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(54) **SHAPING UNDERGARMENT AND METHOD OF ITS MANUFACTURE**

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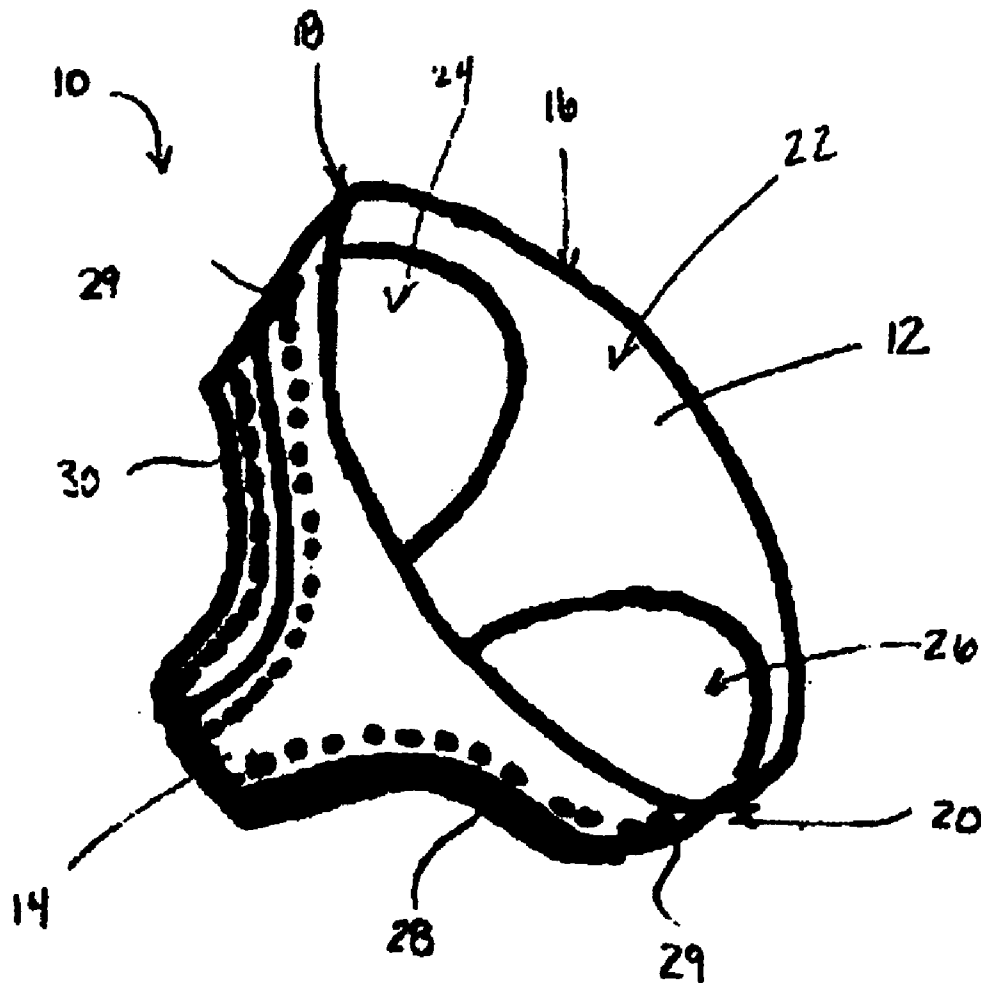
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A shaping undergarment generally includes a front panel, a rear panel joined to the front panel, thereby forming an undergarment having a waist opening, a first leg opening, and a second leg opening, and a substantially circular, centrally-located aperture formed in the rear panel and shaped to encircle a wearer's buttocks. The aperture is defined by an edge. The edge is reinforced to preserve the substantially-circular shape of the aperture when the undergarment is worn, thereby providing uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks. Reinforcement may be provided by increasing the thickness of the edge relative to the remainder of the undergarment, as by providing a multi-layered hem, a knitted in welt, or by attaching a band to the edge. As the undergarment contracts when worn, it will tend to uplift the wearer's buttocks, and the aperture will permit the buttocks to protrude, thereby preserving a natural, rounded appearance.

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**Related U.S. Application Data**

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 11/698,085, filed on Jan. 26, 2007.  
Continuation-in-part of application No. 11/176,306, filed on Jul. 8, 2005, now abandoned.  
(60) Provisional application No. 60/833,195, filed on Jul. 25, 2006.



