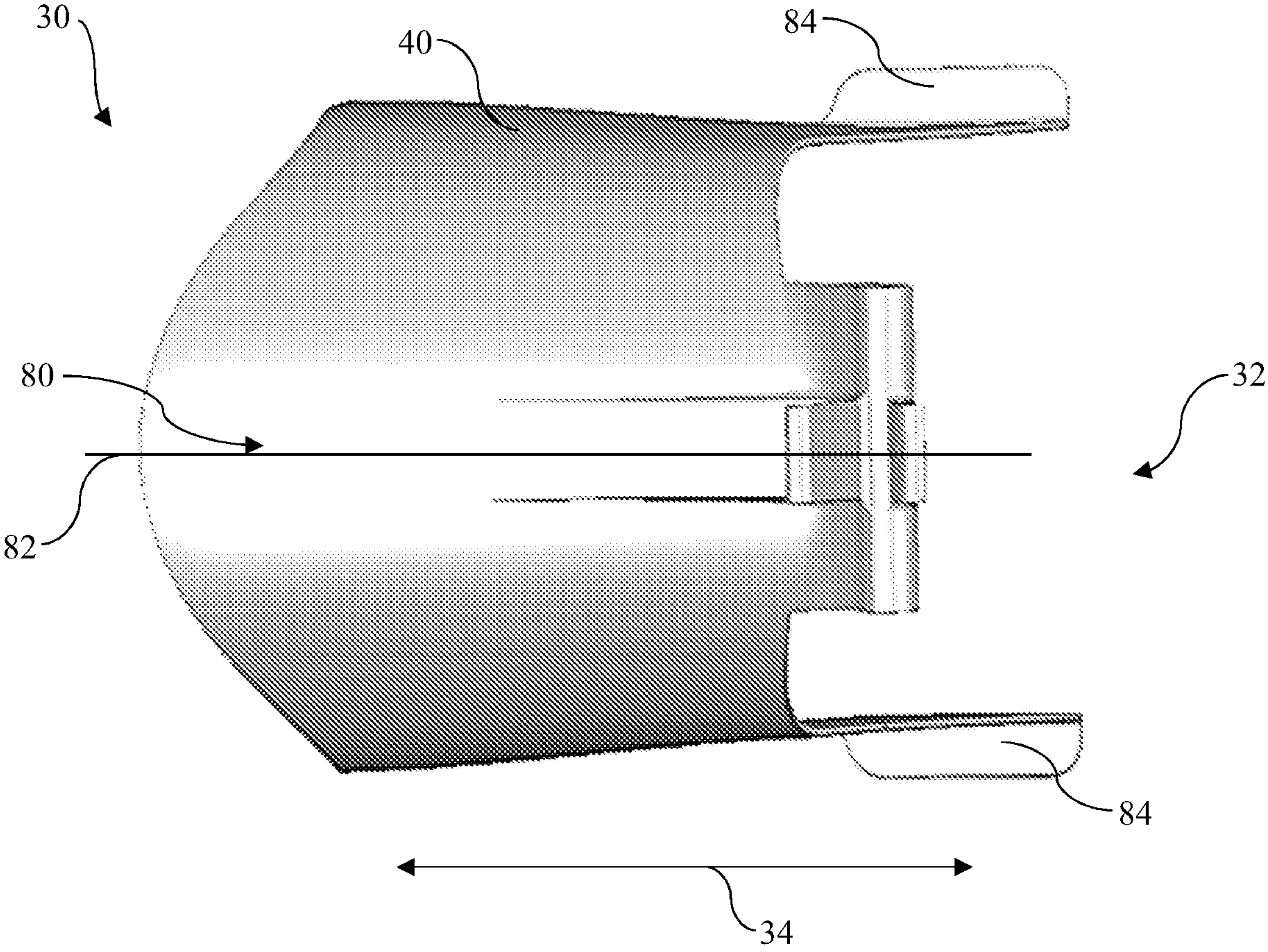


FIG. 4

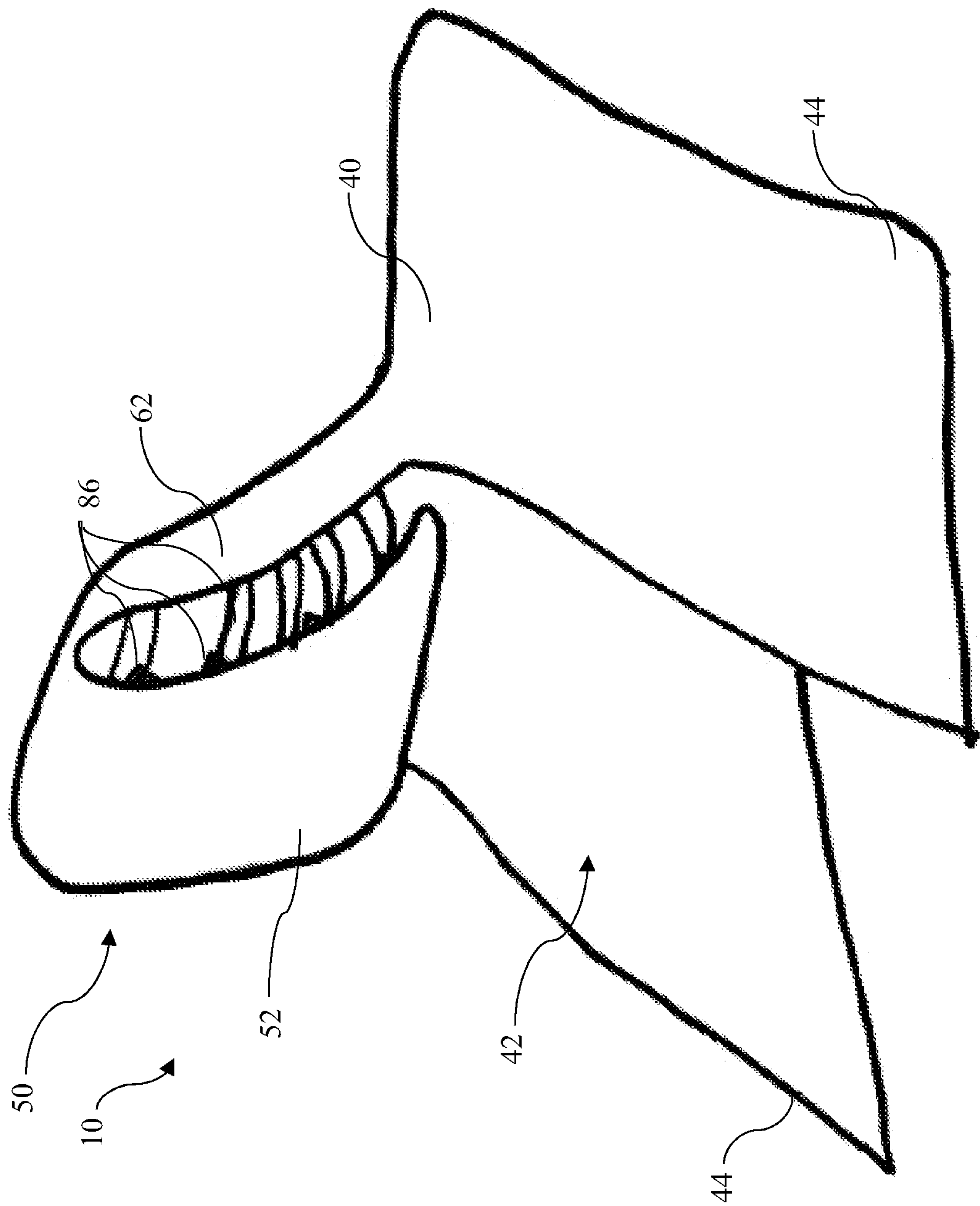


FIG. 5

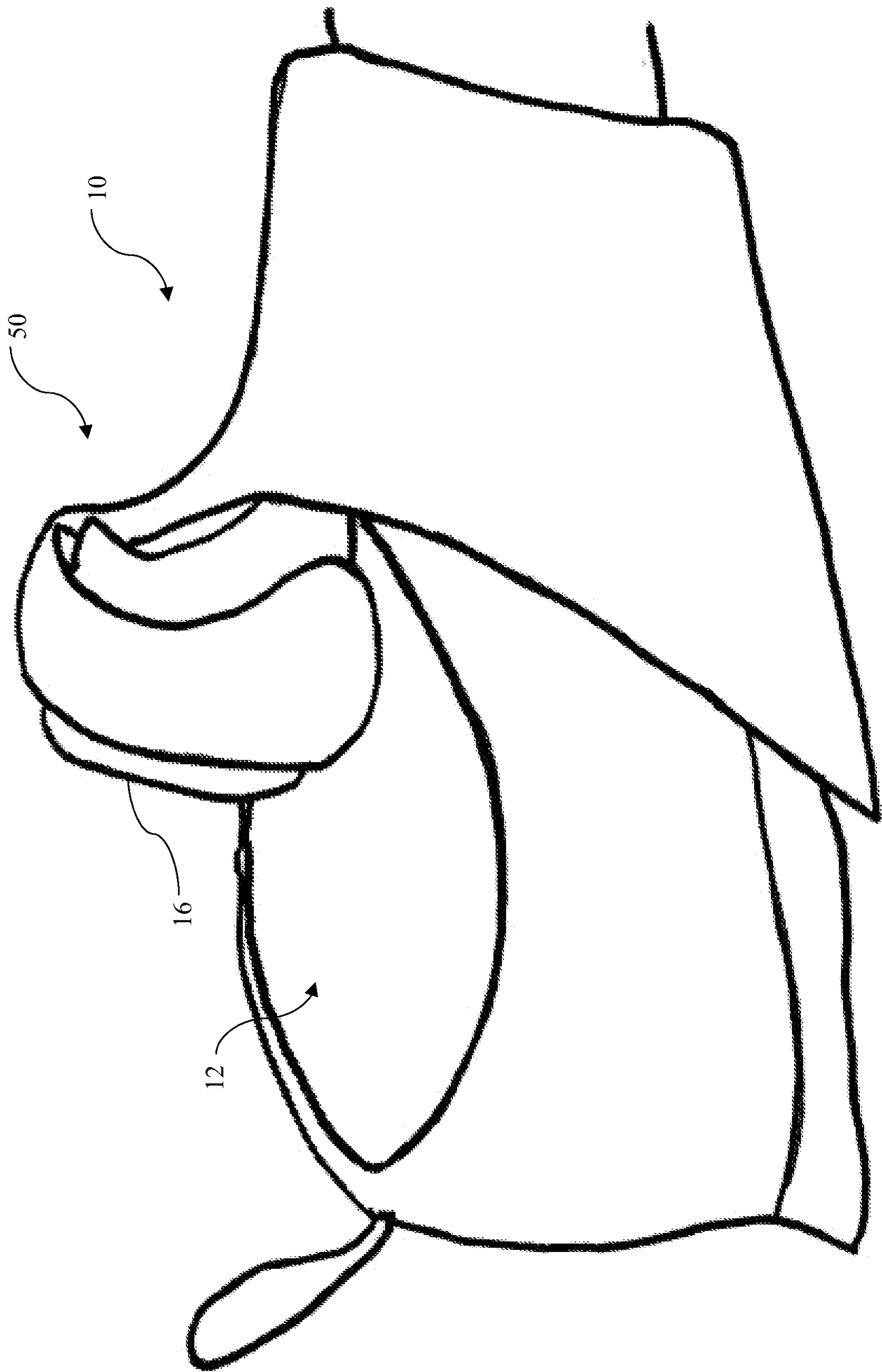


FIG. 6

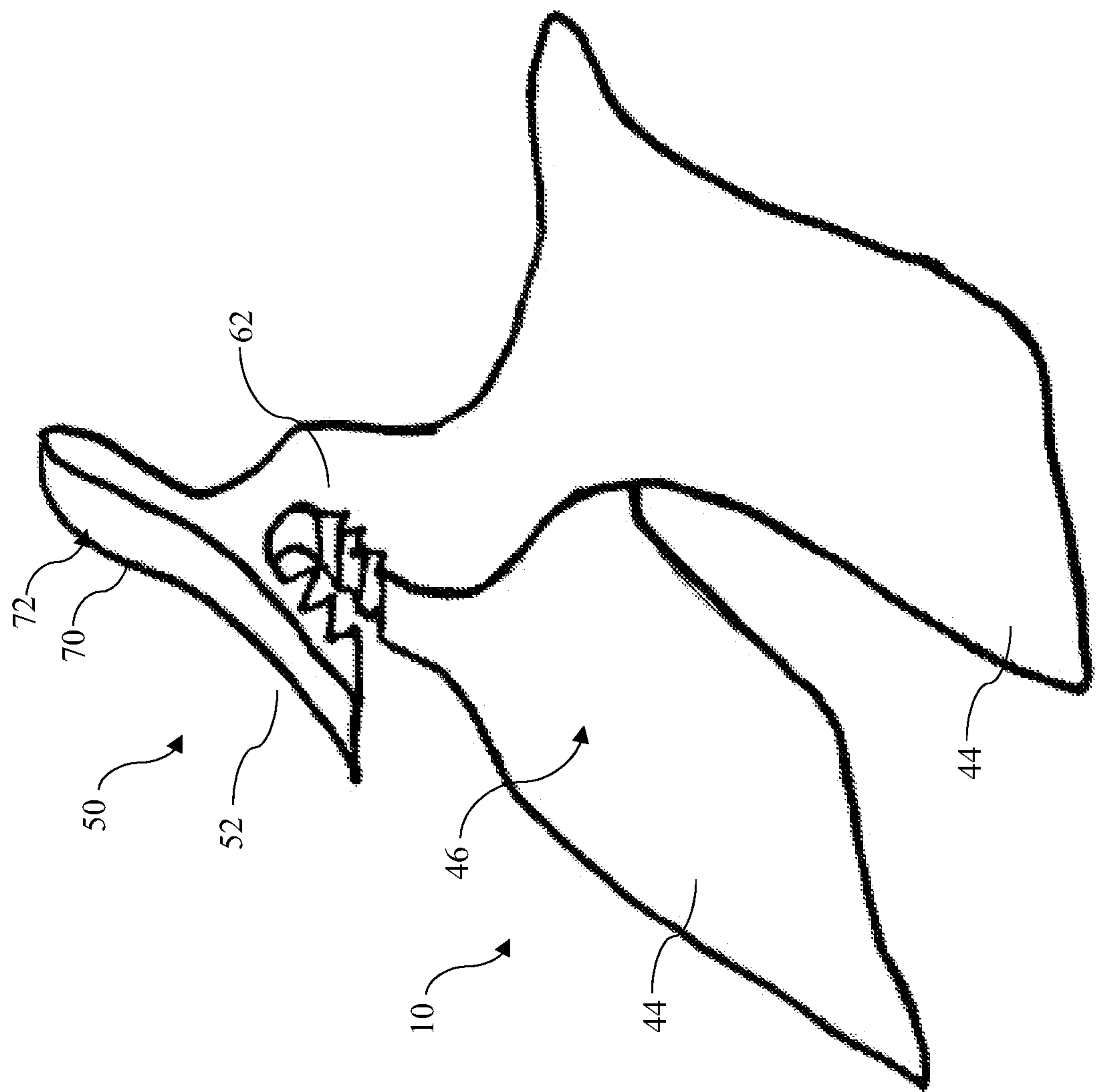


FIG. 7

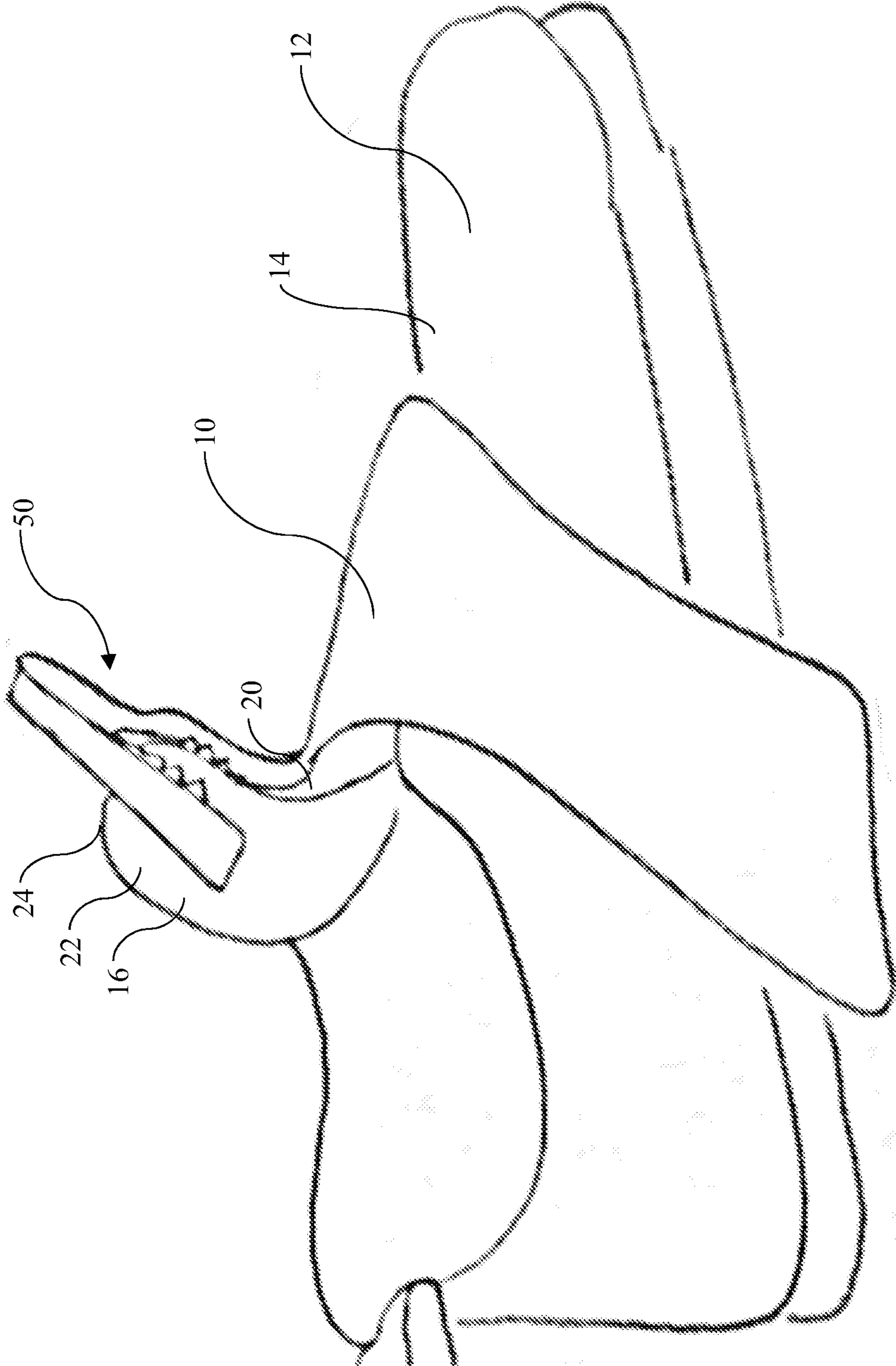


FIG. 8

SHOE DONNING APPARATUS AND METHODS OF USE THEREOF

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority to and the benefit of the filing date of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 63/318,926, filed Mar. 11, 2022, the entirety of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD

[0002] This disclosure relates to apparatuses that assist users with donning footwear.