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(54) **WEIGHTLIFTING SHOE**

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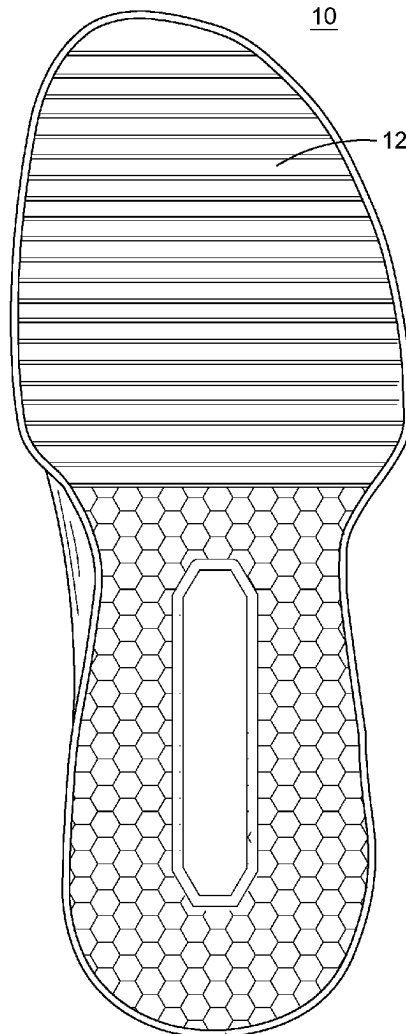
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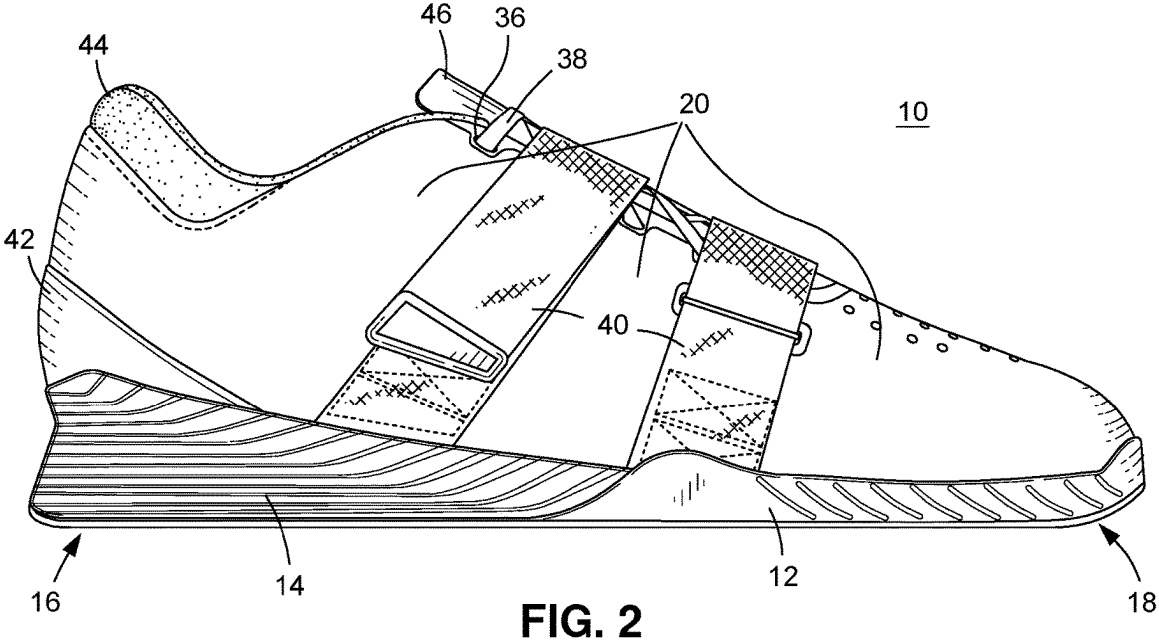
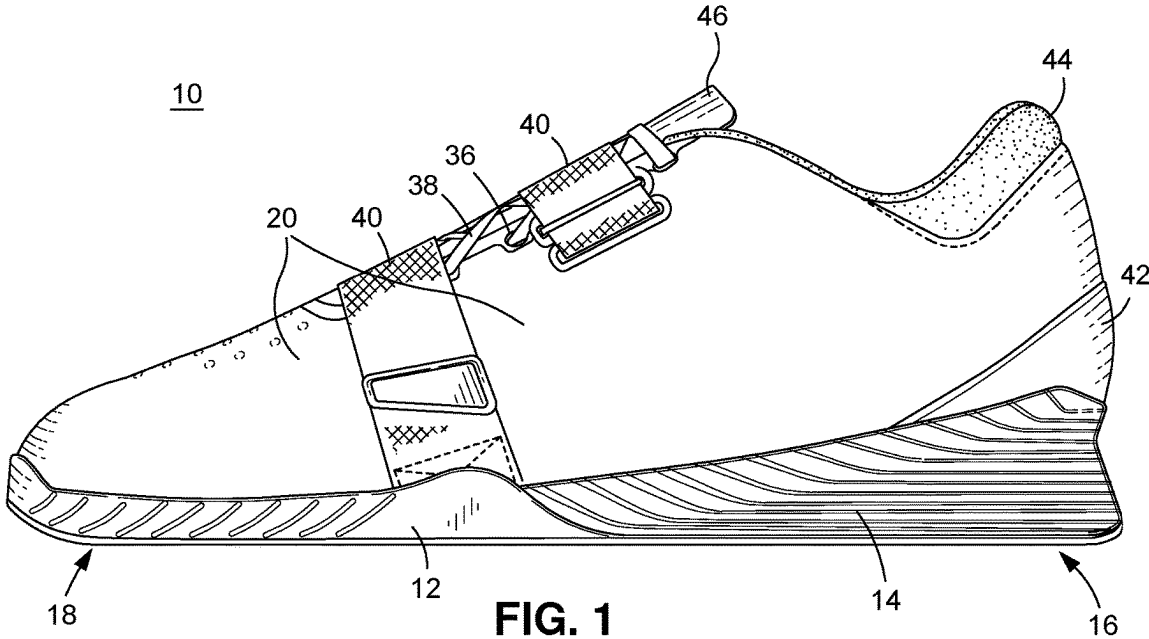
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A weightlifting shoe has a bottom sole, a midsole comprising a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), and one or more panels attached to one or both of the midsole and the bottom sole to define an enclosure for a person's foot. The midsole may be disposed above at least a portion of the bottom sole and may have a decreasing thickness in a direction from a rear region of the bottom sole toward a front region of the bottom sole opposite the rear region. The enclosure may have an axis defined between opposing front and rear points on the enclosure at a longest part thereof and may have a width defined perpendicular to the axis. The width of the enclosure may have a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 70% of the way from the rear point to the front point.





