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Variable lordosis spacer and related methods of use

Abstract

An expandable fusion device may include a first endplate and a second endplate. The expandable fusion device may also include first and second ramps configured to mate with both the first and second endplates. An inserter instrument includes an outer shaft having a bore extending longitudinally therethrough and an inner shaft extending through the bore in the outer shaft. The outer shaft is configured to engage the first or second opening in the second ramp, and the inner shaft is configured to engage the corresponding first or second opening in the first ramp to control implant height and/or lordotic angle.

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Background/Summary

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION (1) This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/833,933 filed on Mar. 30, 2020 (published as U.S. 2020-0237525), which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/122,128 filed on Sep. 5, 2018, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,639,166, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/493,428 filed on Apr. 21, 2017, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,092,417, which is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 14/887,476 filed on Oct. 20, 2015, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,662,224, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Ser. No. 14/449,428, filed Aug. 1, 2014, now U.S. Pat. No.

9,839,528, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Ser. No. 14/175,601, filed Feb. 7, 2014, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,402,739, all of which are each hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties for all purposes.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

(1) Various embodiments of the present disclosure relate generally to variable lordosis spacers and related systems and methods. More specifically, the present disclosure relates to devices, systems, and methods for correcting lordosis and/or other spinal abnormalities.

BACKGROUND

(2) A common procedure for handling pain associated with intervertebral discs that have become degenerated due to various factors such as trauma or aging is the use of intervertebral fusion devices for fusing one or more adjacent vertebral bodies. Generally, to fuse the adjacent vertebral bodies, the intervertebral disc is first partially or fully removed. An intervertebral fusion device is then typically inserted between neighboring vertebrae to maintain normal disc spacing and restore spinal stability, thereby facilitating an intervertebral fusion.

(3) There are a number of known conventional fusion devices and methodologies in the art for accomplishing the intervertebral fusion. These include screw and rod arrangements, solid bone implants, and fusion devices which include a cage or other implant mechanism which, typically, is packed with bone and/or bone growth inducing substances. These devices are implanted between adjacent vertebral bodies in order to fuse the vertebral bodies together, alleviating the associated pain.

(4) However, there are drawbacks associated with the known conventional fusion devices and methodologies. For example, present methods for installing a conventional fusion device often require that the adjacent vertebral bodies be distracted to restore a diseased disc space to its normal or healthy height prior to implantation of the fusion device. In order to maintain this height once the fusion device is inserted, the fusion device is usually dimensioned larger in height than the initial distraction height. This difference in height can make it difficult for a surgeon to install the fusion device in the distracted intervertebral space.

(5) Further, lordosis refers to a curvature of the spine, and in particular a curvature that is posteriorly concave. In certain patients, this curvature may, for example, be larger than desired. Traditional vertebral fusion procedures and devices do not adequately account for this curvature. As such, traditional devices do not properly align with adjacent vertebral bodies. To ensure proper fit of traditional devices, bone may be removed from the vertebral bodies, increasing procedure and healing time.

(6) As such, there exists a need for a fusion device capable of being installed inside an intervertebral disc space at a minimum distraction height and for a fusion device that can maintain a normal distance between adjacent vertebral bodies when implanted.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

(7) The present disclosure relates to embodiments of expandable fusion devices and related methods of use.

(8) In one aspect, the present disclosure is directed to an expandable fusion device that may include a first endplate, and a second endplate. The expandable fusion device also may include a first ramp configured to mate with both the first and second endplates. The first ramp may be a wedge with an incline extending along a longitudinal axis of the expandable fusion device, and also may be a wedge having an incline extending along a lateral axis of the expandable fusion device. A second ramp may be configured to mate with both the first and second endplates. The second ramp may be a wedge having an incline extending along the longitudinal axis of the expandable fusion device, and also may be wedge having an incline extending along the lateral axis of the expandable fusion device.

(9) Various examples of the present disclosure may include one or more of the following aspects:

wherein the first and second endplates may each include at least one first mating feature configured to mate with at least one corresponding first mating feature disposed on the first ramp; wherein the at least one mating feature of the first and second endplates may be slidable with respect to the corresponding first mating feature disposed on the first ramp; wherein the first and second endplates may each include a second mating feature configured to mate with a corresponding second mating feature disposed on the first ramp; wherein the second mating feature and the corresponding second mating feature may each be C-shaped, V-shaped, or U-shaped; wherein the first and second endplates may each include a third mating feature configured to mate with a corresponding third mating feature disposed on the second ramp; wherein the third mating feature and the corresponding third mating feature may each be C-shaped, V-shaped, or U-shaped; wherein each of the first and second endplates may have an inner surface configured to mate with the first ramp, wherein the inner surface of each of the first and second endplates may be shaped as a concave curve, the concave curve being formed about a longitudinal axis of the expandable fusion device; wherein the expandable fusion device may be movable between a collapsed configuration and an expanded configuration; wherein the first ramp may be coupled to the second ramp by an actuating mechanism, and the expandable fusion device may be configured to transition from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration via actuation of the actuating mechanism to move the second ramp and the first ramp toward one another; wherein, in the expanded configuration, the expandable fusion device may be a wedge having an incline extending along the lateral axis of the expandable fusion device; and wherein the first and second endplates each may have an outer surface configured to contact a respective vertebral body, wherein each outer surface of the first and second endplates may have one or more of teeth, ridges, friction increasing elements, keels, or gripping or purchasing projections.

(10) In another aspect, the present disclosure may be directed to an expandable fusion device. The expandable fusion device may include a first endplate and a second endplate, and both the first and second endplates may extend from a first side of the expandable fusion device to a second side of the expandable fusion device. The expandable fusion device also may include a first ramp and a second ramp. Both the first ramp and the second ramp may be configured to mate with both the first and second endplates, and both the first ramp and the second ramp may extend from the first side of the expandable fusion device to the second side of the expandable fusion device. At least one of the first and second sides of the expandable fusion device may pivotally expand about a pivot point.

(11) Various examples of the present disclosure may include one or more of the following aspects: wherein both of the first and second sides of the expandable fusion device may pivotally expand about the same pivot point; wherein the same pivot point may be a point disposed outside of the expandable fusion device; wherein the pivot point may be disposed along the first side or between the first and second sides of the expandable fusion device; and wherein only the second side of the expandable fusion device may pivot about the pivot point.

(12) In yet another aspect, the present disclosure may be directed to an expandable fusion device. The expandable fusion device may include a first endplate and a second endplate, and both the first and second endplates may extend from a first side of the expandable fusion device to a second side of the expandable fusion device. The expandable fusion device also may include a first ramp and a second ramp, and both the first ramp and the second ramp may be configured to mate with both the first and second endplates, and both the first ramp and the second ramp may extend from the first side of the expandable fusion device to the second side of the expandable fusion device. The first and second side of the expandable fusion device may form concentric arcs about a pivot point.

(13) Various examples of the present disclosure may include one or more of the following aspects: wherein the expandable fusion device may be movable between a collapsed configuration and an expanded configuration, and both of the first and second sides of the expandable fusion device may have same angular rate of change when moving between the collapsed configuration and the

expanded configuration; and wherein the first side of the expandable fusion device may be defined by a first radius, the second side of the expandable fusion device may be defined by a second radius, and the first radius may be smaller than the second radius.

(14) In yet another aspect, the present disclosure may be directed to an expandable fusion device having a first endplate and a second endplate. The first and second endplates may each include at least one mating feature. A first ramp may be configured to mate with both the first and second endplates, and the first ramp may include a mating feature having a first angle relative to a vertical axis. The mating feature of the first endplate and/or second endplate is slidable with respect to the corresponding mating feature disposed on the first ramp. A second ramp may be configured to mate with both the first and second endplates, and the second ramp may include a mating feature having a second angle relative to the vertical axis. The first angle may be the same or different from the second angle. If different, the first angle may be larger or smaller than the second angle. It may be preferred that the second angle is smaller than the first angle.

