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(54) **HAIR STYLING TOOL AND METHOD OF USING SAME**

Publication Classification

(75) Inventor: **Christine K. Sparrow**, Chagrin Falls, OH (US)

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Correspondence Address:
JEANNE E. LONGMUIR
2836 CORYDON ROAD
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OH 44118 (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A hair styling tool for creating an uneven part having a base with a handle, a stem and a web portion. First and second tines extend transversely from the web portion, and in the same direction, generally toward the handle. The tines are spaced apart a distance sufficient to lift and separate hair as the tool is moved through hair to form an uneven part. A method for forming an uneven part in hair includes the steps of engaging first and/or second spaced tines of a hair styling tool with a scalp of a person's head at a desired location for the start of the part near the person's face. Moving the hair styling tool toward the desired location of the part end using an alternating pattern to form a desired predetermined uneven hair part. Finally, slightly lifting a handle of the hair styling tool when the second tine has reached the desired location of the part end to separate and capture hair between the first and second tines so that the captured hair may be divided by the tool user.

(73) Assignee: **PART Z GIRL PRODUCTS, LLC**, Chagrin Falls, OH (US)

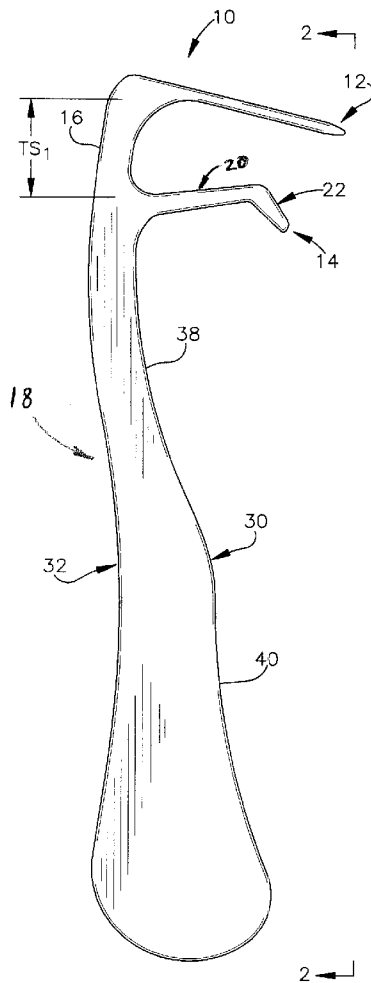
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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 11/071,377, filed on Mar. 3, 2005, now abandoned.

(60) Provisional application No. 60/550,086, filed on Mar. 4, 2004.