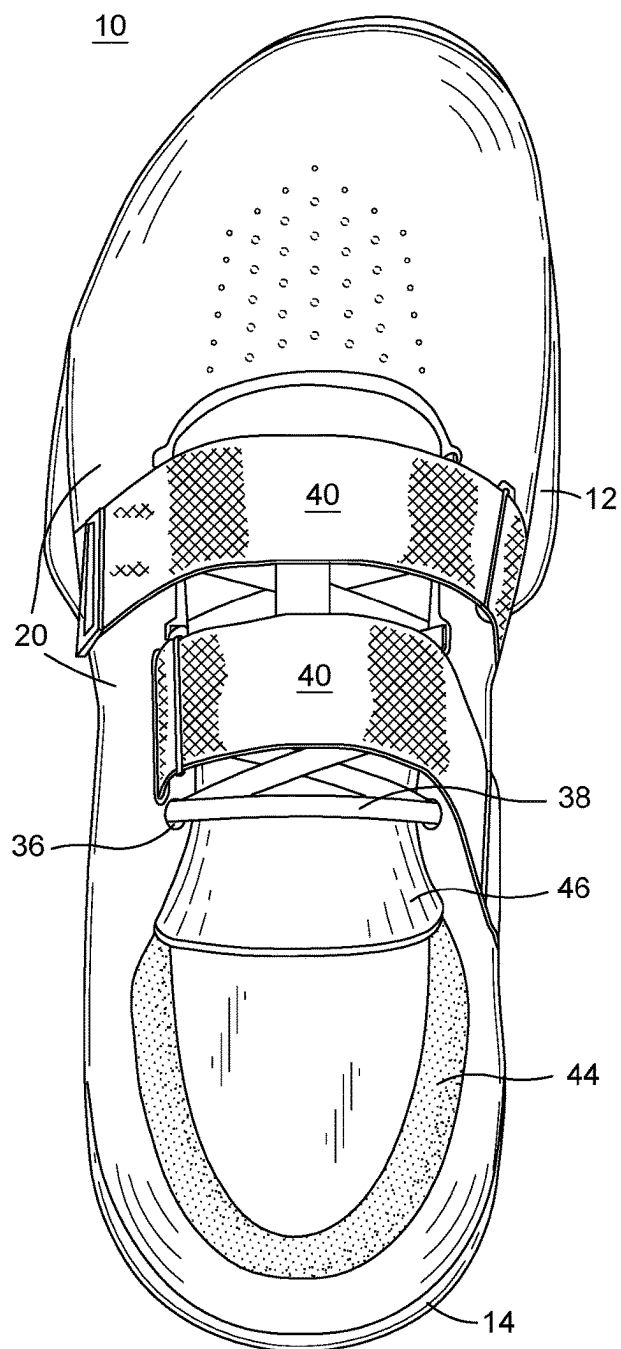


FIG. 3

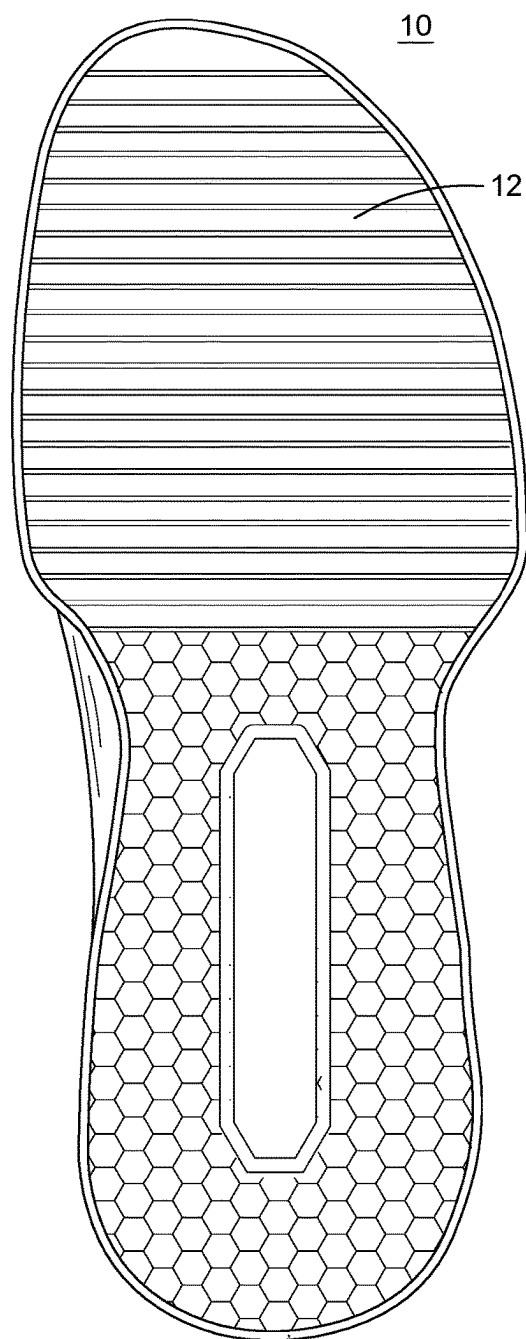


FIG. 4

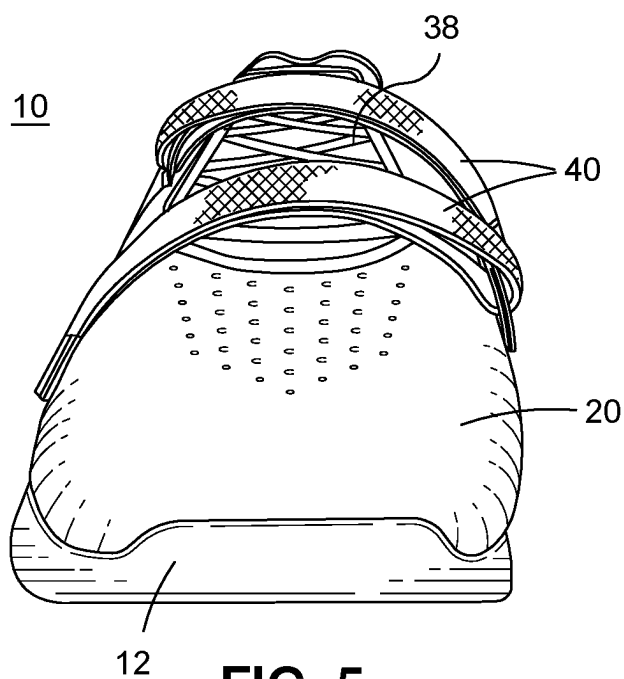


FIG. 5