(15) Various examples of the present disclosure may include one or more of the following aspects: wherein the first angle is greater than the second angle; wherein the first angle is about 50-70°; wherein the first angle is about 60°; wherein the second angle is about 5-25°; wherein the second angle is about 15°; wherein the first and second ramps are configured to provide for symmetrical expansion of the first and second endplates; wherein at least a portion of the first ramp includes a curved ramp surface; and wherein at least a portion of the first ramp has a continuously changing ramp angle.

(16) In yet another aspect, the present disclosure may be directed to a system comprising an expandable fusion device described herein and an inserter instrument. The inserter instrument may include an outer shaft having a bore extending longitudinally therethrough, and an inner shaft extending through the bore in the outer shaft. The outer shaft may be configured to engage an opening in the second ramp, for example, via threaded engagement. The inner shaft may be configured to engage a corresponding opening in the first ramp, for example, via threaded engagement. By rotating and/or axially moving the inner shaft relative to the outer shaft of the inserter instrument, a change in height and/or lordotic angle of the expandable fusion device may be obtained.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

- (1) The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate various exemplary embodiments and together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the disclosed embodiments.
- (2) FIG. 1 is a side view of an embodiment of an expandable fusion device shown between adjacent lordotic vertebrae according to the present disclosure.
- (3) FIG. 2 is a longitudinal side view of an embodiment of an expandable fusion device in a first configuration according to the present disclosure.
- (4) FIG. 3 is a lateral side view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. 2.
- (5) FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. 2 taken along line 4-4.
- (6) FIG. 5 depicts the expandable fusion device of FIG. 2 in a second configuration.
- (7) FIG. 6 is a lateral side view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. 5.
- (8) FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. 5 taken along line 7-7.
- (9) FIG. 8 is a side view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. 2 in the first configuration, showing a pivot point.
- (10) FIG. 9 is a side view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. 2 in the second configuration, showing the pivot point of FIG. 8.

- (11) FIG. **10** is a perspective view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. **2**.
(12) FIG. **11** is an exploded view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. **2**.
(13) FIG. **12** is another exploded view of the expandable fusion device of FIG. **2**.
(14) FIG. **13** is a lateral side view of an endplate incorporated into the expandable fusion device of FIG. **12**.
(15) FIG. **14** is a top view of the endplate of FIG. **13**.
(16) FIG. **15** is a longitudinal side view of the endplate of FIG. **13**.
(17) FIG. **16** is a perspective view of a first ramp incorporated into the expandable fusion device of FIG. **12**.
(18) FIG. **17** is a lateral side view of the first ramp of FIG. **16**.
(19) FIG. **18** is a lateral side view of a second ramp incorporated into the expandable fusion device of FIG. **12**.
(20) FIG. **19** is a cross-sectional view of an expandable fusion device according to another embodiment of the present disclosure.
(21) FIG. **20** is an exploded view of an expandable fusion device according to another embodiment of the present disclosure.
(22) FIG. **21** is a perspective view of the expandable fusion device shown in FIG. **20**.
(23) FIG. **22** is a side view of the expandable fusion device shown in FIG. **20** and depicting different rates of expansion between the front and back of the implant.
(24) FIG. **23** shows a cross sectional view of the expandable fusion device shown in FIG. **20** including the ramp angles.
(25) FIG. **24** is a side view of the expandable fusion device shown in FIG. **20** and depicting the ramp angle.
(26) FIG. **25** is a front view of the front, first ramp which may be used with any of the expandable fusion devices described herein.
(27) FIG. **26** is a top view of the first ramp shown in FIG. **25**.
(28) FIGS. **27A** and **27B** show an insertion instrument engaged with any of the expandable fusion devices described herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

- (29) Reference will now be made in detail to embodiments of the present disclosure, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers will be used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like parts.
- (30) A spinal fusion is typically employed to eliminate pain caused by the motion of degenerated disk material. Upon successful fusion, a fusion device becomes permanently fixed within the intervertebral disc space. Referring to FIG. **1**, an expandable fusion device **10** is shown between adjacent vertebral bodies **2** and **3**. Expandable fusion device **10** may extend from a first side **22** (e.g., a posterior side) to a second side **24** (e.g., an anterior side). Expandable fusion device **10** may engage the endplates of adjacent vertebral bodies **2** and **3** and, in an installed position, maintain normal intervertebral disc spacing and restore spinal stability, thereby facilitating an intervertebral fusion. In some embodiments, expandable fusion device **10** may provide indirect decompression (e.g., by reducing the pressure of vertebral bodies **2** and **3** on adjacent nerves) while still providing lordosis correction. Expandable fusion device **10** may be formed from any suitable material or combination of materials, including, but not limited to, titanium, stainless steel, titanium alloys, non-titanium metallic alloys, polymeric materials, plastics, plastic composites, polyetheretherketone (PEEK), ceramic, and elastic materials, among others.
- (31) In an embodiment, the expandable fusion device **10** may be configured and sized to be placed down an insertion tube and into the disc space between the adjacent vertebral bodies **2** and **3**. For example, expandable fusion device **10** may be configured for insertion through an insertion tube, such as, e.g., a cannula. It should be noted, however, that the insertion tube may alternatively have any suitable diameter. In one embodiment, expandable fusion device **10** may be inserted through a

cannula having a diameter of about 8.5 mm. In some embodiments, the expandable fusion device **10** may have a width in a range of from about 8 mm to about 26 mm, and a length in a range from about 20 mm to about 65 mm, or may have other suitable dimensions. Expandable fusion device **10** may be inserted into a patient via a direct lateral procedure, although anterior, anterolateral, posterolateral or posterior procedures alternatively may be utilized.

(32) Expandable fusion device **10** may be generally wedge shaped, and may have a height that increases from first side **22** toward second side **24**. In some embodiments, the expandable fusion device **10** may be expanded to a height that is equal to or greater than about 150% of its initial height. In one embodiment, the expandable fusion device **10** may be expanded to a height that is equal to or greater than about 200% of its initial height, or another suitable percentage of its initial height.

(33) As shown in FIG. **10**, expandable fusion device **10** may include one or more openings **26** to accommodate bone growth along the longitudinal length of the expandable fusion device **10**. In some embodiments, openings **26** may have the same dimensions, or may alternatively have different dimensions. In the embodiment shown, expandable fusion device **10** has two openings **26**, although other suitable numbers and dimensions of openings are also contemplated. Openings **26** may be sufficiently large to facilitate bone growth after installation of expandable fusion device **10** between vertebral bodies **2** and **3**.

(34) In an exemplary embodiment, bone graft or similar bone growth inducing material may be introduced around and within the expandable fusion device **10** to further promote and facilitate the intervertebral fusion. The expandable fusion device **10**, in one embodiment, may be packed with bone graft (e.g., autograft or allograft) or similar bone growth inducing material to promote the growth of bone through and around the expandable fusion device **10**. The bone graft may be packed between the endplates of the adjacent vertebral bodies prior to, subsequent to, or during implantation of the fusion device.

(35) In one embodiment, expandable fusion device **10** may be treated with a titanium and/or hydroxyapatite plasma spray coating to encourage bony on-growth, improving the strength and stability of the connection between the respective component and the underlying bone (e.g., a vertebral body). Any other suitable coating also may be provided on expandable fusion device **10**. Such coatings may include therapeutic agents, if desired. Expandable fusion device **10** also may include radiopaque markings to facilitate in vivo visualization. In some embodiments, portions of expandable fusion device **10** may be formed of a radiolucent material, while other portions of expandable fusion device **10** may be formed of radiopaque materials to facilitate imaging of the radiopaque portions of expandable fusion device **10**, such as, e.g., actuating mechanisms, endplates, ramps, or the like.