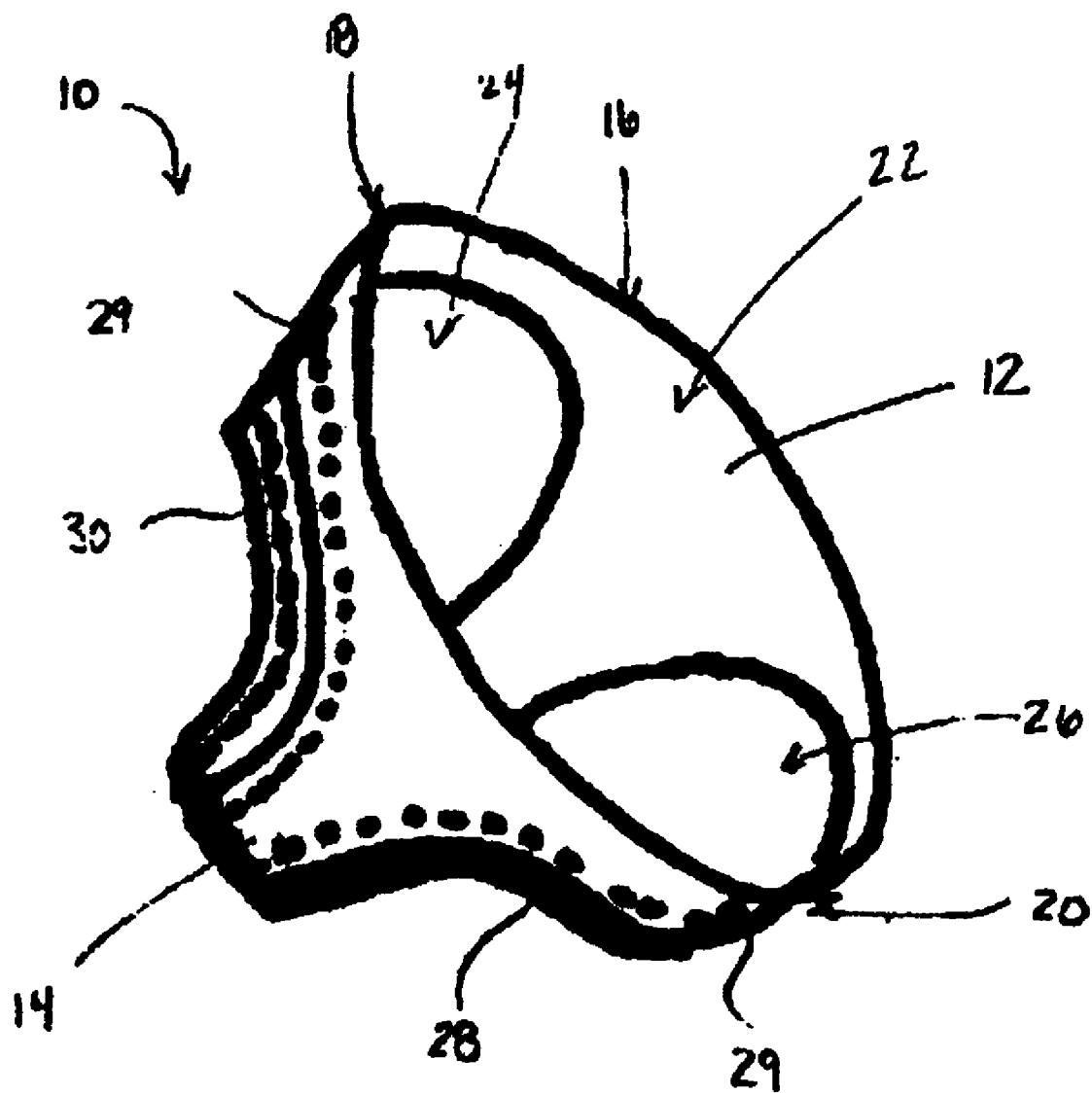


FIG. 1

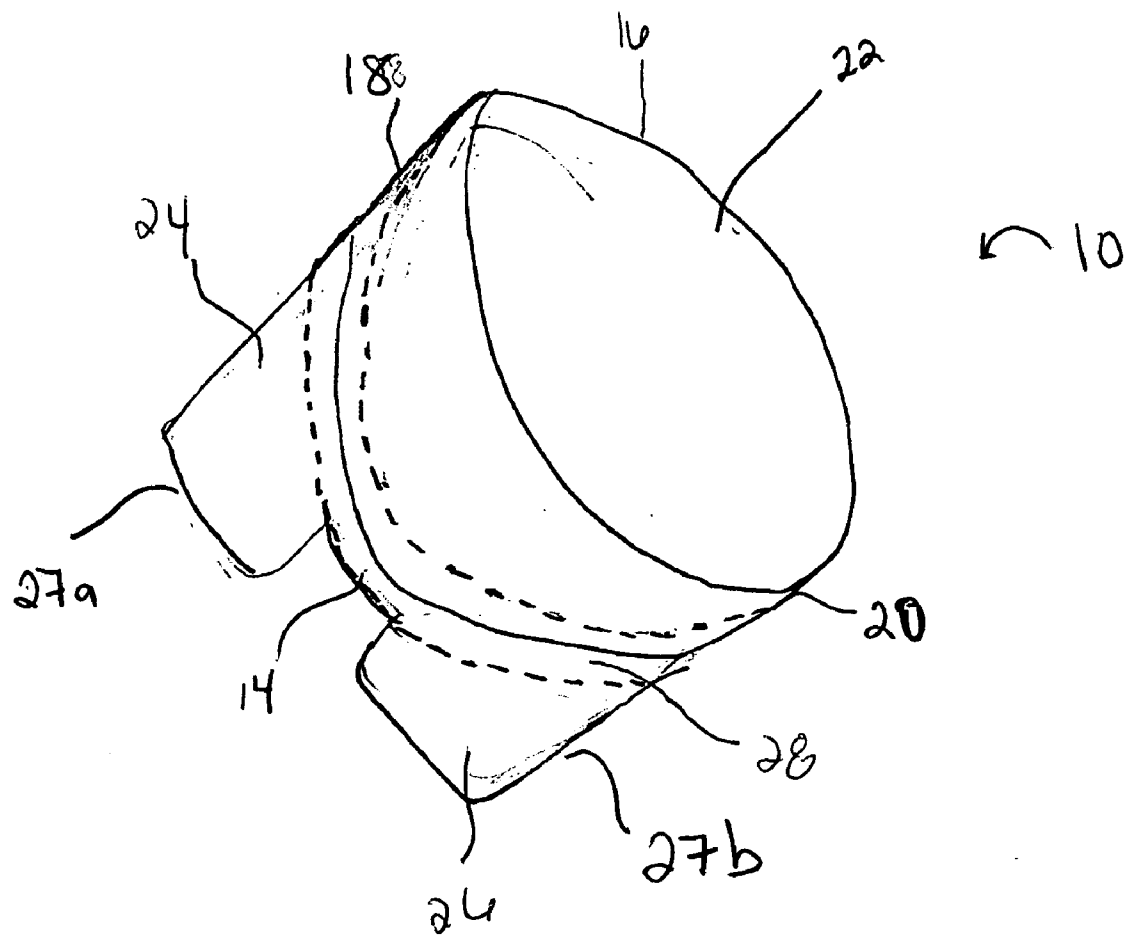


FIG. 2

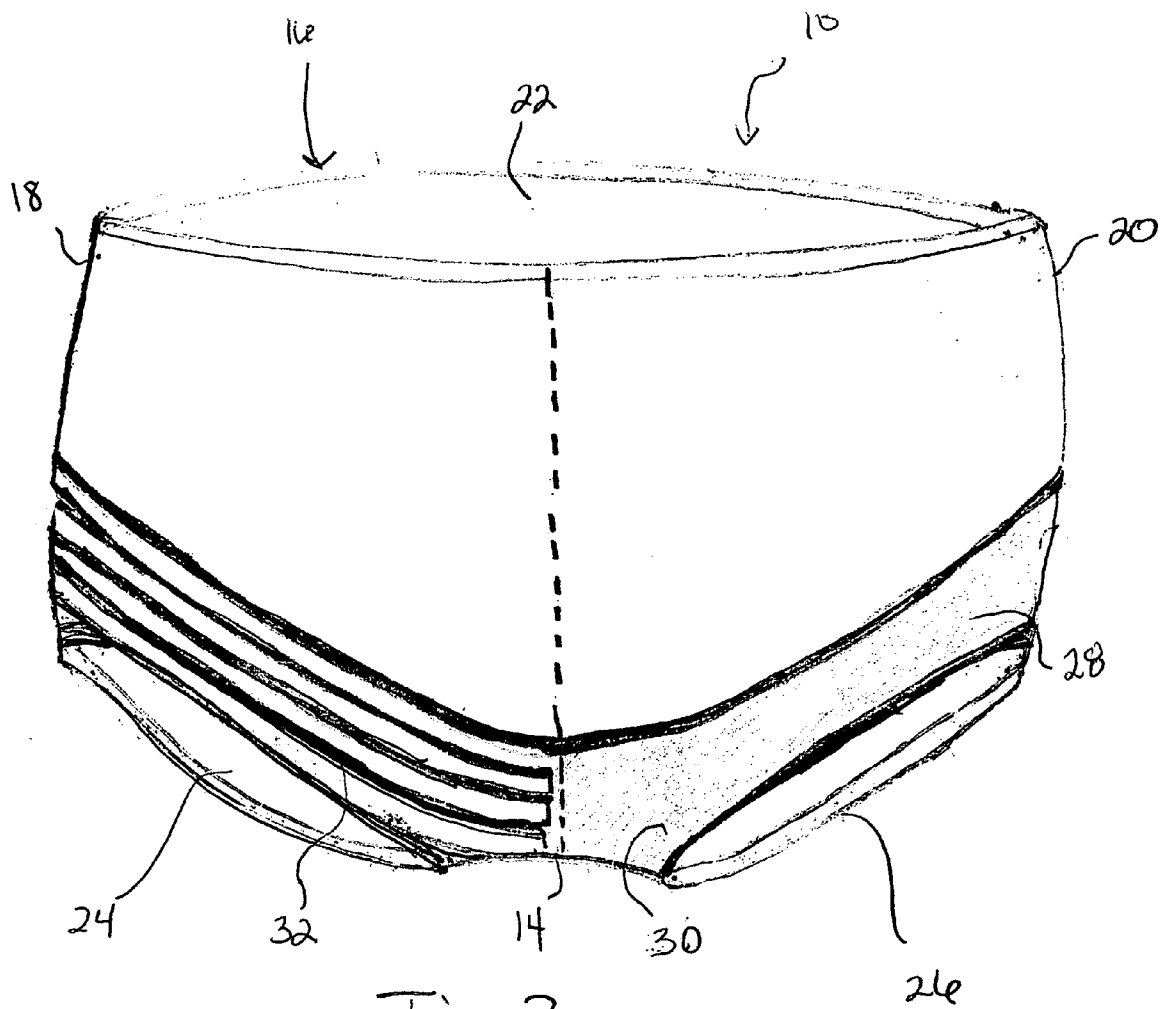