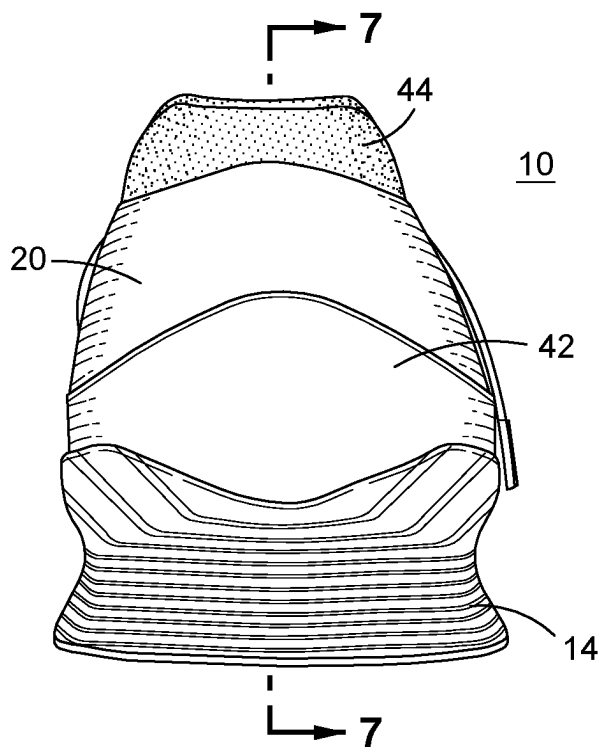


FIG. 6

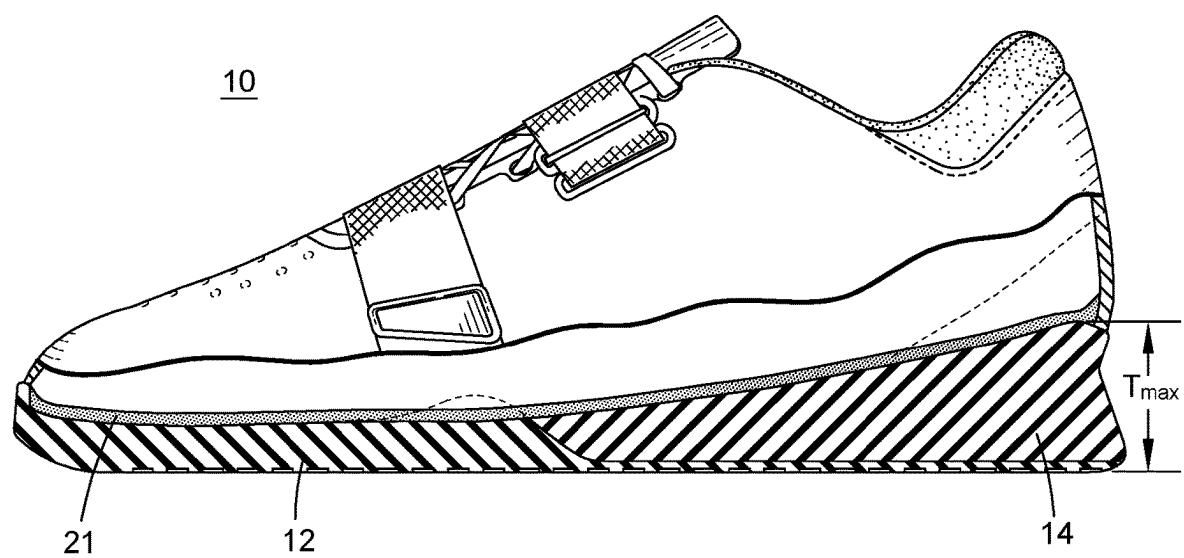


FIG. 7

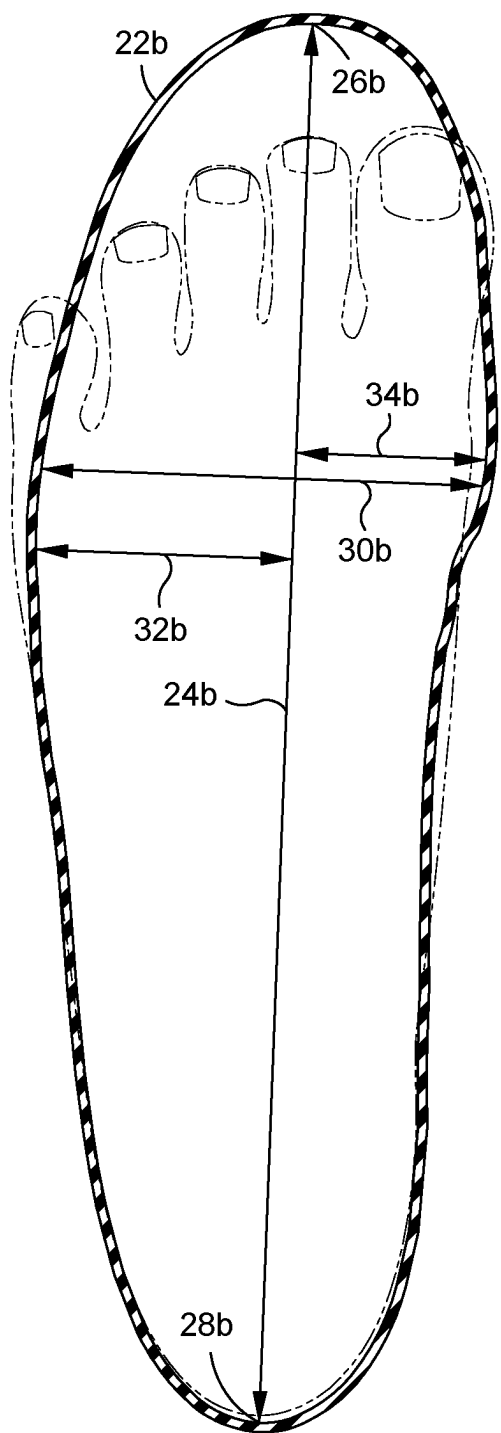


FIG. 8
(PRIOR ART)