(36) With reference to FIGS. **2-12**, an embodiment of the expandable fusion device **10** is shown. In an exemplary embodiment, the expandable fusion device **10** may include a first endplate **14**, a second endplate **16**, a first ramp **18**, and a second ramp **20**. Expandable fusion device **10** may be movable between a collapsed configuration shown in FIGS. **2-4** and **8**, and an expanded configuration shown in FIGS. **5-7** and **9**. The ability of expandable fusion device **10** to reciprocally move between the collapsed and expanded configurations may provide numerous benefits. For example, because expandable fusion device **10** can be inserted between the vertebral bodies **2** and **3** in a collapsed configuration that is smaller than the expanded configuration, the large impaction forces needed to install traditional fusion devices are not required to install expandable fusion device **10**. In one embodiment, expandable fusion device **10** may be in a lordotic state in the collapsed configuration, although other suitable configurations, such as, e.g., parallel or other starting angles, are also contemplated.

(37) Expandable fusion device **10** may expand and collapse about a set pivot point P, shown in FIGS. **8** and **9**. Expandable fusion device **10** may be constructed to alter the position of pivot point P. That is, first ramp **18**, second ramp **20**, and endplates **14**, **16** may be constructed to exhibit a

curvature (e.g., may have a radius of curvature) about pivot point P, as further described below. In the collapsed configuration shown in FIGS. 2-4 and 8, expandable fusion device **10** may maintain an angle α (shown only in FIG. 8) with respect to pivot point P. In the expanded configuration shown in FIGS. 5-7 and 9, expandable fusion device **10** may maintain an angle β (shown only in FIG. 9) with respect to pivot point P. The construction of expandable fusion device **10** also may select the rate of change between angles α and β in the transition of expandable fusion device **10** between the collapsed and expanded configurations. In some embodiments, expandable fusion device **10** may experience a linear increase in the lordotic angle during the transition from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration (i.e., through an expansion range). In some embodiments, expandable fusion device **10** may be constructed to set pivot point P closer to the expandable fusion device **10** (or even within the perimeter of expandable fusion device **10**). As pivot point P moves toward expandable fusion device **10** (or further toward a midline **204** shown in FIGS. 8 and 9), the rate of angle change per height change exhibited by expandable fusion device **10** may increase. Because second side **24** has a larger distance from pivot point P than first side **22**, second side **24** may increase in height faster than first side **22** in the transition of expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration. Thus, expandable fusion device **10** may be constructed in various configurations to set different α and β angles (i.e., different ramp angles on the anterior and posterior sides of expandable fusion device **10**).

(38) The position of pivot point P may be dependent or independent upon the inclination of expandable fusion device **10** between first side **22** and second side **24**. That is, as the difference in height between first side **22** and second side **24** increases, pivot point P may be set closer to expandable fusion device **10**, or even within the perimeter of expandable fusion device **10**. Thus, as pivot point P is set closer to expandable fusion device **10** (or further toward midline **204**), angles α and β may become larger. On the contrary, as the pivot point P is set further from expandable fusion device **10**, a smaller rate of angle change per height change, and smaller α and β angles will be present in expandable fusion device **10**.

(39) In one embodiment, α may be about 10.4° , β may be about 22.5° , and a distance d between pivot point P and first side **22**, may be about 17 mm although other suitable values are also contemplated.

(40) First and second sides **22**, **24** of expandable fusion device **10** may thus be formed as arcs (e.g., concentric arcs) about pivot point P. In the collapsed configuration, first side **22** may be oriented at angle α with respect to pivot point P, and may have a radius $r_{sub.pc}$. In the collapsed configuration, second side **24** also may be oriented at angle α with respect to pivot point P, but may have a radius $r_{sub.ac}$ that is larger than radius $r_{sub.pc}$, as second side **24** may be oriented at a further distance from pivot point P than first side **22**. In the expanded configuration, first and second sides **22**, **24** of expandable fusion device **10** may expand at a substantially similar angular rate, and may both become oriented at angle β with respect to pivot point P. In the expanded configuration, first side **22** may have a radius $r_{sub.pc}$ that is constant with radius $r_{sub.pc}$.

(41) The curvatures of first ramp **18**, second ramp **20**, and endplates **14**, **16**, may determine the location of pivot point P. As shown in FIGS. 8 and 9, the curvatures of first ramp **18**, second ramp **20**, and endplates **14**, **16** may cause first and second sides **22**, **24** of expandable fusion device **10** to be curved about pivot point P to form portions of the aforementioned concentric arcs. The curvature of first and second sides **22**, **24**, may set the distance of pivot point P from first and second sides **22**, **24**. That is, if expandable fusion device **10** is constructed so as to position pivot point P relatively farther from first and second sides **22**, **24**, each of first and second sides **22**, **24** may have shallower curvatures. On the contrary, if expandable fusion device **10** is constructed so as to position pivot point P relatively closer to first and second sides **22**, **24** (or even between first and second sides **22**, **24**), each of first and second sides **22**, **24** may have steeper curvature.

(42) Referring to FIGS. 11 and 12, endplates **14**, **16** may have a first end **30** and a second end **32**. In the illustrated embodiment, the endplates **14**, **16** may include an outer surface **40** connecting the

first end **30** and the second end **32**, and an inner surface **42** connecting the first end **30** and the second end **32**. Outer surface **40** and inner surface **42** may both be defined by first and second ends **30**, **32**, and by a first side **44** and a second side **45**. First side **44** of endplates **14**, **16** may be disposed at first side **22** of expandable fusion device **10**. Similarly, second side **45** of endplates **14**, **16** may be disposed at second side **24** of expandable fusion device **10**. First and second sides **44**, **45** may define a plurality of mating features configured to engage with one or more mating features of first ramp **18** and second ramp **20**. In one embodiment, both first and second sides **44**, **45** may extend from inner surface **42**. Second side **45** may extend further from inner surface **42** than first side **44**.

(43) First side **44** may include a mating feature **46** at first end **30**, at least one mating feature **47** at an intermediate portion, and a mating feature **48** at second end **32**.

(44) Mating feature **46** may be substantially C-shaped, V-shaped, U-shaped, or otherwise suitably shaped. In the embodiment shown, mating feature **46** may form a slidable joint with a corresponding mating feature (e.g., one of mating features **77** or **146** described in further detail below). The slidable joint may be, e.g., a tabled splice joint, or another suitable joint. That is, mating feature **46** and its corresponding mating feature **77** or **146** may be similarly shaped to have a groove disposed between two shoulders. One shoulder of mating feature **46** may slide within the groove of the corresponding mating feature **77** or **146**, while one shoulder of the corresponding mating feature **77** or **146** may slide within the groove of mating feature **46**. In some embodiments, it should be understood that mating feature **46** and its corresponding mating feature **77** or **146** may be formed in any other suitable manner. For example, mating feature **46** and its corresponding mating feature **77** or **146** may form another splice joint, a tongue and groove joint, another suitable joint, or be related to each other in another suitable manner. In some embodiments, mating feature **46** and its corresponding mating feature **77** or **146** may be slidable and/or interlocking with one another. In some embodiments, mating feature **46** may be inclined along longitudinal axis **200** from first end **30** of endplates **14**, **16** toward an intermediate portion of endplates **14**, **16**.