Fig. 3

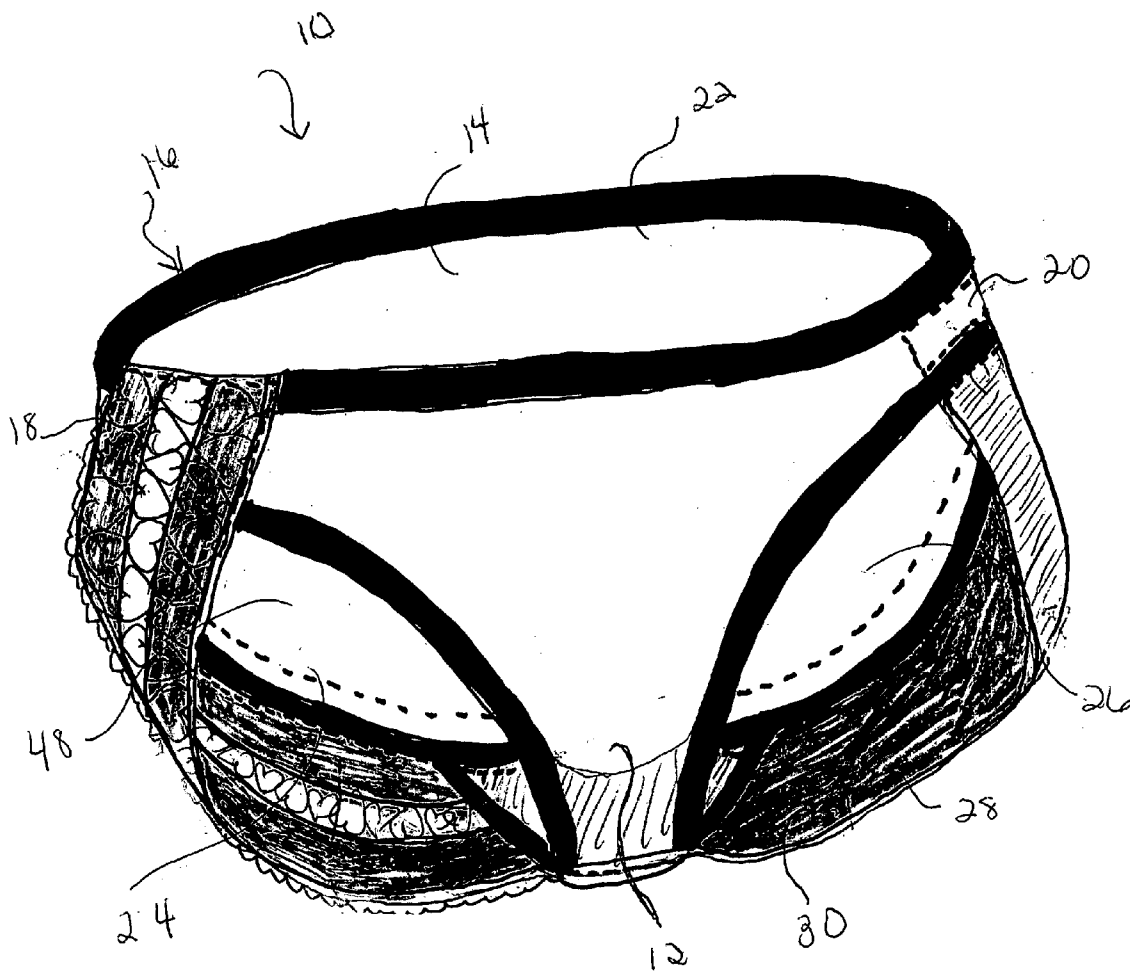
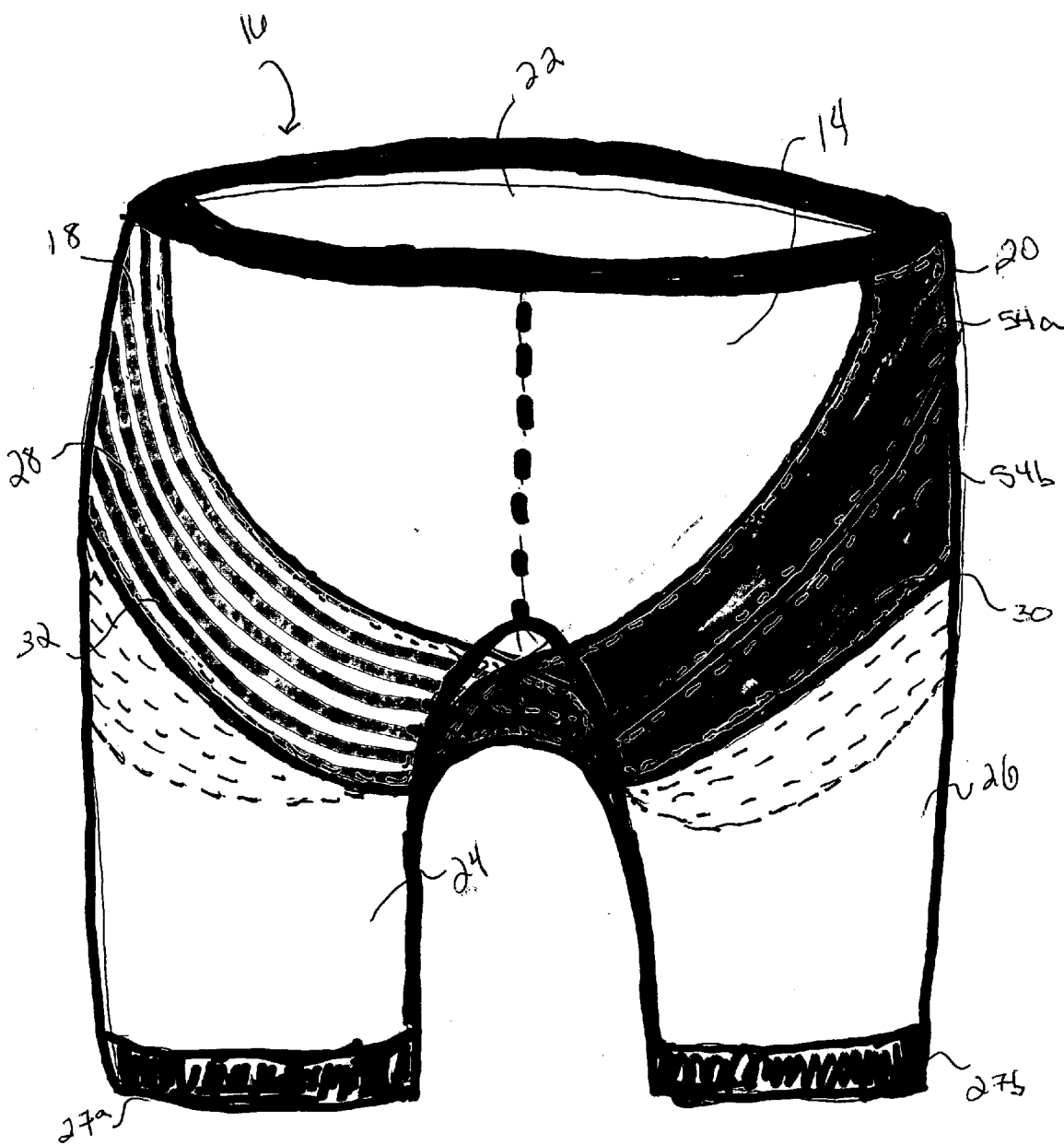
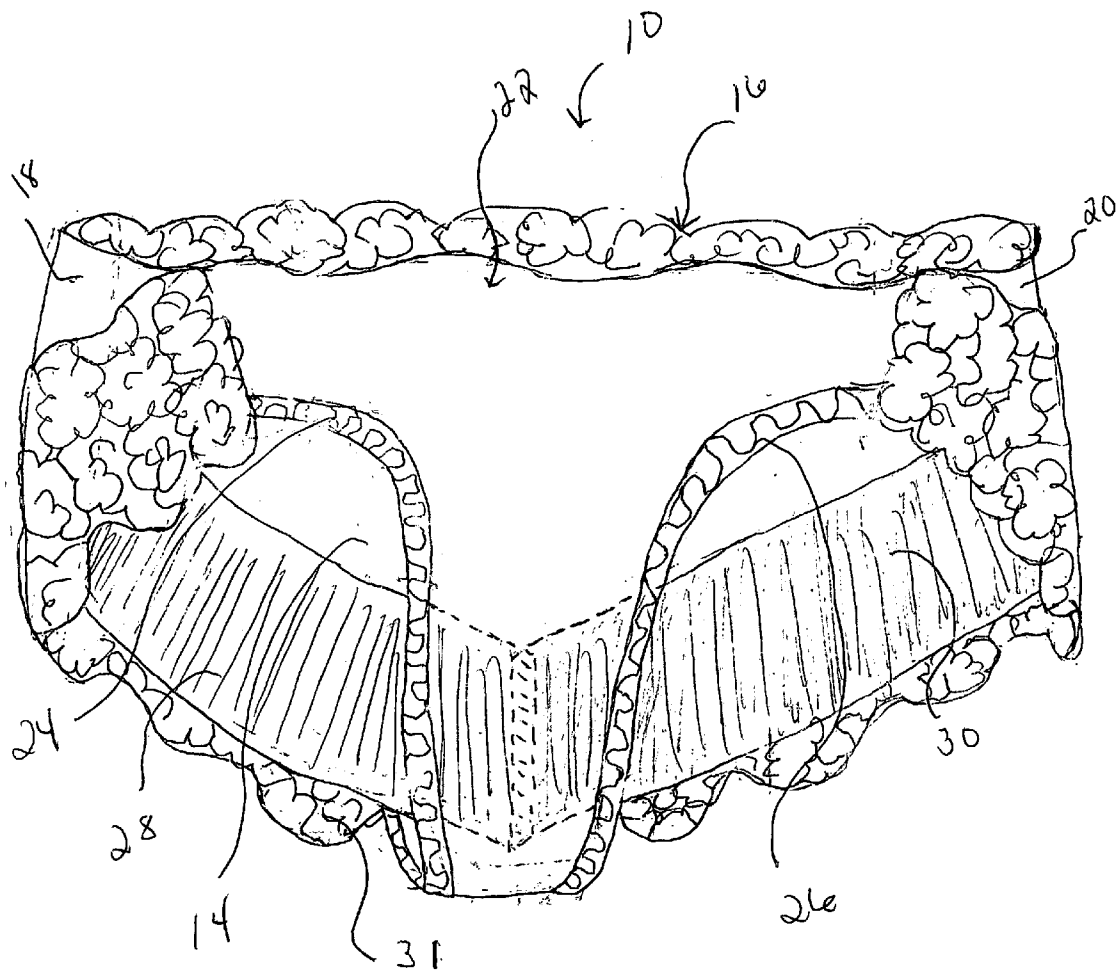