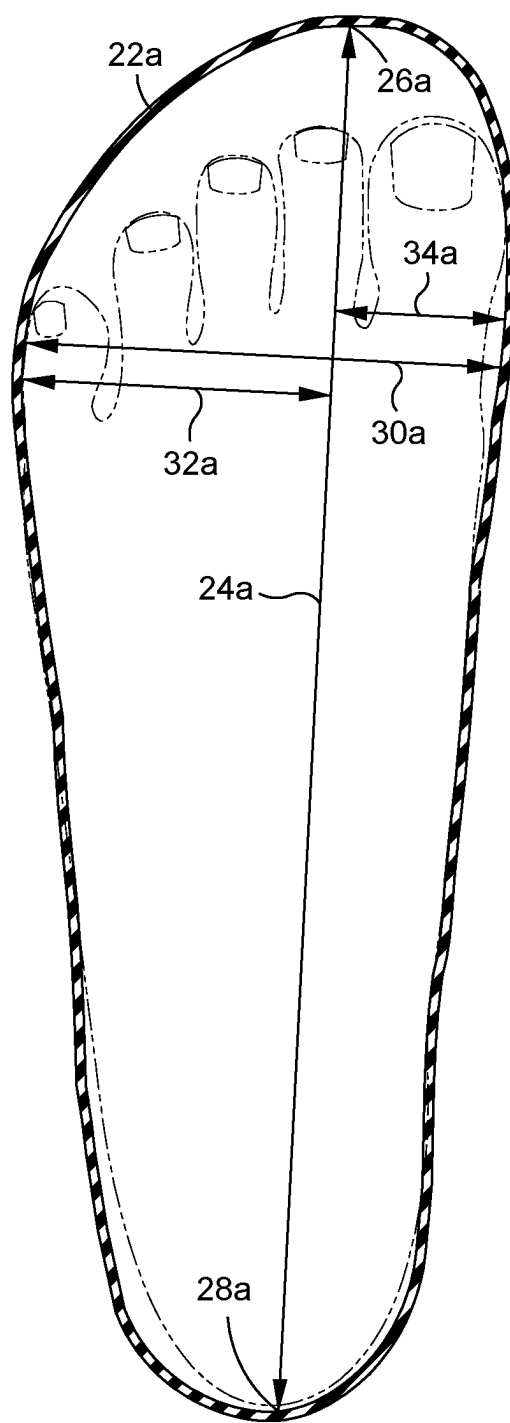


FIG. 9

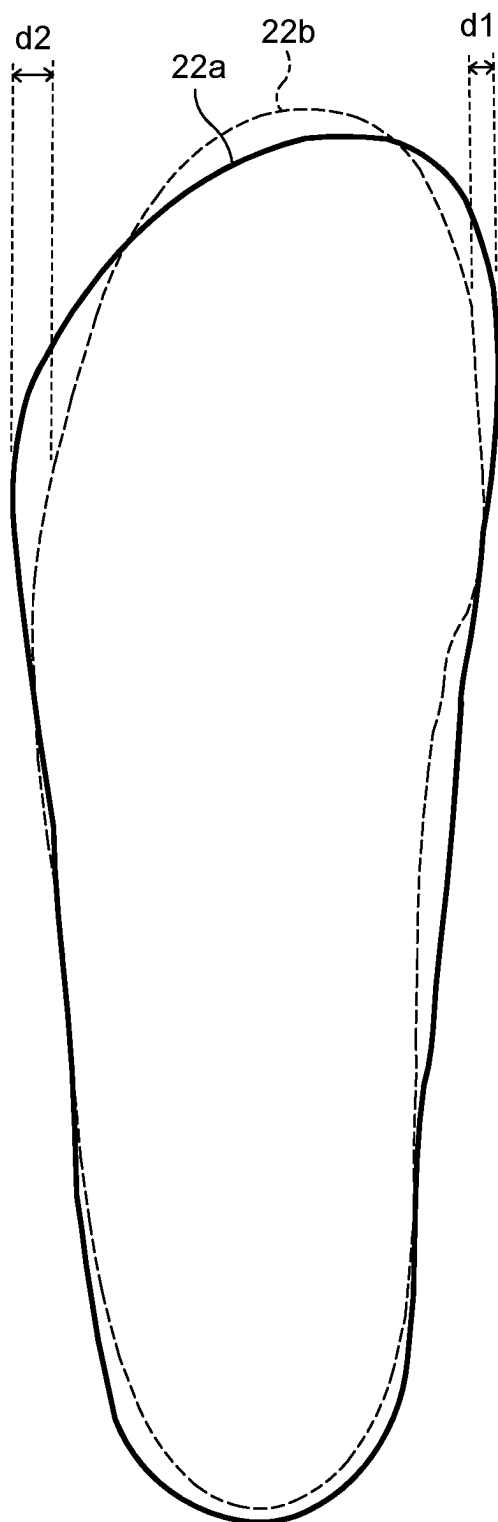


FIG. 10

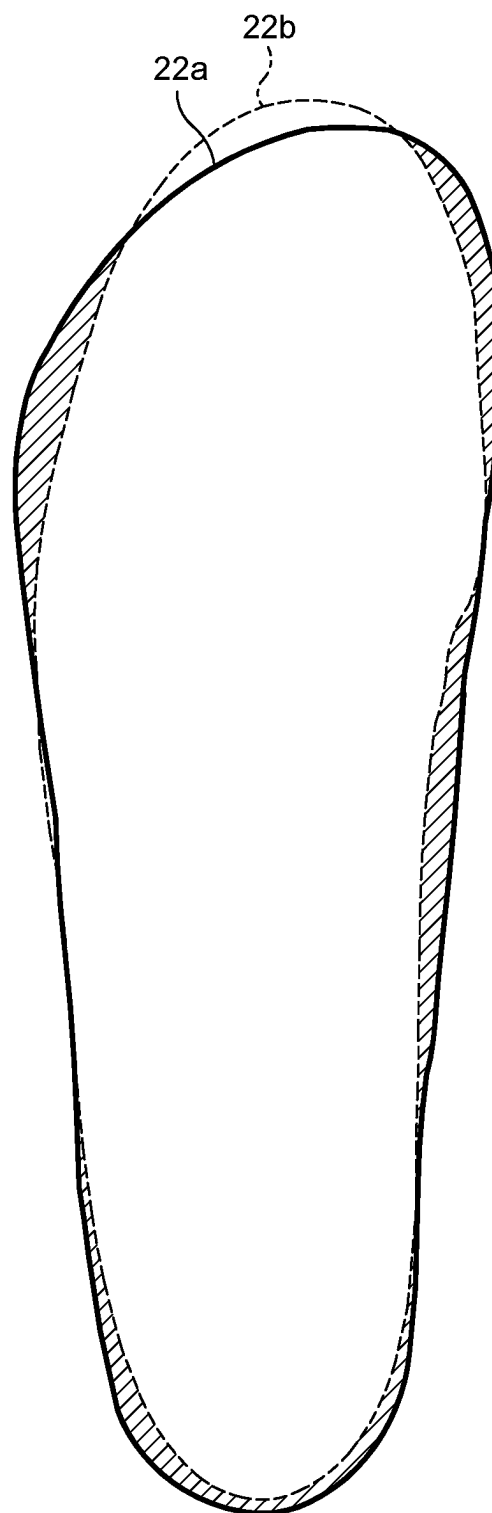


FIG. 11

WEIGHTLIFTING SHOE**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] Not Applicable

STATEMENT RE: FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH/DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not Applicable

BACKGROUND

[0003] Footwear that is designed specifically for weightlifting differs in some respects from other athletic shoes, most notably in that the heel is typically elevated. An elevated heel is thought to improve the range of motion of the weightlifter's knees and to allow for better use of the weightlifter's leg muscles during a squat. However, the elevated heel is also thought to increase the potential for slippage of the foot, which may be the reason for the tendency of weightlifting shoes to be relatively narrow and constricting along the length of the shoe including in the toe box. Although some efforts have been made to design weightlifting shoes for wide feet (just as other types of athletic shoes have wide foot styles), the existing weightlifting shoes on the market remain overly confining to the toes. In particular, the toe boxes of existing weightlifting shoes do not adequately account for the benefit to the weightlifter of being able to fully splay the toes while lifting.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0004] The present disclosure contemplates footwear for overcoming the above drawbacks associated with the related art. One aspect of the embodiments of the present disclosure is a weightlifting shoe comprising a bottom sole, a midsole comprising a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), and one or more panels attached to one or both of the midsole and the bottom sole to define an enclosure for a person's foot. The midsole may be disposed above at least a portion of the bottom sole and may have a decreasing thickness in a direction from a rear region of the bottom sole toward a front region of the bottom sole opposite the rear region. The enclosure may have an axis defined between opposing front and rear points on the enclosure at a longest part thereof and may have a width defined perpendicular to the axis. The width of the enclosure may have a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 70% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