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Individuals can often benefit from apparatuses that assist with putting shoes on. For example, shoe horns are widely used for this purpose. However, shoe horns require flexibility, dexterity, strength, and sensation that some individuals can lack. One apparatus, sold under the trademark FOOT FUNNEL and is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 7,090,101, granted Aug. 15, 2006, and which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety, attempts to address some of the deficiencies of shoe horns. However, many individuals require additional help with shoe donning beyond what is afforded by the FOOT FUNNEL apparatus. Such individuals can include post-hip surgery populations and those with comorbidity of excessive body weight/girth such that they cannot see or reach their feet.

SUMMARY

[0004] Described herein, is an apparatus for assisting a user in donning a shoe, the shoe having an upper surface, a tongue, and a sole, the apparatus having a front and a rear spaced along a longitudinal axis. The apparatus can comprise a body defining a U-shaped receptacle that is configured to extend across the upper surface of the shoe. The body can comprise a pair of legs that are spaced along a transverse axis that is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis. The pair of legs can extend downwardly on respective sides of the body to respective lower edges. The body can have a highest portion opposite the lower edges of the pair of legs that is spaced from the lower edges of the legs by at least 2 inches along a vertical axis that is perpendicular to both the longitudinal and transverse axes. A clip can be coupled to the body, the clip comprising an arm that is pivotable relative to the body. The arm can define a first clamping surface. The apparatus can define a second clamping surface that faces the first clamping surface. The first and second clamping surfaces can be configured to receive the tongue therebetween.