FIG. 4

# FIG. 5





**FIG. 6**

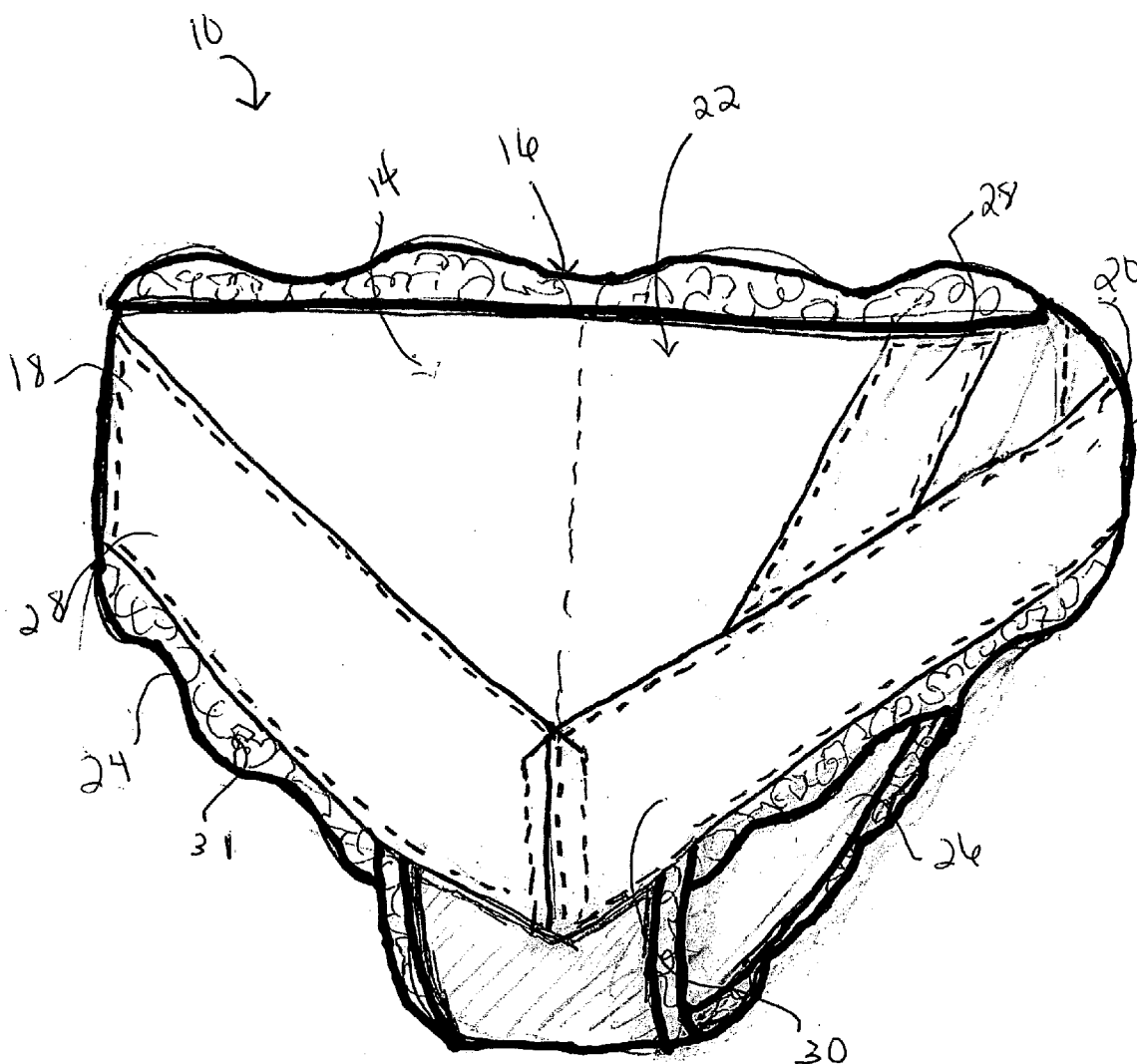


Fig. 7



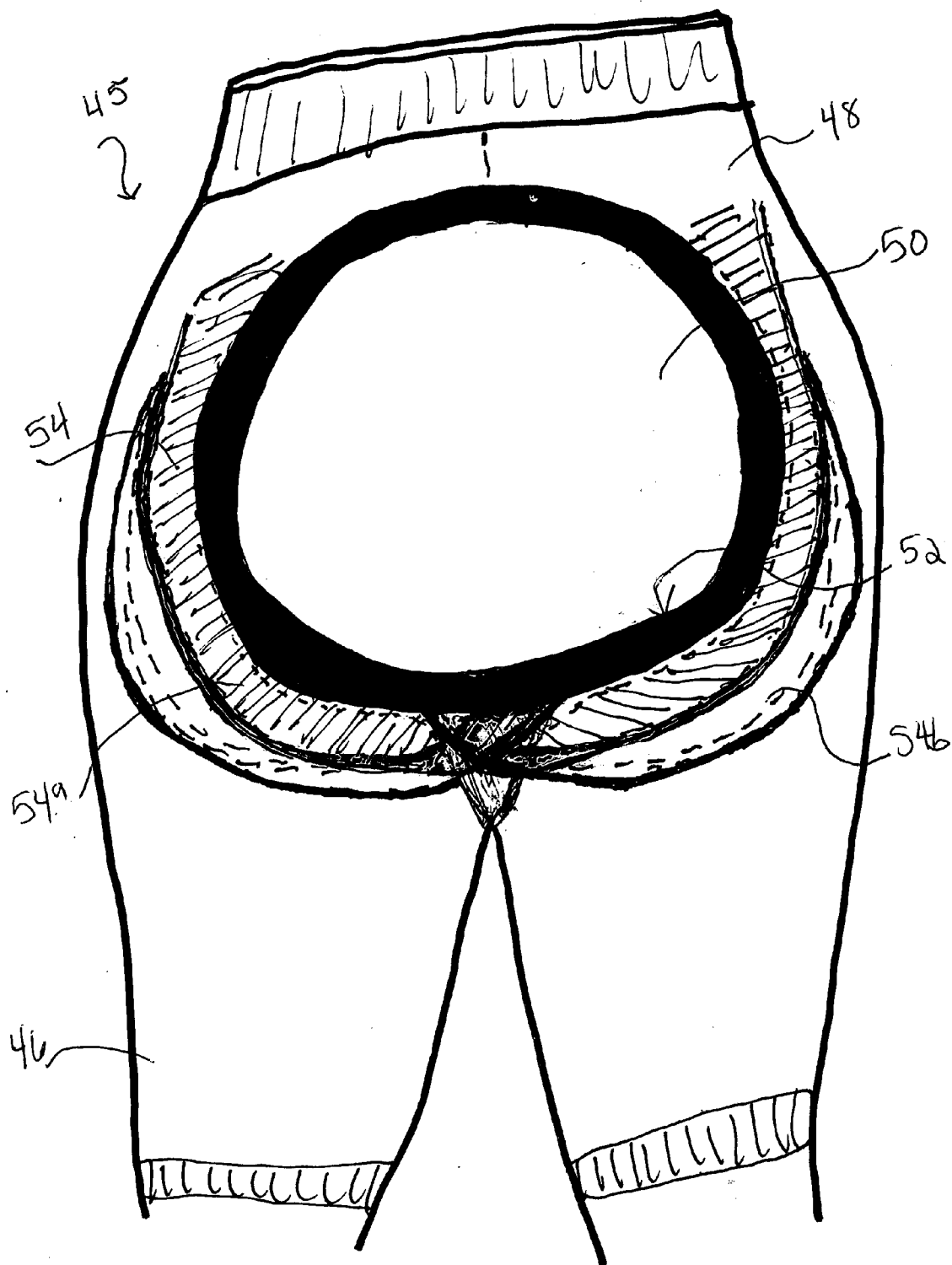


FIG. 8

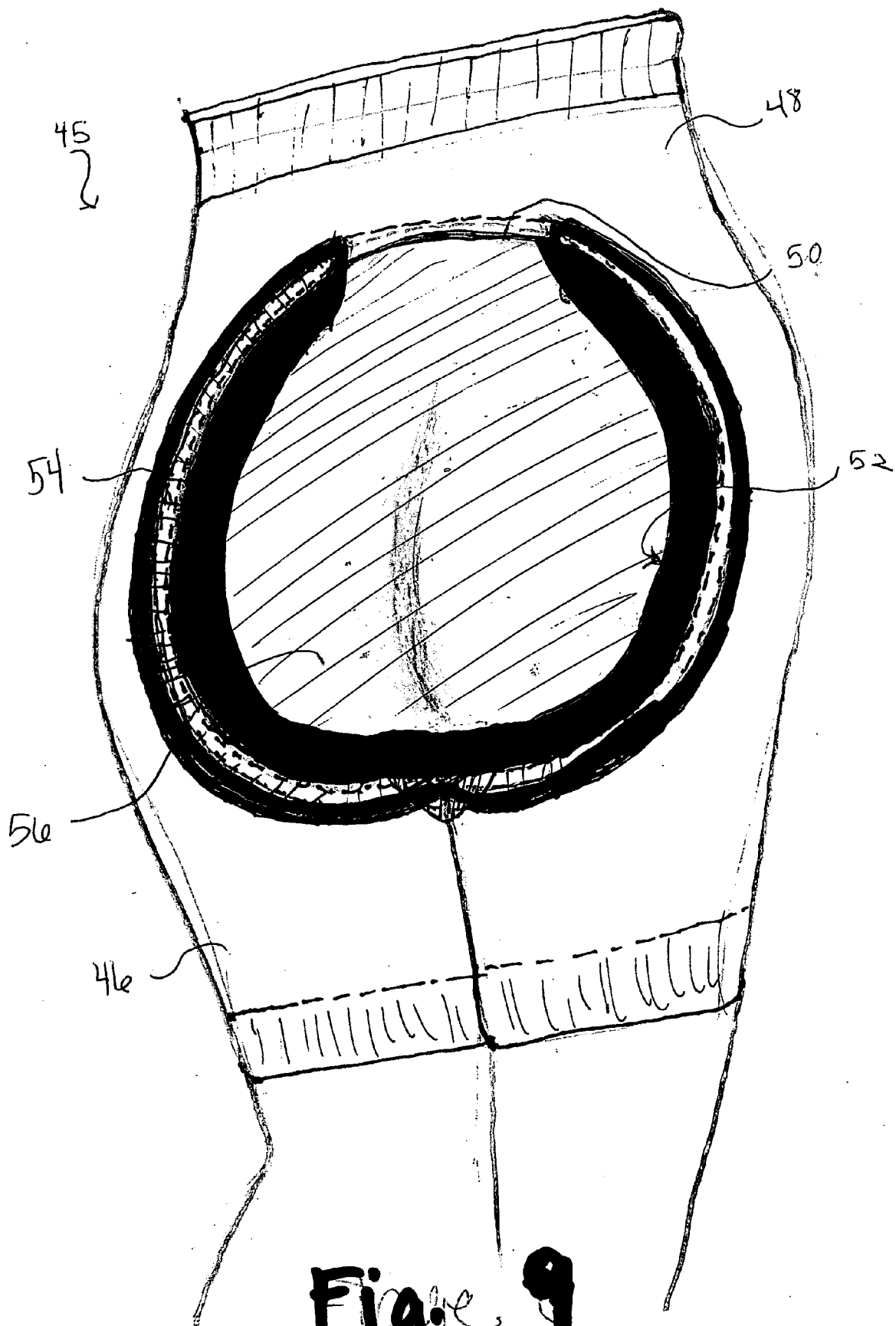


Fig. 9

**SHAPING UNDERGARMENT AND METHOD OF ITS MANUFACTURE**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application is a continuation in part of U.S. application Ser. No. 11/698,085, filed 26 Jan. 2007, which claims the benefit of U.S. provisional application No. 60/833,195, filed 25 Jul. 2006. This application is also a continuation in part of U.S. application Ser. No. 11/176,306, filed 8 Jul. 2005. The foregoing applications are hereby incorporated by reference as though fully set forth herein.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] a. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates generally to undergarments. More particularly, the present invention relates to an undergarment for naturally enhancing and shaping the appearance of a wearer's buttocks.

[0004] b. Background Art

[0005] Individuals often rely upon their garments to enhance and reshape their appearance. At its simplest, this process can involve wearing particular patterns or fabrics that create an illusion of a particular appearance. For example, vertical stripes make the wearer appear slimmer.

[0006] Special garments may also be used to enhance both the size and presentation of certain body parts. For example, undergarments, such as corsets and girdles, have long been used to reshape a person's figure. To a certain extent, these special garments can change the shape and proportion of the wearer's body parts in order to create a more aesthetically pleasing appearance.

[0007] In striving for a callipygian ideal, many shaping garments provide various support to the wearer's lower torso by constricting the wearer's lower torso. These extant undergarments, however, often have the undesirable effect of simultaneously flattening the wearer's buttocks, thereby spoiling the individual's natural figure. Alternatively, some extant garments shape through padding, which also spoils the individual's natural figure, and often disfiguring the body of the wearer. Further, though they may provide the wearer with a more aesthetically pleasing appearance, the undergarment itself is often not aesthetically appealing.