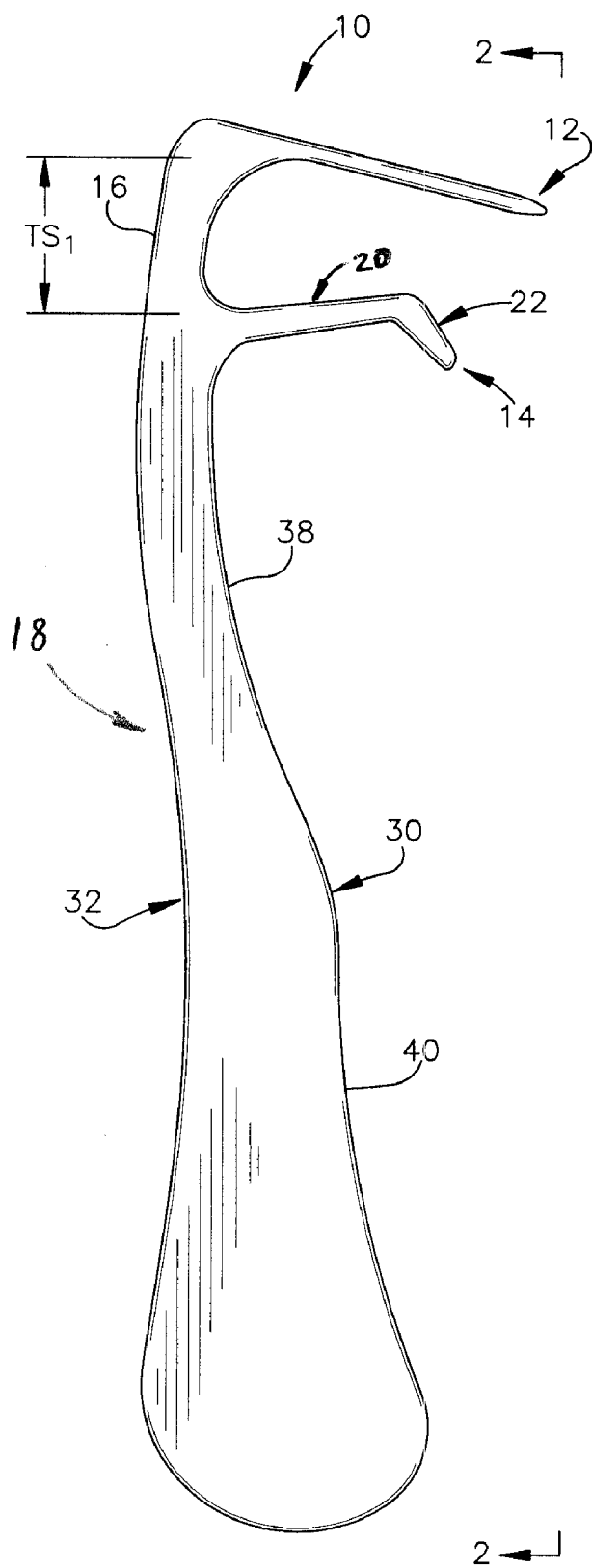


Fig. 1

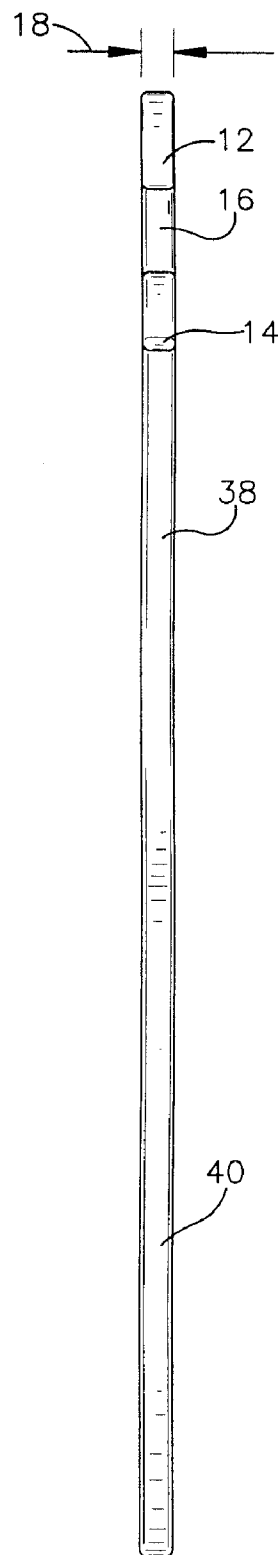


Fig. 2

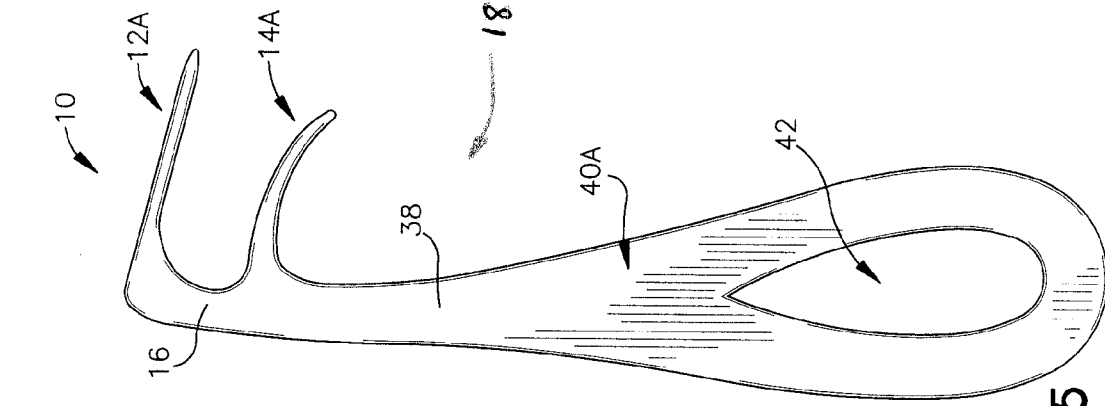