[0005] The maximum value of the width of the enclosure may be at a position along the axis that is more than 71% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the width of the enclosure may be at a position along the axis that is more than 72% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the width of the enclosure may be at a position along the axis that is more than 73% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the width of the enclosure may be at a position along the axis that is more than 74% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the width of the enclosure may be at a position along the axis that is more than 75% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

[0006] The width of the enclosure may be the sum of an outer foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis between

the axis and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot and an inner foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis between the axis and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot. The outer foot distance may have a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 66% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the outer foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 68% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the outer foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 70% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

[0007] The width of the enclosure may be the sum of an outer foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis between the axis and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot and an inner foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis between the axis and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot. The inner foot distance may have a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 72% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the inner foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 74% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the inner foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 76% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the inner foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 78% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the inner foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 80% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

[0008] A heel height defined as a sum of a maximum value of the thickness of the midsole and a corresponding thickness of the bottom sole may be at least 18 mm. The heel height may be at least 20 mm.

[0009] The weightlifting shoe may comprise a plurality of shoelace eyelets and two or more straps.

[0010] Another aspect of the embodiments of the present disclosure is a weightlifting shoe comprising a bottom sole, a midsole comprising a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), and one or more panels attached to one or both of the midsole and the bottom sole to define an enclosure for a person's foot. The midsole may be disposed above at least a portion of the bottom sole and may have a decreasing thickness in a direction from a rear region of the bottom sole toward a front region of the bottom sole opposite the rear region. The enclosure may have an axis defined between opposing front and rear points on the enclosure at a longest part thereof and may have a width defined perpendicular to the axis. The width may be the sum of an outer foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis between the axis and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot and an inner foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis between the axis and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot. The outer foot distance may have a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 66% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

[0011] The maximum value of the outer foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 68% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum

value of the outer foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 70% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

[0012] Another aspect of the embodiments of the present disclosure is a weightlifting shoe comprising a bottom sole, a midsole comprising a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), and one or more panels attached to one or both of the midsole and the bottom sole to define an enclosure for a person's foot. The midsole may be disposed above at least a portion of the bottom sole and may have a decreasing thickness in a direction from a rear region of the bottom sole toward a front region of the bottom sole opposite the rear region. The enclosure may have an axis defined between opposing front and rear points on the enclosure at a longest part thereof and may have a width defined perpendicular to the axis. The width may be the sum of an outer foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis between the axis and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot and an inner foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis between the axis and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot. The inner foot distance may have a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 72% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

[0013] The maximum value of the inner foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 76% of the way from the rear point to the front point. The maximum value of the inner foot distance may be at a position along the axis that is more than 80% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] These and other features and advantages of the various embodiments disclosed herein will be better understood with respect to the following description and drawings, in which like numbers refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

[0015] FIG. 1 is a left side view of a weightlifting shoe for a left foot, showing an outer side thereof;

[0016] FIG. 2 is a right side view of the weightlifting shoe, showing an inner side thereof;

[0017] FIG. 3 is a top view of the weightlifting shoe;

[0018] FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the weightlifting shoe;

[0019] FIG. 5 is a front view of the weightlifting shoe;

[0020] FIG. 6 is a rear view of the weightlifting shoe;

[0021] FIG. 7 is a partial cross-sectional view of the weightlifting shoe taken along the line 7-7 in FIG. 6;

[0022] FIG. 8 shows an outline of an enclosure for a person's foot that is defined by a conventional weightlifting shoe;

[0023] FIG. 9 shows an outline of an enclosure for a person's foot that is defined by the weightlifting shoe shown in FIGS. 1-7 and described herein;

[0024] FIG. 10 shows a comparison between the outlines of FIGS. 8 and 9; and

[0025] FIG. 11 shows another comparison between the outlines of FIGS. 8 and 9.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0026] The present disclosure encompasses various embodiments of weightlifting shoes. The detailed description set forth below in connection with the appended drawings is intended as a description of several currently con-

templated embodiments and is not intended to represent the only form in which the disclosed invention may be developed or utilized. The description sets forth the functions and features in connection with the illustrated embodiments. It is to be understood, however, that the same or equivalent functions may be accomplished by different embodiments that are also intended to be encompassed within the scope of the present disclosure. It is further understood that the use of relational terms such as first and second and the like are used solely to distinguish one from another entity without necessarily requiring or implying any actual such relationship or order between such entities.

[0027] FIGS. 1-7 are views of a weightlifting shoe 10 for a left foot. While not separately illustrated, the weightlifting shoe 10 may also be symmetrically designed for a right foot. The resulting pair of weightlifting shoes 10 may advantageously be worn by a weightlifter in order to optimize performance during a squat. The weightlifting shoe 10 may include a bottom sole 12 (which may be made of rubber, for example), a midsole 14 comprising a stiff thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) for strong support and stability, and one or more panels 20, which may be attached to one or both of the midsole 14 and the bottom sole 12 to define an enclosure for a person's foot. The panel(s) 20, which may be made of microfiber, for example, may comprise an upper, vamp, quarter, etc. that surround the foot while the weightlifting shoe 10 is being worn. As compared with conventional weightlifting shoes, the enclosure defined by the attachment of the panel(s) 20 to the midsole 14 and/or bottom sole 12 may provide more room for the weightlifter's toes, allowing the weightlifter to full splay his/her toes during a squat as is not possible with conventional weightlifting shoes, even those designed for wide feet. As a result, the weightlifting shoe 10 may improve the weightlifter's performance and stability.