[0005] Additional advantages of the invention will be set forth in part in the description that follows, and in part will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by practice of the invention. The advantages of the invention will be realized and attained by means of the elements and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims. It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory only and are not restrictive of the invention, as claimed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] These and other features of the preferred embodiments of the invention will become more apparent in the detailed description in which reference is made to the appended drawings wherein:

[0007] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a shoe donning apparatus as disclosed herein.

[0008] FIG. 2 is a first end view of the shoe donning apparatus of FIG. 1.

[0009] FIG. 3 is a side view of the shoe donning apparatus of FIG. 1.

[0010] FIG. 4 is a top view of the shoe donning apparatus of FIG. 1.

[0011] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of an exemplary shoe donning apparatus as disclosed herein.

[0012] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of the exemplary shoe donning apparatus of FIG. 5 in a use position with a shoe.

[0013] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of an exemplary shoe donning apparatus as disclosed herein.

[0014] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of the exemplary shoe donning apparatus of FIG. 7 in a use position with a shoe.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015] The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which some, but not all embodiments of the invention are shown. Indeed, this invention may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will satisfy applicable legal requirements. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout. It is to be understood that this invention is not limited to the particular methodology and protocols described, as such may vary. It is also to be understood that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only, and is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention.

[0016] Many modifications and other embodiments of the invention set forth herein will come to mind to one skilled in the art to which the invention pertains having the benefit of the teachings presented in the foregoing description and the associated drawings. Therefore, it is to be understood that the invention is not to be limited to the specific embodiments disclosed and that modifications and other embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims. Although specific terms are employed herein, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation.

[0017] As used herein the singular forms “a,” “an,” and “the” include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. For example, use of the term “a leg” can refer to one or more of such legs, and so forth.

[0018] All technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood to one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs unless clearly indicated otherwise.

[0019] As used herein, the terms “optional” or “optionally” mean that the subsequently described event or circumstance may or may not occur, and that the description includes instances where said event or circumstance occurs and instances where it does not.

[0020] As used herein, the term “at least one of” is intended to be synonymous with “one or more of” For

example, “at least one of A, B and C” explicitly includes only A, only B, only C, and combinations of each.

[0021] Ranges can be expressed herein as from “about” one particular value, and/or to “about” another particular value. When such a range is expressed, another aspect includes from the one particular value and/or to the other particular value. Similarly, when values are expressed as approximations, by use of the antecedent “about,” it will be understood that the particular value forms another aspect. It will be further understood that the endpoints of each of the ranges are significant both in relation to the other endpoint, and independently of the other endpoint. Optionally, in some aspects, when values are approximated by use of the antecedent “about,” it is contemplated that values within up to 15%, up to 10%, up to 5%, or up to 1% (above or below) of the particularly stated value can be included within the scope of those aspects.

[0022] The word “or” as used herein means any one member of a particular list, unless context dictates otherwise, also includes any combination of members of that list.

[0023] It is to be understood that unless otherwise expressly stated, it is in no way intended that any method set forth herein be construed as requiring that its steps be performed in a specific order. Accordingly, where a method claim does not actually recite an order to be followed by its steps or it is not otherwise specifically stated in the claims or descriptions that the steps are to be limited to a specific order, it is in no way intended that an order be inferred, in any respect. This holds for any possible non-express basis for interpretation, including: matters of logic with respect to arrangement of steps or operational flow; plain meaning derived from grammatical organization or punctuation; and the number or type of aspects described in the specification.

[0024] The following description supplies specific details in order to provide a thorough understanding. Nevertheless, the skilled artisan would understand that the apparatus, system, and associated methods of using the apparatus can be implemented and used without employing these specific details. Indeed, the apparatus, system, and associated methods can be placed into practice by modifying the illustrated apparatus, system, and associated methods and can be used in conjunction with any other apparatus and techniques conventionally used in the industry.

[0025] Referring to FIGS. 1-8, an apparatus 10 can be used for assisting a user in donning a shoe 12. The shoe 12 can have an upper surface 14, a tongue 16, and a sole 18. The tongue 16 can have a top side 20 and an underside 22 that intersect at a lip 24. The apparatus 10 can have a front 30 and a rear 32 spaced along a longitudinal axis 34.

[0026] The apparatus can comprise a body 40 defining a U-shaped receptacle 42 that is configured to extend across the upper surface 14 of the shoe 12. The body 40 can comprise a pair of legs 44 that are spaced along a transverse axis 35 that is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis 34. The pair of legs 44 can extend downwardly on respective sides of the body to respective lower edges 46. It is further contemplated that, in further embodiments, the body 40 can comprise three or more legs, wherein at least one leg is on each side of the body.

[0027] A clip 50 can be coupled to the body 40. The clip 50 can comprise an arm 52 that is pivotable relative to the body 40. The arm 52 can define a first clamping surface 54. The apparatus 10 can define a second clamping surface 56 that faces the first clamping surface 54. The first and second

clamping surfaces 54, 56 can be configured to receive the tongue 16 therebetween. The first and second clamping surfaces 54, 56 can be biased toward a position that compresses and retains the tongue 16 therebetween.