(45) In the embodiment shown by FIGS. **11** and **12**, mating features **47** are shown as defining inwardly facing recesses or grooves. The recesses of mating features **47** may accept a protrusion or tongue of a corresponding mating feature (e.g., mating features **84** and **86** described in further detail below). Thus, mating features **47** and its corresponding mating features **84** or **86** may form a tongue and groove joint. That is, the tongue of the corresponding mating feature **84** or **86** may be slidable within the groove of mating feature **47**. It is also contemplated that mating feature **47** and its corresponding mating feature **84** or **86** may form another type of joint, such as, e.g., a splice joint, another suitable joint, or be related to each other in another suitable manner. In some embodiments, mating features **47** and their corresponding mating features **84** or **86** may be slidably interlocking with one another. In some embodiments, mating features **47** may be inclined along longitudinal axis **200** from a respective intermediate portion of endplates **14**, **16** toward first end **30** of endplates **14**, **16**. Thus, the inclinations of mating feature **46** and mating features **47** may generally oppose one another. Alternatively, mating features **47** may be inclined in any other suitable direction, such as, e.g., from a respective intermediate portion of endplates **14**, **16** toward second end **32** of endplates **14**, **16**.

(46) Mating feature **48** and its corresponding mating feature (e.g., mating features **78** and **148** described in further detail below) may be substantially similar to mating feature **46** described above. In some embodiments, mating feature **48** may be inclined along longitudinal axis **200** from second end **32** of endplates **14**, **16** toward an intermediate portion of endplates **14**, **16**. Thus, the inclinations of mating features **46** and **48** may oppose one another, but the inclinations of mating features **47** and **48** may be generally aligned (e.g., substantially parallel).

(47) Second side **45** may include a mating feature **49** at first end **30**, at least one mating feature **50** at an inner (or intermediate) portion, and a mating feature **51** at second end **32**. Mating feature **49** may be similar to mating feature **46** described above, except that mating feature **49** may have

different (e.g., larger) dimensions than mating feature **46**. Similar to mating feature **46**, mating feature **49** may be inclined along longitudinal axis **200** from first end **30** of endplates **14, 16** toward an intermediate portion of endplates **14, 16**.

(48) Mating features **50** may be similar to mating features **47**, except that mating features **50** may have different (e.g., larger) dimensions than mating features **47**. Similar to mating features **47**, mating features **50** may be inclined along longitudinal axis **200** from a respective intermediate portion of endplates **14, 16** toward first end **30** of endplates **14, 16**. Thus, the inclinations of mating feature **49** and mating features **50** may generally oppose one another. Alternatively, mating features **50** may be inclined in any other suitable direction, such as, e.g., from a respective intermediate portion of endplates **14, 16** toward second end **32** of endplates **14, 16**.

(49) Mating feature **51** may be substantially similar to mating feature **46** described above. However, in some embodiments, mating feature **51** may have different (e.g., larger) dimensions than mating feature **46**. Similar to mating feature **46**, mating feature **51** may be inclined along a longitudinal axis **200** (referring to FIG. **10**) from second end **32** of endplates **14, 16** toward an intermediate portion of endplates **14, 16**. Thus, the inclinations of mating features **46** and **48** may oppose one another, but the inclinations of mating features **50** and **51** may be generally aligned (e.g., substantially parallel).

(50) Mating features **46-51** may be configured to mate with a corresponding mating feature on one of first and second ramps **18** and **20** in a slidable and/or interlocking relationship.

(51) Outer surface **40** and/or inner surface **42** may be curved about one or more axes. For example, outer surface **40** and/or inner surface **42** may be curved about longitudinal axis **200**. Thus, in one embodiment, outer surface **40** may be convex, while inner surface **42** may be concave about the longitudinal axis **200**. In some embodiments, material can be added to or removed from outer surface **40** to modify the interaction between outer surface **40** and vertebral bodies **2** and **3**. For example, material can be added to give outer surface **40** a generally flat configuration while maintaining the concavity of inner surface **42**.

(52) The respective mating features of endplates **14, 16** may be curved in order to impart a curvature to first and second sides **22, 24** of assembled expandable fusion device **10** as set forth above. As best seen in FIG. **13**, first and second sides **44** and **45** may be curved (e.g., may have a radius of curvature) about pivot point **P**, and thus mating features **46-51** that are disposed in one of first and second sides **44, 45** may be similarly curved with respect to pivot point **P**.

(53) In some embodiments, the outer surface **40** of endplates **14, 16** may be flat and generally planar to allow the outer surface **40** engage with an adjacent vertebral body. Alternatively, the outer surface **40** may be curved convexly or concavely to allow for a greater or lesser degree of engagement with the adjacent vertebral body. It is also contemplated that the outer surface **40** may be generally planar but include a generally straight ramped surface or a curved ramped surface. The ramped surface may allow for engagement with the adjacent vertebral body in a further lordotic fashion. In one embodiment, the outer surface **40** may include texturing to aid in gripping the adjacent vertebral bodies. Although not limited to the following, the texturing may include teeth, ridges, friction increasing elements, keels, or gripping or purchasing projections.

(54) Referring now to FIGS. **11, 12**, and **16**, the first ramp **18** may have a first end **70**, a second end **72**, a first side portion **74** connecting the first end **70** and the second end **72**, and a second side portion **76** on the opposing side of the first ramp **18** connecting the first end **70** and the second end **72**. The first ramp **18** may further include a third end (e.g., an upper end) **28**, which is sized to receive at least a portion of the first endplate **14**, and a fourth end (e.g., a lower end) **29**, which is sized to receive at least a portion of the second endplate **16**.

(55) The first end **70** of the first ramp **18**, in an exemplary embodiment, may include four mating features **77, 78, 80**, and **82** (mating feature **82** shown only in FIG. **16**). Each of mating features **77, 78, 80, 82** may be shaped to mate with a respective mating feature disposed on one of endplates **14, 16**. Mating feature **77** may be configured to mate with, and may be similarly shaped as mating

feature **46** of endplate **14**. Mating feature **78** may be configured to mate with, and may be similarly shaped as mating feature **48** of endplate **16**. Mating feature **80** may be configured to mate with, and may be similarly shaped as mating feature **49** of endplate **14**. Mating feature **82** may be configured to mate with, and may be similarly shaped as mating feature **51** of endplate **16**. Each of mating features **77**, **78**, **80**, and **82** may have substantially similar inclinations (with respect to an assembled expandable fusion device **10**) their respective and corresponding mating features set forth above. In one embodiment, each of mating features **77**, **78**, **80**, and **82** are inclined from an intermediate portion of first ramp **18** toward first end **70** of first ramp **18**, although other suitable configurations are also contemplated. In one embodiment, mating features **77** and **78** extend from third end **28**, while mating features **78** and **82** extend from fourth end **29**.

(56) First side portion **74** may include mating features **84** and **86** that are configured to mate with various mating features of endplates **14**, **16**.

(57) Mating features **84** may be protrusions extending from an intermediate portion of first side portion **74** toward first end **70**. In one embodiment, mating features **84** may have a surface that is inclined from the intermediate portion of first side portion **74** toward first end **70**. The inclined surface of mating features **84** also may extend laterally outward from first side portion **74**. Mating features **84** also may extend from third end **28** of first ramp **18**. The inclined surface of mating features **84** may extend toward a generally flattened surface that is substantially parallel to longitudinal axis **200** of expandable fusion device **10**. In one embodiment, first ramp **18** may include at least two mating features **84** that are staggered along first side portion **74**, although other suitable numbers of mating features **84** may alternatively be utilized. In the embodiment shown, mating features **84** are substantially similar to one another, although it is contemplated that mating features **84** may be different than one another. Mating features **84** may be configured to mate with mating features **47** of endplate **14**. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **11** and **12**, mating features **47** and **84** may form a slidable and interlocking (e.g., a tongue and groove) joint that allows expandable fusion device **10** to move between the collapsed and expanded configurations. However, it is contemplated that mating features **47** and **84** may be modified to other suitable configurations that allow expandable fusion device **10** to move between the collapsed and expanded configurations. For example, in one alternative embodiment, mating features **47** may be formed as protrusions, while mating features **84** are formed as recesses. In another alternative embodiment, each of mating features **47** and **84** may be formed as grooves disposed between two shoulders such that mating features **47** and **84** form a splice joint (e.g., similar to the tabled splice joints described above).