[0028] As best seen in FIG. 1 and in the cross-sectional view of FIG. 7 (which is taken along the line 7-7 in the rear view of FIG. 6), the midsole 14 may be disposed above at least a portion of the bottom sole 12 and may have a decreasing thickness in a direction from a rear region 16 of the bottom sole 12 toward a front region 18 of the bottom sole 12 opposite the rear region 16. In particular, a heel height T_{max} (see FIG. 7) defined as a sum of a maximum value of the thickness of the midsole 14 and a corresponding thickness of the bottom sole 12 (i.e., the combined thicknesses of the midsole 14 and bottom sole 12 where the midsole 14 is at its thickest) may be at least 18 mm, preferably 20 mm or more. An insole 21 (e.g., a removable insole) may be provided over the midsole 14 and, in a case where the midsole 14 is not disposed above the entire bottom sole 12, over the bottom sole 12 as well as shown in FIG. 7, serving as an unbroken surface for the person's foot.

[0029] FIG. 9 shows an outline 22a of the enclosure for the person's foot that is defined by the weightlifting shoe 10, e.g., by the attachment of the panel(s) 20 to the midsole 14 and/or bottom sole 12. The enclosure may have an axis 24a defined between opposing front and rear points 26a, 28a on the enclosure at the longest part thereof. The outline 22a shown in FIG. 9, which typically corresponds to the shape of the insole 21 viewed from above, may represent a slice of the enclosure at this longest part (and thus points 26a and 28a fall on the outline 22a as shown). As shown in FIG. 9, a person's foot can comfortably and completely fit within the outline 22a (and thus within the enclosure) while in a

relaxed state, even in the area of the toes (known as the toe box of the shoe). More particularly, the enclosure represented by the outline **22a** may have a width that is defined perpendicular to the axis **24a**, and the width may have a maximum value **30a** at a position along the axis **24a** that is more than 70% of the way from the rear point **28a** to the front point **26a**. Because the maximum value **30a** of the width is positioned this far forward, the weightlifting shoe **10** may be prevented from narrowing too early and closing in on the person's toes as is typical of conventional weightlifting shoes. Because the person's toes are not overly confined by a narrow toe box and can fit comfortably while in a relaxed state as shown in FIG. 9, the person is able to splay his/her toes during a squat for improved weightlifting performance. Preferably, the maximum value **30a** of the width of the enclosure is at a position along the axis **24a** that is more than 71% of the way from the rear point **28a** to the front point **26a**, more preferably 72%, 73%, 74%, 75%, or more. In contrast, as shown in FIG. 8 in relation to an outline **22b** of an enclosure similarly defined by a conventional weightlifting shoe, the maximum value **30b** of the width perpendicular to the axis **24b** (defined similarly between opposing front and rear points **26b**, **28b**) is significantly less far forward, resulting in a narrow toe box. As can be seen, the person's toes cannot comfortably fit and must be scrunched up in the conventional weightlifting shoe, making splaying of the toes much more difficult or impossible.

[0030] Referring again to FIG. 9, the enclosure defined by the weightlifting shoe **10** may, alternatively or additionally, have wider space to the left and/or right of the axis **24a** relative to conventional weightlifting shoes. In other words, instead of or in addition to defining a wider toe box generally, the outline **22a** of the enclosure may define a wider area for the person's big toe and/or a wider area for the person's second, third, fourth, and fifth toes. In particular, given that the axis **24a** is defined between opposing front and rear points **26a**, **28a** on the enclosure at the longest part thereof, the width of the enclosure (perpendicular to the axis **24a**) may be thought of as the sum of an outer foot distance and an inner foot distance. The outer foot distance may be defined perpendicular to the axis **24a** between the axis **24a** and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot (the left-hand side in FIG. 9), while the inner distance may be defined perpendicular to the axis **24a** between the axis **24a** and the enclosure where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot (the right-hand side in FIG. 9). In order to define a wide area for the person's toes other than the big toe, the outer foot distance may have a maximum value **32a** at a position along the axis **24a** that is more than 66% of the way from the rear point **28a** to the front point **26a**. Preferably, the maximum value **32a** of the outer foot distance may be at a position along the axis **24a** that is more than 67% of the way from the rear point **28a** to the front point **26a**, more preferably 68%, 69%, 70%, or more. Along the same lines, in order to define a wide area for the person's big toe, the inner foot distance may have a maximum value **34a** at a position along the axis **24a** that is more than 72% of the way from the rear point **28a** to the front point **26a**. Preferably, the maximum value **34a** of the inner foot distance may be at a position along the axis **24a** that is more than 73% of the way from the rear point **28a** to the front point **26a**, more preferably 74%, 75%, 76%, 77%, 78%, 79%, 80%, or more. In contrast, as shown in FIG. 8 in relation to the outline **22b** of the enclosure defined by the

conventional weightlifting shoe, both the maximum value **32b** of the outer foot distance and the maximum value **34b** of the inner foot distance (defined similarly) are significantly less far forward, resulting in narrow areas for the toes and making splaying of the toes difficult or impossible on both sides of the foot.

[0031] FIGS. 10 and 11 show comparisons superimposing the outline **22b** of the conventional weightlifting shoe of FIG. 8 on the outline **22a** of the innovative weightlifting shoe **10** disclosed herein. As shown in FIG. 10, the toe box of the weightlifting shoe **10** may provide additional width **d1** at the inner part of the person's foot as well as additional width **d2** at the outer part of the person's foot, resulting in a weightlifting shoe **10** that may be 6-10% wider than other weightlifting shoes available on the market. Depending on which conventional weightlifting shoe is compared with, the additional width **d1** at the inner part of the person's foot may be 2-3 mm, for example, while the additional width **d2** at the outer part of the person's foot may be 3-5 mm, for example. In FIG. 11, the shaded regions show increased room that may be provided by the disclosed weightlifting shoe **10** in these areas of the toe box as well as elsewhere. In general, the natural foot-shaped design of the weightlifting shoe **10** may provide better comfort for the wearer while allowing the wearer to splay his/her toes for improved performance and stability.