[0008] An additional disadvantage of some existing shaping garments is that they are often designed to be worn in addition to, rather than instead of, other undergarments. This may create a bulky and unnatural appearance, and may also cause the wearer discomfort.

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0009] It is desirable to be able to provide a shaping undergarment that enhances the appearance of the wearer's buttocks without spoiling the individual's natural figure.

[0010] It is also desirable to provide an undergarment that shapes the wearer's buttocks without the use of padding.

[0011] It is further desirable in some embodiments for the shaping undergarment to be aesthetically pleasing.

[0012] Also, it is desirable to provide a shaping undergarment that provides customizable shaping and support.

[0013] It is also desirable to provide a shaping undergarment that both slims and reshapes the wearer's "saddlebag" region while also providing natural uplifting support to and enhancement of the wearer's buttocks.

[0014] Disclosed herein is a shaping undergarment, including: a front panel; a rear panel joined to the front panel and forming therewith an undergarment having a waist opening, a first leg opening, and a second leg opening; and a centrally located aperture formed in the rear panel, the aperture being shaped to encircle a wearer's buttocks, wherein the aperture is defined by a reinforced edge configured to provide uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks when the buttocks is encircled by the aperture. The undergarment may include one or more materials selected from the group consisting of nylon, spandex, control top fabrics, any blends thereof, and any combinations thereof.

[0015] The reinforced edge may include a multi-layered hem, such as a double-layered hem, or another material of increased thickness relative to the rest of the undergarment. Alternatively, the reinforced edge may include a knitted-in welt, a rubber yarn, an elasticized band, a frictional band, or a polymeric band. Combinations of the above may also be used to reinforce the edge.