[0028] The U-shaped receptacle 42 of the body 40 can have a highest portion 58, and the respective lower edges 46 of the legs 44 of the body 40 can extend at least 2 inches, at least 3 inches, between 2 inches and 5 inches, or about 2.5 inches from the highest portion along a vertical axis 60 that is perpendicular to both the longitudinal axis 34 and the transverse axis 35. Generally, the U-shaped receptacle 42 can be sized to extend over a shoe and receive a tongue within the clip 50. In this way, the respective lower edges 46 of the legs 44 of the body 40 can be configured to extend to the ground with the tongue received within the clip 50. Thus, when an individual inserts a foot into the shoe with the clip 50 retaining the tongue 16, downward forces on the tongue are transmitted to the ground so that the ground, via the apparatus 10, inhibits movement of the tongue downwardly into the shoe. Accordingly, the apparatus 10 can hold the tongue of the shoe in place so that the user can insert the user's foot into the shoe.

[0029] The highest portion 58 can be defined by a portion of an inner surface 43 of the U-shaped receptacle 42 having a maximum distance from the lower edges along the vertical axis 60 from the lower edges. The highest portion 58 can, thus, define a maximum clearance height of the U-shaped receptacle 42. The highest portion 58 can be, for example, a point, a line, or a plane on the inner surface 43 of the U-shaped receptacle 42.

[0030] Optionally, in some aspects, the clip 50 can be coupled to the body 40 via integral formation. For example, in some optional aspects, the apparatus 10 can be a unitary body. The apparatus 10 can comprise polymer. In some exemplary aspects, the apparatus 10 can be formed by injection molding.

[0031] In some aspects, the clip 50 can comprise a first portion 62 having a first end 64 and a second end 66. The first portion 62 can couple to the body 40 at the first end 64 and can extend from the body to the second end 66. The arm 52 can be coupled to the second end 66 of the first portion 62. Optionally, the first portion 62 can define the second clamping surface 56. In further aspects, it is contemplated that the body 40 can define the second clamping surface 56. For example, in these aspects, it is contemplated that a portion of the surface 40 that defines the U-shaped receptacle 42 can also define the second clamping surface 56. The first portion 62 and arm 52 can be coupled together by a bridge 68 of flexible material that enables pivotal movement therebetween. For example, as illustrated, it is contemplated that the first portion 62 and the arm 52 of the clip can be unitarily formed as a monolithic structure. It is further contemplated that the first portion 62 and the arm 52 can be separate components that are coupled together (e.g., coupled together by a torsion spring (with a construction like that of a clothespin)).

[0032] A first projection 70 can couple to and extend from the arm 52. The first projection 70 can define a lever that facilitates pivotal movement of the first clamping surface 54 away from the second clamping surface 56. For example, the first projection can define a lever arm that, when biased in a first rotational direction, causes the first clamping surface 54 to move away from the second clamping surface 56. That

is, the first projection can define a surface **72** that a user can press to cause the arm to pivot away from the second clamping surface **56**.

[0033] In further aspects, the clip **50** can comprise first and second projections **70, 74** that are respectively coupled to the arm **52** and the first portion **62** of the clip so that biasing of the first projection toward the second projection causes movement of the arm of the clip away from the first portion of the clip. For example, a reference plane **76** can extend between the first and second projections **70, 74**. Biasing of the first and second projections **70, 74** toward the reference plane **76** (e.g., squeezing the first and second projections **70, 74** between a user's thumb and forefinger) can cause the arm to pivot away from the second clamping surface **56**. In exemplary aspects, the first and second projections **70, 74** at rest (with no user force applied) can form an acute angle with each other.

[0034] The arm **52** can define an outer surface **78** that opposes the first clamping surface **54**. In some aspects, the outer surface **78** of the arm **52** can be convex.

[0035] In some aspects, the body **40** can have a decreasing height moving along the longitudinal axis **34** from the rear **32** to the front **30**, with the height being defined by a spacing from the lower edges **46** of the legs **44** to a top **80** of the body **40** in a plane transverse to the longitudinal axis. The body **40** can further have an increasing spacing between the legs **44** along the transverse axis **35** moving from the rear **32** to the front **30**. In this way, the body **40** can generally have a similar contour to that of a portion of a shoe that the body is configured to oppose (e.g., a shoe upper).

[0036] In some aspects, the apparatus **10** can be symmetric about a plane **82** that includes the longitudinal axis and is perpendicular to the transverse axis.

[0037] The U-shaped receptacle **42** can optionally have rounded surfaces as shown. In further aspects, it is contemplated that the U-shaped receptacle **42** can have a planar top surface (not shown) and legs **44** that perpendicularly intersect the top portion. Thus, the term U-shape need not require a rounded shape.

[0038] In some aspects, the body **40** can comprise respective feet **84** (or, optionally, a plurality of feet) that extend from the lower edges **46** of the legs **44** and outwardly from the U-shaped receptacle **42**. The apparatus **10** can have a length along the longitudinal axis. In some optional aspects, the feet **84** can along only a portion of the apparatus **10** (e.g., along only a portion of the lower edges **46** of the legs **44**) from the front to the rear. In some optional aspects, the feet **84** can extend to the rear of the apparatus **10** (e.g., to the rear end of the lower edges **46** of the legs **44**), and optionally, along only a portion of the lower edges **46** of the legs **44**. In some optional aspects, the feet **84** can an entire length of the respective lower edges **46** of the legs **44**. The feet **84** can distribute pressure to the floor/ground and can provide rigidity to the body **40**.