(58) Mating features **86** may be protrusions extending from an intermediate portion of first side portion **74** toward first end **70**. In one embodiment, mating features **86** may have a surface that is inclined from the intermediate portion of first side portion **74** toward first end **70**. The inclined surface of mating features **86** also may extend laterally outward from first side portion **74**. Unlike mating features **84**, mating features **86** may extend from fourth end **29** of first ramp **18**. Thus, mating features **84** and **86** may extend in generally opposite vertical directions from first side portion **74**. The inclined surface of mating features **86** may extend toward a generally flattened surface that is substantially parallel to longitudinal axis **200** of expandable fusion device **10**. In one embodiment, first ramp **18** may include at least two mating features **86** that are staggered along first side portion **74**, although other suitable numbers of mating features **86** may alternatively be utilized. In some embodiments, each of mating features **84** and **86** may be staggered from one another, although other suitable configurations are also contemplated. In the embodiment shown, mating features **86** are substantially similar to one another, although it is contemplated that mating features **86** may be different than one another. Mating features **86** may be configured to mate with mating features **47** of endplate **16**. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **11** and **12**, mating features **47** and **86** may form a slidable and interlocking (e.g., a tongue and groove) joint that allows expandable fusion device **10** to move between the collapsed and expanded configurations.

However, it is contemplated that mating features **47** and **86** may be modified to other suitable configurations that allow expandable fusion device **10** to move between the collapsed and expanded configurations (e.g., in a substantially similar manner as described above with reference to mating features **47** and **84**).

(59) Second side portion **76** may include mating features **88** and **90** that are configured to mate with various mating features of endplates **14**, **16**.

(60) Mating features **88** may be protrusions extending from an intermediate portion of second side portion **76** toward first end **70**. In one embodiment, mating features **88** may have a surface that is inclined from the intermediate portion of second side portion **76** toward first end **70**. The inclined surface of mating features **88** also may extend laterally outward from second side portion **76**. Mating features **88** also may extend from third end **28** of first ramp **18**. The inclined surface of mating features **88** may extend toward a generally flattened surface that is substantially parallel to longitudinal axis **200** of expandable fusion device **10**. In one embodiment, first ramp **18** may include at least two mating features **88** that are staggered along second side portion **76**, although other suitable numbers of mating features **88** may alternatively be utilized. In the embodiment shown, mating features **88** are substantially similar to one another, although it is contemplated that mating features **88** may be different than one another. Mating features **88** may be configured to mate with mating features **50** of endplate **14**. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **11** and **12**, mating features **50** and **88** may form a slidable and interlocking (e.g., a tongue and groove) joint that allows expandable fusion device **10** to move between the collapsed and expanded configurations. However, it is contemplated that mating features **50** and **88** may be modified to other suitable configurations that allow expandable fusion device **10** to move between the collapsed and expanded configurations (e.g., in a substantially similar manner as described above with reference to mating features **47** and **84**).

(61) Mating features **90** may be protrusions extending from an intermediate portion of second side portion **76** toward first end **70**. In one embodiment, mating features **90** may have a surface that is inclined from the intermediate portion of second side portion **76** toward first end **70**. The inclined surface of mating features **90** also may extend laterally outward from second side portion **76**. Unlike mating features **88**, mating features **90** may extend from fourth end **29** of first ramp **18**. Thus, mating features **88** and **90** may extend in generally opposite vertical directions from second side portion **76**. The inclined surface of mating features **90** may extend toward a generally flattened surface that is substantially parallel to longitudinal axis **200** of expandable fusion device **10**. In one embodiment, first ramp **18** may include at least two mating features **90** that are staggered along second side portion **76**, although other suitable numbers of mating features **90** may alternatively be utilized. In some embodiments, each of mating features **88** and **90** may be staggered from one another, although other suitable configurations are also contemplated. In the embodiment shown, mating features **90** are substantially similar to one another, although it is contemplated that mating features **90** may be different than one another. Mating features **90** may be configured to mate with mating features **50** of endplate **16**. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **11** and **12**, mating features **50** and **90** may form a slidable and interlocking (e.g., a tongue and groove) joint that allows expandable fusion device **10** to move between the collapsed and expanded configurations. However, it is contemplated that mating features **50** and **90** may be modified to other suitable configurations that allow expandable fusion device **10** to move between the collapsed and expanded configurations (e.g., in a substantially similar manner as described above with reference to mating features **47** and **84**).

(62) The respective mating features of first ramp **18** may be curved in order to impart the curvature to first and second sides **22**, **24** of assembled expandable fusion device **10** as set forth above. That is, the mating features of first ramp **18** may have a radius of curvature about pivot point **P**. Further, as the mating features of first ramp **18** may be complimentary to corresponding mating features along endplates **14**, **16**, the mating features of endplates **14**, **16** also may have a radius of curvature

about pivot point P. Referring to FIG. 17, mating features 77, 78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 may each have a radius of curvature about pivot point P. Thus, all or a portion of first ramp 18 may be bent about pivot point P. The geometry of first ramp 18 (e.g., any of the aforementioned radii of curvature) may be approximated with simpler features for manufacturing ease.

(63) As shown in FIG. 11, first ramp 18 may include both a bore 418 and a bore 515. In some embodiments, the bore 418 may be threaded and configured to receive a threaded member 302 of an actuating mechanism 300. The central longitudinal axis of the bore 418 may be off-center from the central longitudinal axis of the first ramp 18 in order to accommodate the bore 515.

(64) The adjacent bore 515 may serve as an access port to allow graft material to be delivered through the first ramp 18, either prior to insertion or even in situ, if desired. The bore 418 may align with a bore 366 in second ramp 20 and bore 515 may align with an additional bore 512 in the second ramp 20, as discussed below.

(65) Second ramp 20 may be disposed adjacent to first ramp 18 in expandable fusion device 10. Second ramp 20 may include four mating features 146, 148, 149, and 151. Each of mating features 146, 148, 149, and 151 may be substantially similar to mating feature 46 described above, and may be configured to mate with a respective mating feature disposed on one of endplates 14, 16. Mating feature 146 may be configured to mate with mating feature 46 of endplate 16. Mating feature 148 may be configured to mate with mating feature 48 of endplate 14. Mating feature 149 may be configured to mate with mating feature 49 of endplate 16. Mating feature 151 may be configured to mate with mating feature 51 of endplate 14.

(66) The respective mating features of second ramp 20 may be curved in order to impart the curvature to first and second sides 22, 24 of assembled expandable fusion device 10 as set forth above. Further, as the mating features of second ramp 20 may have a radius of curvature about pivot point P, the mating features of endplates 14, 16 also may have a radius of curvature about pivot point P. Mating features 146, 148, 149, and 151 may be all curved about pivot point P. Thus, all or a portion of second ramp 20 may be bent about pivot point P. The geometry of second ramp 20 (e.g., any of the aforementioned radii of curvature) may be approximated with simpler features for manufacturing ease.

(67) In one alternative embodiment, expandable fusion device 10 may be formed so as to locate pivot point P within lateral width of the expandable fusion device 10 along first side 22 of expandable fusion device 10. In this alternative embodiment, all mating features (e.g., tracks, protrusions, grooves, shoulders, and the like) disposed along first side 22 of expandable fusion device 10 (e.g., along endplates 14, 16, and first and second ramps 18 and 20) may be replaced by linkage or pivoting mechanisms. When pivot point P is located within lateral width of the expandable fusion device 10 along first side 22 of expandable fusion device 10, only second side 24 may pivot about pivot point P during expansion and collapse of expandable fusion device 10.