[0016] Optionally, the undergarment also includes first and second leg extensions extending downwardly from the first and second leg openings, wherein the leg extensions have a length sufficient to cover a wearer's saddlebag regions. An optional sheer drape or cover may be provided to cover the aperture.

[0017] Also disclosed herein is a method of manufacturing a shaping undergarment. The method includes the following steps: attaching a front panel to a rear panel, thereby forming an undergarment having a waist opening, a first leg opening, and a second leg opening; forming a centrally-located aperture in the rear panel, the aperture being defined by an edge and shaped to encircle a wearer's buttocks; and reinforcing the edge to provide uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks when the wearer's buttocks is encircled by the aperture. The edge may be reinforced by providing a multi-layered hem, such as a double-layered hem, or another material of increased thickness relative to the remainder of the undergarment. Alternatively, the edge may be reinforced with a knitted-in welt, an elastic band, a polymeric band, or a rubber yarn. A sheer drape may be attached to cover the aperture.

[0018] In another aspect of the present invention, a shaping undergarment includes: a front panel; a rear panel joined to the front panel, thereby forming an undergarment having a waist opening, a first leg opening, and a second leg opening; and a substantially circular, centrally-located aperture formed in the rear panel and shaped to encircle a wearer's buttocks, wherein the aperture is defined by an edge, and wherein the edge is reinforced to preserve the substantially-circular shape of the aperture when the undergarment is worn, thereby providing uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks.

[0019] An advantage of the present invention is that it enhances and augments the appearance of the wearer's buttocks while simultaneously preserving a natural shape of the buttocks.

[0020] Another advantage of the present invention is that, in some embodiments, it provides an aesthetically pleasing shaping undergarment.

[0021] Still another advantage of the present invention is that may be customized to provide shaping and support to an individual wearer's liking.

[0022] Yet another advantage of the present invention is that it may improve the appearance of the wearer's thighs, legs, and saddlebag regions, while simultaneously preserving a natural shape to the wearer's buttocks.

[0023] A further advantage of the present invention is that it improves the appearance of the wearer's figure without the use of padding or otherwise spoiling the wearer's natural appearance.

[0024] The foregoing and other aspects, features, details, utilities, and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from reading the following description and claims, and from reviewing the accompanying drawings.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] FIG. 1 is a rear perspective view illustrating a shaping undergarment according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0026] FIG. 2 illustrates a shaping undergarment according to another embodiment of the invention including leg extensions.

[0027] FIG. 3 is a rear view of a shaping undergarment that illustrates various frictional band configurations.

[0028] FIG. 4 is a front perspective view of a shaping undergarment that illustrates features of a frictional band.

[0029] FIG. 5 illustrates various features of a shaping undergarment.

[0030] FIG. 6 depicts a shaping undergarment where the frictional band is camouflaged by the undergarment itself.

[0031] FIG. 7 is a rear inside view of a shaping undergarment that illustrates both single-band and double-band frictional band attachment configurations.

[0032] FIG. 8 is a rear view of a shaping undergarment with an aperture defined by a reinforced edge that uplifts the wearer's buttocks.

[0033] FIG. 9 illustrates various features of a shaping undergarment with an aperture defined by a reinforced edge that uplifts the wearer's buttocks.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] FIG. 1 illustrates a shaping undergarment 10 according to some embodiments of the invention. Shaping undergarment 10 generally includes a front panel 12 and a rear panel 14 attached to front panel 12. Together, front panel 12 and rear panel 14 form an undergarment 16 including a first (e.g., left) hip region 18 and a second, opposite (e.g., right) hip region 20. Undergarment 16 is of generally familiar configuration and appearance, having a waist opening 22, typically including a waist band (e.g., an elastic waist, turned welt knit from elasticized yarns, or a knitted-in welt band), at an upper portion thereof and two leg

openings 24, 26 (e.g., elastic leg openings, knitted-in welts, or double-layered hems) at a lower portion thereof. In some embodiments of the invention, for example, a bikini-style undergarment 16, first and second hip regions 18, 20 are adjacent to waist opening 22, though other configurations and styles of undergarment 16 are regarded as within the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0035] One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that many materials may be utilized in the construction of undergarment 16, optionally including control top materials that provide desirable shaping and support to one or more of the wearer's buttocks region, hips, thighs, and abdomen. Suitable materials include, without limitation, cotton, knitted fabric, nylon yarn, textured nylon yarn, spandex yarn, rubber yarn, elasticized yarn, lycra, silk, stretch silk, modal, elastane, lace, polyester, stretch satin, and any combinations or blends thereof.

[0036] The use of control top materials in the construction of undergarment 16 is especially desirable, in that control top materials provide a smooth appearance under clothing without making the wearer uncomfortable or increasing the wearer's apparent bulk. A preferred embodiment may further create a smoother and more natural appearance of the wearer. The undergarments 16 can be worn in place of panties, thereby eliminating panty lines. It is contemplated, however, that undergarment 16 may be constructed without the use of control top materials without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0037] Of course, undergarment 16 may also be made of multiple materials or multiple layers of material. For example, the majority of undergarment 16 may be made of a loosely knit combination of traditional support materials, such as nylon or spandex, while the hip and buttocks regions thereof may be made of a tighter knitted combination, spandex, or the like. As another example, undergarment 16 may be made of a combination of about 91% nylon and about 9% spandex, with a substantially 100% cotton liner. Alternatively, certain regions of undergarment 16, and in particular the hip and buttocks regions thereof, may be reinforced or layered with spandex or another suitable control top material. Further, undergarment 16 may also be made of lighter materials, such as 91% modal and 9% of spandex with a substantially 100% lighter liner. One of ordinary skill in the art will understand how to select a suitable material or combination of materials for construction of a particular undergarment 16.

[0038] Waist opening 22 of undergarment 16 may extend sufficiently upward (e.g., undergarment 16 may be sufficiently high-waisted) to provide shaping and body-smoothing support to the wearer's abdominal region. In embodiments where undergarment 16 provides such shaping and support to the wearer's abdominal region, it is desirable to utilize a control top material for undergarment 16 near waist opening 22. For example, front panel 12 may utilize a tighter knit than the remainder of undergarment 16. Alternatively, front panel 12 may incorporate a control top material such as nylon, or spandex, yarn.

[0039] As shown, for example, in FIG. 2, some embodiments of the invention include first and second leg extensions 27a and 27b extending downwardly from leg openings 24 and 26, respectively, in order to lend support to the wearer's upper legs and thighs. Leg extensions 27a, 27b

preferably extend downwardly from leg openings **24**, **26** a sufficient distance to cover the “saddlebag” and cellulite regions of the body (e.g., to the wearer’s mid-thigh). The “saddlebag” regions are below the buttocks on the back and sides of the thighs just below the hips, and typically extend for between about 1 inch and about 4 inches, depending on the wearer’s body type and size. Thus, the length of leg extensions **27a**, **27b**, as measured from the wearer’s crotch to the end of the leg extension, typically ranges from about 1 inch to about 10 inches, depending on the size and style of shaping undergarment **10**. Preferably, leg extensions **27a**, **27b** are made of a control top material, in order to provide smoothing and support to the “saddlebag” and cellulite regions of the body. For example, leg extensions **27a** and **27b** may be made of or reinforced with spandex, nylon, textured elastic yarn, or another suitable control top material or combination or blend of materials. Leg extensions **27a**, **27b** may terminate in any suitable fashion (e.g., single-hem, double-hem, knitted-in welt, elastic band).

[0040] Returning to FIG. 1, to shape and uplift the wearer’s buttocks, in some embodiments of the invention a frictional band **28** is attached to or embedded in undergarment **16** extending along at least a portion of rear panel **14** between first hip region **18** and second hip region **20**. One of skill in the art will appreciate that attachment between frictional band **28** and undergarment **16** may be by sewing, gluing, taping, melt-processing, or any other suitable method.