[0039] In some aspects, the first clamping surface **54** can have a texture. Said texture can inhibit sliding of the tongue **16** relative to the first clamping surface **54** to facilitate retention of the tongue within the clip **50**. In some aspects, the texture can comprise at least one projection or tooth **86** (optionally, a plurality of projections or teeth or a rough surface). In further aspects, the second clamping surface **56** can comprise a texture (e.g., one or more teeth **86** or a rough surface).

[0040] Referring to FIG. 3, in some aspects, the respective lower edges **46** of the legs **44** can extend along a single plane **92**. In this way, the lower edges **46** can engage a flat floor or ground surface during donning of the shoe **12**. In some aspects, the first and second clamping surfaces define a tongue receiving space **94** therebetween. At least a portion of the tongue receiving space **94** (e.g., a portion of the tongue receiving space proximate to the second end **66** of the first portion **62** of the clip **52**) can extend along an axis **96** that forms an angle of greater than 60 degrees (optionally, greater than 70 degrees, or greater than 80 degrees) with the single plane **92**. For example, the receiving space **94** can have a curved pathway, and the axis **96** can be tangential to the curved pathway. In this way, the tongue can be held upwardly to allow receipt of the user's foot into the shoe.

[0041] Optionally, referring to FIG. 1, the apparatus **10** can define a hole **90** that can receive a string therethrough. The string can be tied or looped so that the string can extend from the apparatus **10** to serve as a handle for manipulating the apparatus. The string can be used to lift the apparatus **10** from the shoe **12** after donning the shoe. In some aspects, the hole **90** can extend through the first projection **70**. The hole **90** can extend transversely to a thickness of the first projection **70** along a central axis **91** that extends through a center point of the hole. The central axis **91** can, for example, extend along the longitudinal axis **34**.

[0042] Referring to FIGS. 1 and 8, a method of using the apparatus **10** can comprise positioning the shoe **12** within the U-shaped receptacle. The shoe **12** can be positioned beneath the body so that the body extends across the upper surface **14** of the shoe. The tongue **16** of the shoe **12** can be positioned within the clip **50**. For example, the first clamping surface **54** can bias against the underside **22** of the tongue, and the second clamping surface **56** can bias against the tip side **20** of the tongue, compressively retaining the tongue **16** between the first and second clamping surfaces **54, 56**. A user can then insert a foot into the shoe. The tongue **16** can then be removed from (or otherwise decoupled from) the clip **50**. For example, using the string described herein, the user can pull the apparatus **10** from the shoe.

[0043] In some aspects, a method can comprise passing a string through the hole **90**. The method can further comprise tying the string to retain the string in a configuration in which the string extends through the hole **90**.

Exemplary Aspects

[0044] In view of the described devices, systems, and methods and variations thereof, herein below are described certain more particularly described aspects of the invention. These particularly recited aspects should not however be interpreted to have any limiting effect on any different claims containing different or more general teachings described herein, or that the "particular" aspects are somehow limited in some way other than the inherent meanings of the language literally used therein.

[0045] Aspect 1: An apparatus for assisting a user in donning a shoe, the shoe having an upper surface, a tongue, and a sole, the apparatus having a front and a rear spaced along a longitudinal axis, the apparatus comprising:

[0046] a body defining a U-shaped receptacle that is configured to extend across the upper surface of the shoe, wherein the body comprises a pair of legs that are spaced along a transverse axis that is perpendicular to the longitu-

dinal axis, wherein the pair of legs extend downwardly on respective sides of the body to respective lower edges, wherein the body has a highest portion opposite the lower edges of the pair of legs that is spaced from the lower edges of the legs by at least 2 inches along a vertical axis that is perpendicular to both the longitudinal and transverse axes; and a clip that is coupled to the body, the clip comprising an arm that is pivotable relative to the body, wherein the arm defines a first clamping surface, wherein the apparatus defines a second clamping surface that faces the first clamping surface, wherein the first and second clamping surfaces are configured to receive the tongue of the shoe therebetween.

[0047] Aspect 2: The apparatus of aspect 1, wherein the clip is coupled to the body via integral formation.

[0048] Aspect 3: The apparatus of aspect 2, wherein the apparatus is a unitary body.

[0049] Aspect 4: The apparatus of any one of the preceding aspects, wherein the clip comprises a first portion having a first end and a second end, wherein the first portion couples to the body at the first end and extends from the body to the second end, and wherein the arm is coupled to the second end of the first portion.

[0050] Aspect 5: The apparatus of aspect 4, wherein the clip further comprises first and second projections that are respectively coupled to the arm and the first portion of the clip so that biasing of the first projection toward the second projection causes movement of the arm of the clip away from the first portion of the clip.

[0051] Aspect 6: The apparatus of aspect 4 or aspect 5, wherein the first portion defines the second clamping surface.

[0052] Aspect 7: The apparatus of any one of aspects 1-5, wherein the body defines the second clamping surface.

[0053] Aspect 8: The apparatus of any one of aspects 1-3, wherein the clip comprises a first projection that is coupled to the arm, wherein the first projection defines a lever arm that, when biased in a first rotational direction, causes the first clamping surface to move away from the second clamping surface.

[0054] Aspect 9: The apparatus of any one of the preceding aspects, wherein the arm defines an outer surface that opposes the first clamping surface, wherein the outer surface is convex.