(68) As described above, the second ramp 20 may include a bore 366 adjacent bore 512. The bore 366 may be configured to receive an actuating mechanism 300 therethrough, and may be aligned with the bore 418 in the first ramp 18. Accordingly, the bore 366 may have a central longitudinal axis that is off-set from the central longitudinal axis of the second ramp 20 to accommodate the adjacent bore 512. The bore 512 of the second ramp 20 may be aligned with the bore 515 of the first ramp 18 to allow graft material to be inserted into the implant, either prior to or even after insertion of the implant.

(69) First and second ramps 18 and 20 may each be a wedge having an incline extending in at least two planes. That is, each of first and second ramps 18 and 20 may be a wedge having an incline extending along a plane defined by longitudinal axis 200 (i.e., may be inclined along the longitudinal axis 200), while also being a wedge having an incline extending along a plane defined a lateral axis 202 (i.e., may be inclined along the lateral axis 202). The inclination of first and second ramps 18 and 20 (and their associated mating features) along the longitudinal axis 200 of expandable fusion device 10 may allow for the expansion/compression of endplates 14 and 16 as

first and second ramps **18** and **20** translate with respect to one another along the longitudinal axis **200**. The inclination of first and second ramps **18** and **20** along the lateral axis **202** of expandable fusion device **10** may accommodate the uneven lengths of first and second sides **44**, **45** of endplates **14**, **16**.

(70) A method of installing the expandable fusion device **10** of FIG. **1** is now discussed in accordance with one embodiment of the present disclosure. Prior to insertion of the expandable fusion device **10**, the intervertebral space may be prepared. In one method of installation, a discectomy may be performed where the intervertebral disc, in its entirety, may be removed. Alternatively, only a portion of the intervertebral disc can be removed. The endplates of the adjacent vertebral bodies **2**, **3** may be then scraped to create an exposed end surface for facilitating bone growth across the intervertebral space. One or more introduction sheaths then can be inserted into the disc space. The expandable fusion device **10** can then be introduced into the intervertebral space down an insertion sheath and seated in an appropriate position in the intervertebral disc space.

(71) After the expandable fusion device **10** has been inserted into the appropriate position in the intervertebral disc space, the expandable fusion device **10** can then be transitioned from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration. To expand the expandable fusion device **10**, the second ramp **20** may be moved toward the first ramp **18**. As the first and second ramps **18** and **20** move toward one another, the respective mating features of first and second ramps **18** and **20** may push against corresponding mating features disposed on endplates **14** and **16** to move expandable fusion device **10** into the expanded configuration. In some embodiments, one or more of endplates **14**, **16**, and first and second ramps **18**, **20** may include locking features for securing expandable fusion device **10** in the expanded configuration.

(72) In the event the expandable fusion device **10** needs to be repositioned or revised after being installed and expanded, the expandable fusion device **10** can be contracted back to the collapsed configuration, repositioned, and expanded again once the desired positioning is achieved. To contract the expandable fusion device **10**, the first ramp **18** is moved away from the second ramp **20** via the actuating mechanism **300**.

(73) Actuating mechanism **300** may include any suitable actuating mechanism configured to translate first and second ramps **18** and **20** toward and away from each other along the longitudinal axis **200**. Referring to FIGS. **4** and **7**, actuating mechanism **300** may include a threaded member **302** (e.g., a screw) that, when rotated in a first direction, directs first and second ramps **18** and **20** toward each other, moving expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration. When threaded member **302** is rotated in a second direction that is opposite to the first direction, first and second ramps **18** and **20** may be moved away from each other, causing expandable fusion device **10** to move back toward the collapsed configuration. In one embodiment, threaded member **302** may be partially disposed through bore **515** of first ramp **18**, and may further extend through bore **515** as expandable fusion device **10** is moved from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration. In this embodiment, threaded member **302** may push second ramp **20** toward first ramp **18**, and may move coextensively with second ramp **20** during the transition of expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration and from the expanded configuration to the collapsed configuration.

(74) In an alternative embodiment shown in FIG. **19**, threaded member **302** may be at least partially disposed within bore **515** in the collapsed configuration. However, to transition from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration, threaded member **302** may be actuated through second ramp **20**. Unlike the embodiment shown in FIGS. **4** and **7**, in the embodiment of FIG. **19**, threaded member **302** may pull first ramp **18** toward second ramp **20**, and may move coextensively with first ramp **18** during the transition of expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration and from the expanded configuration to the collapsed configuration. Any other suitable actuating mechanism may be utilized, such as, e.g., sliders,

pushers, ratchets, or the like.

(75) In some embodiments, threaded member **302** may be rotated directly to actuate the actuating mechanism **300**. In some embodiments, an inserter (not shown) may be configured to thread into or be otherwise coupled to threaded member **302**. In such embodiments, the inserter may be actuated by suitable mechanisms (e.g., tools, ratchets, or the like) to rotate threaded member **302** and adjust the relative position of the first and second ramps **18** and **20**.

(76) In some embodiments, only one of bores **366** and **418** may be threaded, such that expandable fusion device **10** may be actuated by linear movement of actuating mechanism **300**. For example, in one embodiment, bore **366** may be threaded while bore **418** may not be threaded. In such an embodiment, threaded member **302** may be threaded into bore **366**, and may be slidable through bore **418**. After threaded member **302** is threaded through bore **366**, threaded member **302** can be selectively pushed through bore **418** to move expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration (e.g., by moving first ramp **18** and second ramp **20** closer to one another). Additionally, threaded member **302** may be pulled in the opposite direction to move expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration (e.g., by moving first ramp **18** and second ramp **20** away from one another). In this embodiment, second ramp **20** may be pushed toward first ramp **18** to move expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration.

(77) In an alternative embodiment, bore **418** may be threaded and bore **366** may not be threaded. In such an embodiment, threaded member **302** may be disposed through bore **366** and threaded into bore **418** (e.g., referring to FIG. **19**). Threaded member **302** may be pulled linearly to move expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration (e.g., by moving first ramp **18** and second ramp **20** closer to one another). Additionally, threaded member **302** may be pushed to move expandable fusion device **10** from the expanded configuration back to the collapsed configuration (e.g., by moving first ramp **18** and second ramp **20** away from one another). In this embodiment, first ramp **18** may be pulled toward second ramp **20** to move expandable fusion device **10** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration.

(78) In one embodiment, a locking member (e.g., a screw not shown) may be disposed separately of expandable fusion device **10** during the transition between the collapsed and expanded configurations. Once the final position is achieved (e.g., the expanded configuration of expandable fusion device **10**), the locking member may be advanced to lock expandable fusion device **10** into a desired configuration. In some embodiments, the locking member may be integral with expandable fusion device **10**, or may be alternatively introduced after expansion. In some embodiments, the locking member may be captured within the expandable fusion device **10** so that it is not lost. In some embodiments, peening the tip of the locking member may prevent the locking member from becoming lost.

(79) Once expandable fusion device **10** has been moved to the expanded configuration and locked via the locking member, bores **366** and **418**, previously used to expand the expandable fusion device **10** via actuating mechanism **300** may be utilized to pack graft or other bone growth inducing substances into expandable fusion device **10**. That is, bores **366** and **418** may be utilized to pack graft into the expandable fusion device **10** to fill any potential gaps that formed during expansion of expandable fusion device **10**.

(80) With reference to FIGS. **20-24**, an embodiment of expandable fusion device **100** is shown. In an exemplary embodiment, the expandable fusion device **100** may include a first endplate **114**, a second endplate **116**, a first ramp **118**, and a second ramp **120**. The first and/or second endplates **114**, **116** of the expandable fusion device **100** may include one or more openings **126** to accommodate bone growth and/or bone growth materials.