[0041] In some embodiments of the invention, for example as shown in FIGS. 4-7, frictional band **28** extends substantially continuously from first hip region **18** to second hip region **20**, and may extend adjacent at least one of first and second leg openings **24**, **26**. In other embodiments, such as illustrated in FIG. 3, frictional band **28** extends only along first and second leg openings **24**, **26** (that is, frictional band **28** may not extend all the way to either or both of first and second hip regions **18**, **20**). For example, in some embodiments of the invention corresponding generally to a size XS undergarment, frictional band **28** may terminate within less than about 1-3 inches of first and second hip regions **18**, **20**. Of course, this distance may vary with the size and style of the undergarment. It should be understood that frictional band **28** may be attached to the inside or outside of undergarment **16**.

[0042] While frictional band **28** may be a single band **30**, as shown to the right in FIG. 3, extending between first and second hip regions **18**, **20**, frictional band **28** may optionally include multiple discrete pieces **32**, as shown to the left in FIG. 3, which may be either connected to each other, such as by sewing, gluing, taping, melt-processing, or another suitable method, or disconnected from each other. It is also contemplated that frictional band **28** may be directly integrated with undergarment **16**, for example as a reinforced edge thereof. For example, frictional band **28** may include a plurality of discrete pieces **32**, either or both of lengthwise and widthwise relative to frictional band **28**, affixed to or embedded into undergarment **16** proximate the rearward portions of leg openings **24**, **26**. That is, multiple pieces may be combined in a lengthwise span, or widthwise to increase the width of the wearer’s body that is supported and/or uplifted by frictional band **28**.

[0043] The discrete pieces **32** may be configured to shape particular regions of the wearer’s body (e.g., one or more

discrete pieces may be configured to frictionally engage and shape the wearer’s buttocks, while other discrete pieces may be configured to frictionally engage and shape the wearer’s hips). For example, the right-hand side of FIG. 5 depicts an undergarment that includes a first band that shapes the wearer’s buttocks and a second band that shapes the wearer’s legs, thighs, and saddlebag regions. An optional third band may be provided for larger saddlebag regions. Preferably, the width of each discrete piece **32** is about 1/8 inch to about 3/4 inch, though the widths of discrete pieces **32** may vary outside of this range without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. It is also contemplated that the number, width, and thickness of the discrete pieces **32** may be selected and configured depending upon the size of the undergarment (e.g., wider pieces **32** or additional frictional bands **28** may be utilized for undergarments to be worn by those with larger saddlebag areas).

[0044] The coefficient of friction between frictional band **28** and skin is sufficient that frictional band **28** will grip (that is, frictionally engage) the wearer’s skin rather than glide smoothly across the wearer’s skin, thereby uplifting and extending the wearer’s buttocks when shaping undergarment **10** is worn. Frictional bands advantageously provide uplifting support without creating unnatural indentations and creases in the wearer’s appearance. By uplifting and extending the wearer’s buttocks, the appearance of the wearer’s buttocks is enhanced and augmented while preserving a natural (that is, substantially unflattened) shape. Of course, the coefficient of friction between frictional band **28** and skin should also be selected so that the wearer does not experience discomfort due to pulling or pinching of the wearer’s skin.

[0045] To create the desired friction, frictional band **28** is preferably a polymeric (e.g., silicone) band or a band having a polymer coating or element on at least part of the surface adjacent the wearer’s buttocks. By way of example only, frictional band **28** may be entirely coated with a polymer, fully coated with a polymer only on one surface, partially treated with a polymer on the surface adjacent the wearer’s buttocks, or provided with one or more strips of polymeric tape on the surface adjacent the wearer’s buttocks. Where only the side adjacent the wearer’s buttocks is frictional, the reverse surface may be layered with material such as lace or another fabric. Other methods of creating friction between frictional band **28** and the wearer’s buttocks, such as roughening the surface of frictional band **28** or applying an adhesive thereto, are also contemplated.

[0046] Frictional band **28** may also have elastic properties. The elastic modulus of frictional band **28** can be selected to achieve a particularly desirable shaping of the wearer’s buttocks. The degree of uplifting and shaping of the wearer’s buttocks may be further adjusted by altering the coefficient of friction between frictional band **28** and skin. Further, it is also contemplated that the width and thickness of frictional band **28** may be selected to achieve a particularly aesthetically pleasing result. Typical widths range from about 1/2 inch to about 4 inches for a single-piece frictional band **28** and from about 1/8 inch to about 3/4 inch for multi-piece frictional bands **28**. It is also contemplated that multiple frictional bands may be integrated for convenient attachment to undergarment **16**, for example as by attaching two approximately 1/2 inch wide strips of frictional material to a single band of about 2 inches width.

[0047] In addition, anchor points for frictional band 28 (that is, the endpoints at which frictional band 28 is attached to undergarment 16) and the path of frictional band 28 may also be selected or adjusted to achieve a particularly desirable shaping of the wearer's buttocks by effectively pre-stressing frictional band 28. In some embodiments of the invention, fasteners 29 removably attach the ends of frictional band 28 to undergarment 16, for example adjacent hip regions 18, 20. By way of example only, fasteners 29 may be clasps, buttons, snaps, or hook-and-loop type fasteners. It should be understood that the components of fasteners 29 may be attached to frictional band 28 and undergarment 16 in any configuration or combination (e.g., there may be a single button on each end of frictional band 28 with multiple button holes on undergarment 16, a single button on each hip region 18, 20 and multiple button holes on either end of frictional band 28, a single button hole on each end of frictional band 28 and multiple button holes on each hip region 18, 20, or a single button hole on each hip region 18, 20 and multiple buttons on each end of frictional band 28). This permits the wearer to adjust frictional band 28 to achieve a customized, desirable, and comfortable degree of shaping and support, much as one would adjust a brassiere.

[0048] Thus, it should be understood from this disclosure and from practicing the invention that various properties and characteristics (e.g., number, arrangement, width, thickness, and coefficient of friction) of frictional band 28 may be specifically selected, and the attachment of frictional band 28 to undergarment 16 (e.g., anchor points and path thereof) specifically designed, so as to achieve aesthetically pleasing and comfortable results for the wearer.

[0049] To present a pleasing, finished appearance of shaping undergarment 10, frictional band 28 may be at least partially obscured from view. In certain embodiments of shaping undergarment 10, frictional band 28 is at least partially obscured, and preferably is totally obscured, by rear panel 14. Such a configuration is shown adjacent second leg opening 26 in FIG. 1 (a portion of frictional band 28 is shown in phantom hidden by rear panel 14). Alternatively, as shown adjacent first leg opening 24 in FIG. 1 (frictional band 28 is shown entirely in phantom), frictional band 28 may be partially or totally obscured by a camouflaging feature 31, such as a lace trim, attached to undergarment 16.

[0050] Undergarment 16 itself may also camouflage frictional band 28, for example as by attaching frictional band 28 directly to the underside of undergarment 16 along leg openings 24, 26. Frictional band 28 may also be integrated with or attached to camouflaging feature 31, for example as by applying a polymer coating to or roughening one surface of camouflaging feature 31, or by selecting a frictional band 28 that is also camouflaging or decorative (e.g., FIG. 4, which depicts a heart-patterned frictional band). As with frictional band 28, camouflaging feature 31 may be integrated with undergarment 16. Of course, any suitable method may be used to attach or integrate camouflaging feature 31 with undergarment 16. For example, FIG. 6 depicts the frictional band as camouflaged by a lace decoration on the undergarment.

[0051] It should also be understood that the coloring or pattern of frictional band 28 may also enhance the aesthetic appearance of shaping undergarment 10. For example, where it is desired to hide frictional band 28 from view, it

may be clear. Alternatively, frictional band 28 may be colored to match or contrast with undergarment 16 or the wearer's skin as desired.

[0052] To manufacture shaping undergarment 10, front panel 12 is attached to rear panel 14 to form undergarment 16. Front panel 12 and rear panel 14 may be joined along a seam, or, as illustrated in FIG. 1, seamlessly. Frictional band 28 is then attached to undergarment 16, for example by sewing, gluing, taping, melt-processing, or another method, though integrally forming frictional band 28 with undergarment 16 is regarded as within the spirit and scope of the present invention. As describe above, frictional band 28 may be attached substantially continuously to undergarment 16 between first and second hip regions 18, 20, and, in certain embodiments, is a single continuous component. Preferably, however, frictional band 28 is comprised of multiple discrete components, such as strips 32 shown in FIG. 3. As further described above, either or both ends of frictional band 28 may be removably attached to undergarment 16 using fasteners 29. If desired, camouflaging feature 31 may then be attached to undergarment 16. As with frictional band 28, camouflaging feature 31 may be attached by sewing or integrally formed with undergarment 16, and may be either continuous or discontinuous. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, however, frictional band 28 is clear and substantially completely hidden by undergarment 16 itself.