[0055] Aspect 10: The apparatus of any one of the preceding aspects, wherein the body has a decreasing height moving along the longitudinal axis from the rear to the front, the height defined by a spacing the lower edges of the legs to a top of the body in a plane transverse to the longitudinal axis.

[0056] Aspect 11: The apparatus of any one of the preceding aspects, wherein the apparatus is symmetric about a plane that includes the longitudinal axis and is perpendicular to the transverse axis.

[0057] Aspect 12: The apparatus of any one of the preceding aspects, wherein the apparatus comprises polymer.

[0058] Aspect 13: The apparatus of any one of the preceding aspects, wherein the body further comprises respective feet that extend from the lower edges of the legs and outwardly from the U-shaped receptacle.

[0059] Aspect 14: The apparatus of aspect 13, wherein the apparatus has a length along the longitudinal axis,

wherein the feet extend to the front of the apparatus and only along a portion of the apparatus from the front to the rear.

[0060] Aspect 15: The apparatus of any one of the preceding aspects, wherein the first clamping surface is textured.

[0061] Aspect 16: The apparatus of aspect 15, wherein the first clamping surface defines at least one tooth.

[0062] Aspect 17: The apparatus of any one of the preceding aspects, wherein the respective lower edges of the legs extend along a single plane.

[0063] Aspect 18: The apparatus of aspect 17, wherein the first and second clamping surfaces define a tongue receiving space therebetween, wherein at least a portion of the tongue receiving space extends along an axis that forms an angle of greater than 60 degrees with the single plane.

[0064] Aspect 19: A method of using the apparatus as in any one of the preceding aspects with a shoe, the shoe having a tongue, the method comprising:

[0065] positioning the shoe within the U-shaped receptacle;

[0066] positioning the tongue of the shoe within the clip.

[0067] Aspect 20: The method of aspect 19, further comprising inserting a foot into the shoe.

[0068] Although the foregoing invention has been described in some detail by way of illustration and example for purposes of clarity of understanding, certain changes and modifications may be practiced within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for assisting a user in donning a shoe, the shoe having an upper surface, a tongue, and a sole, the apparatus having a front and a rear spaced along a longitudinal axis, the apparatus comprising:

a body defining a U-shaped receptacle that is configured to extend across the upper surface of the shoe, wherein the body comprises a pair of legs that are spaced along a transverse axis that is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, wherein the pair of legs extend downwardly on respective sides of the body to respective lower edges, wherein the body has a highest portion opposite the lower edges of the pair of legs that is spaced from the lower edges of the legs by at least 2 inches along a vertical axis that is perpendicular to both the longitudinal and transverse axes; and

a clip that is coupled to the body, the clip comprising an arm that is pivotable relative to the body, wherein the arm defines a first clamping surface,

wherein the apparatus defines a second clamping surface that faces the first clamping surface, wherein the first and second clamping surfaces are configured to receive the tongue of the shoe therebetween.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the clip is coupled to the body via integral formation.

3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the apparatus is a unitary body.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the clip comprises a first portion having a first end and a second end, wherein the first portion couples to the body at the first end and extends from the body to the second end, and wherein the arm is coupled to the second end of the first portion.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the clip further comprises first and second projections that are respectively coupled to the arm and the first portion of the clip so that biasing of the first projection toward the second projection causes movement of the arm of the clip away from the first portion of the clip.

6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the first portion defines the second clamping surface.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the body defines the second clamping surface.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the clip comprises a first projection that is coupled to the arm, wherein the first projection defines a lever arm that, when biased in a first rotational direction, causes the first clamping surface to move away from the second clamping surface.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the arm defines an outer surface that opposes the first clamping surface, wherein the outer surface is convex.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the body has a decreasing height moving along the longitudinal axis from the rear to the front, the height defined by a spacing the lower edges of the legs to a top of the body in a plane transverse to the longitudinal axis.

11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is symmetric about a plane that includes the longitudinal axis and is perpendicular to the transverse axis.

12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus comprises polymer.

13. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the body further comprises respective feet that extend from the lower edges of the legs and outwardly from the U-shaped receptacle.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the apparatus has a length along the longitudinal axis, wherein the feet extend to the front of the apparatus and only along a portion of the apparatus from the front to the rear.

15. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first clamping surface is textured.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the first clamping surface defines at least one tooth.

17. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the respective lower edges of the legs extend along a single plane.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the first and second clamping surfaces define a tongue receiving space therebetween, wherein at least a portion of the tongue receiving space extends along an axis that forms an angle of greater than 60 degrees with the single plane.

19. A method of donning a shoe, the shoe having a tongue, the method comprising:

positioning the shoe within a U-shaped receptacle of an apparatus comprising:

a body defining the U-shaped receptacle that is configured to extend across the upper surface of the shoe, wherein the body comprises a pair of legs that are spaced along a transverse axis that is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, wherein the pair of legs extend downwardly on respective sides of the body to respective lower edges, wherein the body has a highest portion opposite the lower edges of the pair of legs that is spaced from the lower edges of the legs by at least 2 inches along a vertical axis that is perpendicular to both the longitudinal and transverse axes; and

a clip that is coupled to the body, the clip comprising an arm that is pivotable relative to the body, wherein the arm defines a first clamping surface,

wherein the apparatus defines a second clamping surface that faces the first clamping surface; and positioning the tongue of the shoe within the clip.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising inserting a foot into the shoe.

* * * * *