(81) The first endplate **114** includes an outer surface **140** configured to engage an adjacent vertebral body and an inner surface **142** configured to mate with at least a portion of the first and second ramps **118**, **120**. The second endplate **116** includes an outer surface **145** configured to engage an

adjacent vertebral body and an inner surface **144** configured to mate with at least a portion of the first and second ramps **118**, **120**. The first ramp **118** includes an upper portion **128**, which is sized to receive at least a portion of the first endplate **114**, and a lower portion **129**, which is sized to receive at least a portion of the second endplate **116**. The second ramp **120** may be disposed adjacent to the first ramp **118**. The second ramp **120** includes an upper portion **122**, which is sized to contact at least a portion of the first endplate **114**, and a lower portion **124**, which is sized to contact at least a portion of the second endplate **116**. The first and/or second ramps **118**, **120** may include any of the mating features described herein.

(82) The first ramp **118** may include one or more bores **162**, **164**. The second ramp **120** may include a bore **166** adjacent bore **168**. The bore **166** may be configured to receive an actuating mechanism **300** therethrough, and may be aligned with the bore **164** in the first ramp **118**. The bores **164**, **166** may be threaded, such that expandable fusion device **100** may be actuated by linear movement of the actuating mechanism **300**. The actuating mechanism **300** may include a threaded member **302** as described above. The actuating mechanism may also include one or more snap rings **134** and/or washers **136**. The snap rings **134** and washers **136** may be formed from any suitable material, such as titanium, PEEK, or the like. After threaded member **302** is threaded through bore **166**, threaded member **302** can be selectively threaded through bore **164** to move the expandable fusion device **100** from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration (e.g., by moving first ramp **118** and second ramp **120** closer to one another).

(83) Accordingly, expandable fusion device **100** may be movable between a collapsed configuration and an expanded configuration as described herein. After the expandable fusion device **100** has been inserted into the appropriate position in the intervertebral disc space, the expandable fusion device **100** can then be transitioned from the collapsed configuration to the expanded configuration. To expand the expandable fusion device **100**, the second ramp **120** may be moved toward the first ramp **118**. As the first and second ramps **118** and **120** move toward one another, the respective mating features of first and second ramps **118** and **120** may push against corresponding mating features disposed on endplates **114** and **116** to move the expandable fusion device **100** into the expanded configuration. Thus, the expandable fusion device **100** is able to reciprocally move between the collapsed and expanded configurations.

(84) Depending on the expansion profile desired, symmetrical or asymmetrical expansion of the device **100** may be required. Even if symmetrical expansion is preferred, however, expandable implants that utilize ramps for expansion may be subject to inconsistent expansion rates. For example, depending on the slope of the ramp interface or shape of the mating features, the endplates **114**, **116** may expand at a faster rate at the back of the implant as opposed to the front of the implant. This is shown, for example, in FIG. **22** where the arrows depict the relative rates of expansion. By making the front ramp angles different from the back angles, the asymmetrical expansion issue may be alleviated. For example, increasing the front ramp angles and decreasing the back ramp angles ensures that the endplates **114**, **116** expand symmetrically.

(85) The front and back ramp angles may be the same or different. As shown in FIGS. **23** and **24**, an angle ϵ is provided for the front ramp angles (e.g., the angle(s) on the mating features of the first ramp **118**), and an angle δ is provided for the back ramp angles (e.g., the angle(s) on the mating feature of the second ramp **120**). These angles ϵ , δ are measured from the vertical axis μ . The angle ϵ may be provided on the mating surfaces for the first ramp **118**, the first endplate **114**, and/or the second endplate **116**, respectively. The angle δ may be provided on the mating surfaces for the second ramp **120**, the first endplate **114**, and/or the second endplate **116**, respectively. The angle ϵ is preferably larger than the angle δ , for example, at a ratio of about 4:1. The angle ϵ may range from about 50-70°, 55-65°, 57-63°, 58-62°, or 59-61°. In a preferred embodiment, angle ϵ is 60°. The angle δ may range from about 5-25°, 10-20°, 12-18°, 13-17°, 14-16°. In a preferred embodiment, angle δ is 15°. Increasing the angle ϵ and decreasing the angle δ in this manner ensures that the endplates **114**, **116** expand symmetrically. By expanding symmetrically, the

endplates **114**, **116** are able to contact the vertebral body endplates appropriately and maintain anatomical balance in situ. Although a symmetrical expansion is described, an asymmetrical expansion may also be contemplated. The angles ϵ , δ may be changed or adjusted to provide for asymmetrical expansion of the endplates **114**, **116**.

(86) With reference to FIGS. **25** and **26**, an embodiment of a first, front ramp **218** is shown, which is suitable for use with any of the expandable fusion devices described herein. The first ramp **218** may have a first end **270** on an insertion end of the device, a second end **272** configured to mate with the second ramp **20**, **120**, a first side portion **274**, and a second side portion **276** on the opposing side of the first ramp **218**. The first ramp **218** may extend generally from a first side **222** (e.g., a posterior side) to a second side **224** (e.g., an anterior side). The first ramp **218** may be generally wedge shaped, and may have a height that increases from the first side **222** toward the second side **224**. The first ramp **218** may further include an upper portion **228**, which is sized to receive at least a portion of the first endplate **14**, **114**, and a lower portion **229**, which is sized to receive at least a portion of the second endplate **16**, **116**. As discussed above, the second end **272** of the first ramp **218** may include bores **418**, **515**. In some embodiments, the bore **418** may be configured to receive the threaded member **302** of the actuating mechanism **300**. The adjacent bore **515** may serve as an access port to allow graft material to be delivered through the first ramp **218** prior to insertion or in situ.

(87) The first ramp **218** may have a curvature or pitch on at least one ramp surface or mating feature. For example, the first end **270** may have a curved ramp surface **271**. The second or anterior side **224** may have a higher ramp angle than the first or posterior side **222** or vice versa. One or more portions of the first ramp **218** including one or more of the ramp surfaces or mating features may include a continuously changing ramp angle. The continuous linear change of the implant's angle (e.g., lordotic angle) may be contingent on a continuously changing ramp angle. This results in a curvature of the ramp surface which can be defined by angular change per distance away from the pivot axis π . This value is the pitch of the implant ramp surfaces, and is responsible for varying the rate of angular change the implant is able to achieve. A larger pitch value correlates to a higher ramp angle at the anterior ramp edge in relation to the angle at the posterior ramp edge for an implant of fixed width. The mating features, ramp angles, type of angle change, lordotic angle, rate of expansion, and the like may be configured as described herein to provide for optimal design and functionality of the device.

(88) Referring now to FIGS. **27A** and **27B**, an inserter instrument **600** may allow for adjustment of implant height and/or lordotic angle, for example, via insertion of a threaded shaft **602** contained within the instrument **600**, which may be removed once the implant height and lordotic angle are set. FIGS. **27A** and **27B** show a portion of expandable fusion device **10** with the first endplate removed, but the instrument **600** and methods described herein may be suitable for use with any expandable fusion device.

(89) The instrument **600** includes a threaded inner shaft **602**, which when inserted through the back of the expandable fusion device **10**, rigidly connects to the first ramp **18**, for example, using a threaded connection or other similar feature. The instrument **600** may also include a threaded outer shaft **604**, which is configured to rigidly connect to the second ramp **20**, for example, using a threaded connection or other similar feature. By rotating and/or axially moving the inner shaft **602** relative to the outer shaft **604** of the instrument **600**, the first ramp **18** is drawn toward the back of the expandable fusion device **10**, causing a change in height and/or lordotic angle. In other words, the first and second ramps **18**, **20** are drawn toward or away from one another by axially moving the inner shaft **602** relative to the outer shaft **604** of the instrument **600**.