[0053] Another embodiment of the invention is shown in FIGS. 8 and 9 as undergarment 45, including leg extensions 46. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 4, rear panel 48 of undergarment 45 has a substantially centrally located aperture 50 defined by an edge 52 therein. Typically, aperture 50 will be substantially circular such that the lower portion thereof generally follows the contours of the wearer's buttocks. That is, edge 52 preferably encircles the lower portion of the wearer's buttocks, and more preferably encircles substantially the wearer's entire buttocks. Of course, other shapes of aperture 50 are within the spirit and scope of the invention.

[0054] At least a portion of undergarment 45, and in particular one or more of the hip, buttock, and leg regions of undergarment 45, preferably includes or is made of a control top material, such as nylon or spandex. The control top material of undergarment 45 provides a certain degree of smoothing, shaping, and control to the wearer, and especially to the hip, leg, and buttocks of the wearer.

[0055] As should be clear to one of ordinary skill in the art, undergarment 45 will be stretched (e.g., placed in tension) when donned by the wearer, and the restorative forces caused thereby will tend to push the wearer's buttocks upwards and outwards. Advantageously, aperture 50 allows the wearer's buttocks to be uplifted and enhanced by releasing constriction that might otherwise tend to flatten the wearer's buttocks, permitting the wearer's buttocks to protrude to a certain degree out of undergarment 45, thereby preserving a substantially natural and pleasing rounded appearance to the wearer's buttocks.

[0056] Edge 52 is preferably reinforced in order to prevent undesirable bunching, rolling, and collapse thereof, which might compromise the uplifting support provided by undergarment 45. Thus, by reinforcing edge 52, the efficacy of undergarment 45 in providing uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks is enhanced. Edge 52 may be reinforced, for

example, by increasing the thickness of undergarment **16** along edge **52** in any suitable fashion (e.g., by doubling, tripling, or otherwise multiplying the material of undergarment **16** along edge **52**). One suitable method of reinforcing edge **52** is to provide a multiple-layered hem, such as a double layered hem. It is also contemplated that the material of undergarment **16** may be varied or supplemented along edge **52**, for example by utilizing a different knit or texture or a different material along edge **52** (e.g., by providing an elastic band, a rubber yarn, or the like along edge **52**). A knitted-in welt may also be incorporated into edge **52** in order to provide reinforcement. Other methods of providing a reinforced edge **52**, which will be familiar to one of ordinary skill in the art, are also contemplated.

[0057] A polymeric band **54** may also be attached to undergarment **45**, preferably as a lining on the inside thereof. Polymeric band **54** typically extends through the crotch region of undergarment **45**, underneath the wearer's buttocks, and terminates proximate the hip regions of undergarment **45**, which provides additional uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks as described in detail above in connection with frictional band **28**. It should therefore be understood that polymeric band **54** may include any of the characteristics of frictional band **28** described above (e.g., single or multiple piece; integrated with undergarment **45** or attached thereto by sewing, melt-processing, or the like). Polymeric band **54** will typically have a width between about **1** inch to about **2** inches each and a suitable thickness to provide shaping and support to the wearer's body. In addition, polymeric band **54** may be routed around at least a portion of edge **52** to provide reinforcement thereto. In some embodiments of the invention, as shown in FIG. **8**, two polymeric bands **54a**, **54b** that overlap in the crotch region of undergarment **45** and extend, respectively, towards opposite hip regions thereof, may be utilized. Of course, the use of additional frictional bands is also regarded as within the spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, an additional frictional band may be utilized to provide shaping and support to the wearer's hips and saddlebag regions.

[0058] It is contemplated that a substantially sheer drape or cover **56** may be attached to undergarment **45** to cover aperture **50** and present a generally finished appearance to undergarment **45**. While it is contemplated that cover **56** may be merely draped under or over aperture **50**, which may enhance the comfort of the wearer, it is also within the spirit and scope of the invention to utilize cover **56** to further shape the buttocks of the wearer, further decreasing the visibility of the cellulite of the buttocks. Advantageously, however, cover **56** is sufficiently loose that it does not constrict the wearer's buttocks, thereby preserving the uplifting and enhancing characteristics of undergarment **45**.

[0059] Although several embodiments of this invention have been described above with a certain degree of particularity, those skilled in the art could make numerous alterations to the disclosed embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of this invention. For example, the present invention may be practiced equally well with any style of undergarment **16**, including, but not limited to, bikini, brief, short-shorts, low cut, and stretch laced tanga style underpants.

[0060] One of ordinary skill in the art will also appreciate that, though only a few embodiments of the invention are

described in detail herein, the various features and elements described above may be used in any combination within the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0061] Further, though the invention has been described in connection with an underpant, one of ordinary skill in the art would understand how to apply the principles disclosed herein to other shaping and supporting undergarments, such as girdles and brassieres.

[0062] Thus, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative only and not limiting. Changes in detail or structure may be made without departing from the spirit of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A shaping undergarment, comprising:
  - a front panel;
  - a rear panel joined to the front panel and forming therewith an undergarment having a waist opening, a first leg opening, and a second leg opening; and
  - a centrally located aperture formed in the rear panel, the aperture being shaped to encircle a wearer's buttocks, wherein the aperture is defined by a reinforced edge configured to provide uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks when the buttocks is encircled by the aperture.
2. The undergarment according to claim 1, wherein the reinforced edge comprises a multi-layered hem.
3. The undergarment according to claim 2, wherein the multi-layered hem comprises a double-layered hem.
4. The undergarment according to claim 1, wherein a material comprising the undergarment is increased in thickness to form the reinforced edge.
5. The undergarment according to claim 1, wherein the reinforced edge comprises a knitted-in welt.
6. The undergarment according to claim 1, wherein the reinforced edge comprises a rubber yarn.
7. The undergarment according to claim 1, wherein the reinforced edge comprises an elasticized band.
8. The undergarment according to claim 1, wherein the reinforced edge comprises a frictional band.
9. The undergarment according to claim 8, wherein the reinforced edge comprises a polymeric band.
10. The undergarment according to claim 1, wherein the undergarment further comprises first and second leg extensions extending downwardly from the first and second leg openings, wherein the leg extensions have a length sufficient to cover a wearer's saddlebag regions.
11. The undergarment according to claim 1, wherein the undergarment comprises one or more material selected from the group consisting of: nylon, spandex, control top fabrics, any blends thereof, and any combinations thereof.
12. The undergarment according to claim 1, further comprising a sheer drape covering the aperture.
13. A method of manufacturing a shaping undergarment, comprising:
  - attaching a front panel to a rear panel, thereby forming an undergarment having a waist opening, a first leg opening, and a second leg opening;

forming a centrally-located aperture in the rear panel, the aperture being defined by an edge and shaped to encircle a wearer's buttocks; and

reinforcing the edge to provide uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks when the wearer's buttocks is encircled by the aperture.

**14.** The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of reinforcing the edge comprises providing a multi-layered hem at the edge.

**15.** The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of reinforcing the edge comprises increasing a thickness of a material comprising the undergarment along the edge.

**16.** The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of reinforcing the edge comprises providing a knitted-in welt at the edge.

**17.** The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of reinforcing the edge comprises attaching an elastic band to the edge.

**18.** The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of reinforcing the edge comprises attaching a polymeric band to the edge.

**19.** The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of reinforcing the edge comprises attaching a rubber yarn to the edge.

**20.** The method according to claim 13, further comprising attaching a sheer drape over the aperture.

**21.** A shaping undergarment, comprising:

a front panel;

a rear panel joined to the front panel, thereby forming an undergarment having a waist opening, a first leg opening, and a second leg opening; and

a substantially circular, centrally-located aperture formed in the rear panel and shaped to encircle a wearer's buttocks,

wherein the aperture is defined by an edge, and wherein the edge is reinforced to preserve the substantially-circular shape of the aperture when the undergarment is worn, thereby providing uplifting support to the wearer's buttocks.

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