[0032] Referring back to FIGS. 1-6, the weightlifting shoe **10** may have, in addition to a plurality of shoelace eyelets **36** for threading shoelaces **38**, two or more straps **40** for further securing the weightlifting shoe **10** to the person's foot. As best seen in FIGS. 1-3 and 5, the straps **40** may include one strap **40** over the middle of the foot and another strap **40** around the ankle for maximized support, stability, and lockdown fit. The straps **40** may comprise a nylon and Velcro strap webbing and may be held in place by strap holders made of silicone, for example. Additional features of the weightlifting shoe **10** may include a TPU back heel support **42** and a mesh inner fabric **44** and tongue **46** that may border the panel(s) **20** and may in some cases be thought of as further defining, in part, the enclosure described herein.

[0033] The above description is given by way of example, and not limitation. Given the above disclosure, one skilled in the art could devise variations that are within the scope and spirit of the invention disclosed herein. Further, the various features of the embodiments disclosed herein can be used alone, or in varying combinations with each other and are not intended to be limited to the specific combination described herein. Thus, the scope of the claims is not to be limited by the illustrated embodiments.

1-23. (canceled)

24. A weightlifting shoe comprising:

a bottom sole;

a midsole comprising a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), the midsole disposed above at least a portion of the bottom sole and having a decreasing thickness in a direction from a rear region of the bottom sole toward a front region of the bottom sole opposite the rear region;

one or more panels attached to one or both of the midsole and the bottom sole to define an enclosure for a person's foot; and

an insole having an axis defined between opposing front and rear points at a longest part thereof and having a

width defined perpendicular to the axis, the width of the insole having a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 70% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

25. The weightlifting shoe of claim 24, wherein the maximum value of the width of the insole is at a position along the axis that is more than 71% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

26. The weightlifting shoe of claim 25, wherein the maximum value of the width of the insole is at a position along the axis that is more than 72% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

27. The weightlifting shoe of claim 24, wherein the width of the insole is the sum of an outer foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot and an inner foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot, the outer foot distance having a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 66% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

28. The weightlifting shoe of claim 27, wherein the maximum value of the outer foot distance is at a position along the axis that is more than 68% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

29. The weightlifting shoe of claim 28, wherein the maximum value of the outer foot distance is at a position along the axis that is more than 70% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

30. The weightlifting shoe of claim 24, wherein the width of the enclosure is the sum of an outer foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot and an inner foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot, the inner foot distance having a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 72% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

31. The weightlifting shoe of claim 30, wherein the maximum value of the inner foot distance is at a position along the axis that is more than 74% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

32. The weightlifting shoe of claim 31, wherein the maximum value of the inner foot distance is at a position along the axis that is more than 76% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

33. The weightlifting shoe of claim 24, wherein a heel height defined as a sum of a maximum value of the thickness of the midsole and a corresponding thickness of the bottom sole is at least 18 mm.

34. The weightlifting shoe of claim 33, wherein the heel height is at least 20 mm.

35. The weightlifting shoe of claim 24, further comprising a plurality of shoelace eyelets and two or more straps.

36. A weightlifting shoe comprising:

a bottom sole;

a midsole comprising a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), the midsole disposed above at least a portion of the bottom sole and having a decreasing thickness in a direction from a rear region of the bottom sole toward a front region of the bottom sole opposite the rear region;

one or more panels attached to one or both of the midsole and the bottom sole to define an enclosure for a person's foot; and

an insole having an axis defined between opposing front and rear points at a longest part thereof and having a width defined perpendicular to the axis, the width of the insole being the sum of an outer foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot and an inner foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot, the outer foot distance having a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 66% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

37. The weightlifting shoe of claim 36, wherein the maximum value of the outer foot distance is at a position along the axis that is more than 68% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

38. The weightlifting shoe of claim 37 wherein the maximum value of the outer foot distance is at a position along the axis that is more than 70% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

39. The weightlifting shoe of claim 36, wherein a heel height defined as a sum of a maximum value of the thickness of the midsole and a corresponding thickness of the bottom sole is at least 18 mm.

40. The weightlifting shoe of claim 39, wherein the heel height is at least 20 mm.

41. The weightlifting shoe of claim 36, further comprising a plurality of shoelace eyelets and two or more straps.

42. A weightlifting shoe comprising:

a bottom sole;

a midsole comprising a thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), the midsole disposed above at least a portion of the bottom sole and having a decreasing thickness in a direction from a rear region of the bottom sole toward a front region of the bottom sole opposite the rear region;

one or more panels attached to one or both of the midsole and the bottom sole to define an enclosure for a person's foot; and

an insole having an axis defined between opposing front and rear points at a longest part thereof and having a width defined perpendicular to the axis, the width of the insole being the sum of an outer foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis where the enclosure encloses an outer part of the person's foot and an inner foot distance defined perpendicular to the axis where the enclosure encloses an inner part of the person's foot, the inner foot distance having a maximum value at a position along the axis that is more than 72% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

43. The weightlifting shoe of claim 42, wherein the maximum value of the inner foot distance is at a position along the axis that is more than 76% of the way from the rear point to the front point.

44. The weightlifting shoe of claim 42, wherein a heel height defined as a sum of a maximum value of the thickness of the midsole and a corresponding thickness of the bottom sole is at least 18 mm.

45. The weightlifting shoe of claim **44**, wherein the heel height is at least 20 mm.

46. The weightlifting shoe of claim **42**, further comprising a plurality of shoelace eyelets and two or more straps.

* * * * *