(90) In an alternative embodiment, the inserter instrument **600** can be used in conjunction with the threaded member **302** of the actuating mechanism **300** described herein. For example, the instrument **600** may be threaded into the threaded hole opposite to the threaded member **302**. For example, the openings **366**, **512** in the second ramp **20** may be threaded and the openings **418**, **515**

in the first ramp **18** may be threaded. The openings **366**, **418** may be generally aligned and the openings **512**, **515** may be generally aligned. Accordingly, the inserter instrument **600** may be placed into one set of openings (e.g., openings **366**, **418** as shown) and the threaded member **302** may be positioned in the other set of openings (e.g., openings **512**, **515**). For example, the inner shaft **602** may rigidly connect to the opening **418** in the first ramp **18** and the outer shaft **604** may rigidly connect to the opening **366** in the second ramp **20**.

(91) Once coupled to the device **10**, the instrument **600** is configured to linearly pull or push the first ramp **18** to expand or contract the expandable fusion device **10**. After expansion, the threaded member **302** may be rotated into position to lock the relative positions of the first and second ramps **18**, **20** relative to one another. For example, the threaded member **302** may back up or move away from the first ramp **18** as the instrument **600** is utilized to expand the expandable fusion device **10**. Once the final position is achieved (e.g., height and lordotic angle), the threaded member **302** is advanced to lock the final height and lordotic angle of the endplates **14**, **16** into position. The threaded member **302** can be integral with the device **10** or can be introduced after expansion. If integral, the threaded member **302** may be secured, for example, to the first or second ramp **18**, **20** by peening or the like.

(92) Once the expandable fusion device **10** has been expanded and locked, the openings **418**, **366**, **515**, **512** where the instrument **600** was used to expand the device **10**, which has subsequently been removed, may be filled and packed with bone graft. In addition, if accessible, the graft material can be packed through any of the openings **418**, **366**, **515**, **512** and into the device **10** to fill any potential gaps that were created during expansion.

(93) Any aspect set forth in any embodiment may be used with any other embodiment set forth herein. Every device and apparatus set forth herein may be used in a suitable medical procedure, such as, e.g., a vertebral disc replacement procedure, and may be advanced through any suitable body lumen and body cavity.

(94) It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made in the disclosed systems and processes without departing from the scope of the disclosure. Other embodiments of the disclosure will be apparent to those skilled in the art from consideration of the specification and practice of the disclosure disclosed herein. It is intended that the specification and examples be considered as exemplary only. The following disclosure identifies some other exemplary embodiments.

Claims

1. A method for stabilizing vertebrae comprising the steps of: providing a vertebral stabilizing system, the system including an inserter instrument and an expandable device, the expandable device having: a first endplate having an upper surface defining a first plane extending from a first side of the expandable device to a second side of the expandable device; a second endplate having a lower surface defining a second plane extending from the first side of the expandable device to the second side of the expandable device, wherein the first and second endplates each include at least one mating feature; a first ramp including at least one opening and mating features configured to mate with the at least one mating features of the first and second endplates, wherein the first ramp is slidable with respect to the first and second endplates; a second ramp including at least one opening generally aligned with the at least one opening in the first ramp and mating features configured to mate with the at least one mating features of the first and second endplates; and a threaded member configured to engage a corresponding opening in each of the first ramp and the second ramp to lock a position of the first ramp relative to a position of the second ramp, wherein the expandable device is movable between a collapsed configuration and an expanded configuration and in the collapsed configuration the first plane and the second plane are non-parallel, inserting, via the inserter instrument, the expandable device between adjacent vertebral

bodies; and expanding the expandable device with the inserter instrument, wherein the inserter instrument includes: an outer shaft having a bore extending longitudinally therethrough, the outer shaft configured to engage the at least one opening in the second ramp; and an inner shaft extending through the bore in the outer shaft, the inner shaft configured to engage the at least one opening in the first ramp.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the inner shaft of the inserter instrument is threaded, and the inner shaft threadedly engages the at least one opening in the first ramp.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the outer shaft of the inserter instrument is threaded, and the outer shaft threadedly engages the at least one opening in the second ramp.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the inner shaft is configured to axially move through the outer shaft of the inserter instrument.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the upper and lower surfaces are configured to contact a respective vertebral body, wherein each of the upper and lower surfaces has one or more of teeth, ridges, friction increasing elements, keels, or gripping or purchasing projections.

6. A method for stabilizing vertebrae comprising the steps of: providing a vertebral stabilizing system, the system including an inserter instrument and an expandable device, the expandable device having: a first endplate having an upper surface defining a first plane extending from a first side of the expandable device to a second side of the expandable device; a second endplate having a lower surface defining a second plane extending from the first side of the expandable device to the second side of the expandable device, wherein the first and second endplates each include at least one mating feature; a first ramp including first and second openings and mating features configured to mate with the at least one mating features of the first and second endplates, wherein the first ramp is slidable with respect to the first and second endplates; a second ramp including first and second openings and mating features configured to mate with the at least one mating features of the first and second endplates, the first opening generally aligned with the first opening in the first ramp, and the second opening generally aligned with the second opening in the second ramp; and a threaded member configured to engage a corresponding opening in each of the first ramp and the second ramp to lock a position of the first ramp relative to a position of the second ramp, wherein the expandable device is movable between a collapsed configuration and an expanded configuration and in the collapsed configuration the first plane and the second plane are non-parallel, inserting, via the inserter instrument, the expandable device between adjacent vertebral bodies; and expanding the expandable device with the inserter instrument, wherein the inserter instrument includes: an outer shaft having a bore extending longitudinally therethrough, the outer shaft configured to engage the first or second opening in the second ramp; and an inner shaft extending through the bore in the outer shaft, the inner shaft configured to engage the corresponding first or second opening in the first ramp.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the first and second openings of the first ramp are threaded.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the inner shaft of the inserter instrument is threaded, and the inner shaft threadedly engages the first opening in the first ramp.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the first and second openings of the second ramp are threaded.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the outer shaft of the inserter instrument is threaded, and the outer shaft threadedly engages the first opening in the second ramp.

11. The method of claim 6, wherein the inner shaft is configured to axially move through the outer shaft of the inserter instrument.

12. A method for stabilizing vertebrae comprising the steps of: providing a vertebral stabilizing system, the system including an inserter instrument and an expandable device, the expandable device having: a first endplate having an upper surface defining a first plane extending from a first side of the expandable device to a second side of the expandable device; a second endplate having a lower surface defining a second plane extending from the first side of the expandable device to the second side of the expandable device, wherein the first and second endplates each include

mating features; a first ramp including first and second openings and mating features configured to mate with the mating features of the first and second endplates, wherein the first ramp is slidable with respect to the first and second endplates; a second ramp including first and second openings and mating features configured to mate with the mating features of the first and second endplates, the first opening generally aligned with the first opening in the first ramp, and the second opening generally aligned with the second opening in the second ramp; and a threaded member configured to engage a corresponding opening in each of the first ramp and the second ramp to lock a position of the first ramp relative to a position of the second ramp, wherein the expandable device is movable between a collapsed configuration and an expanded configuration and in the collapsed configuration the first plane and the second plane are non-parallel, inserting, via the inserter instrument, the expandable device between adjacent vertebral bodies; and expanding the expandable device with the inserter instrument, wherein the inserter instrument includes: an outer shaft having a bore extending longitudinally therethrough, the outer shaft having a threaded outer surface extending through one of the first or second openings in the second ramp; and an inner shaft extending through the bore in the outer shaft, the inner shaft having a threaded outer surface extending through the corresponding first or second opening in the first ramp.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the first and second openings of the first ramp are threaded.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the first and second openings of the second ramp are threaded.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the inner shaft is configured to axially move through the outer shaft of the inserter instrument.