Fig. 3

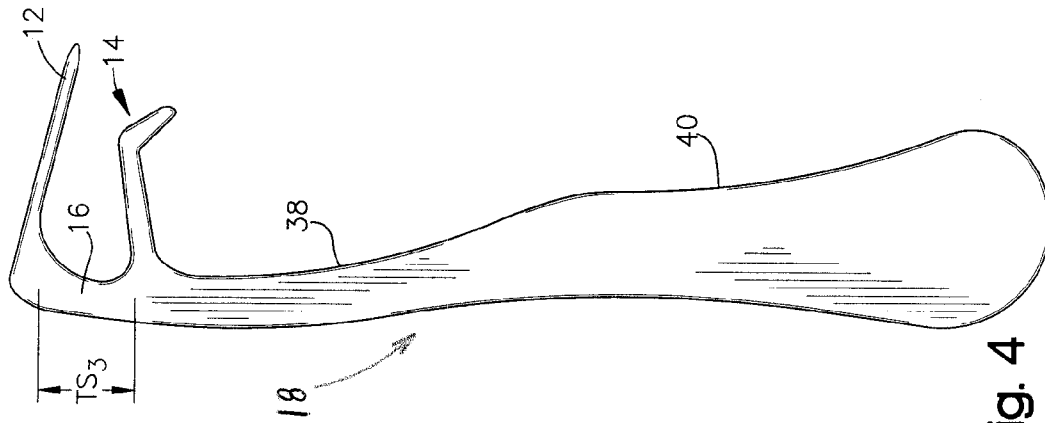


Fig. 4

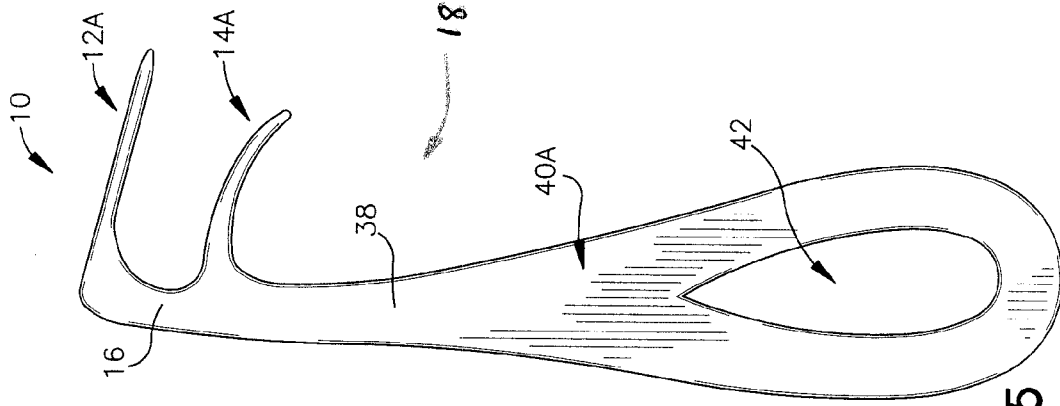


Fig. 5

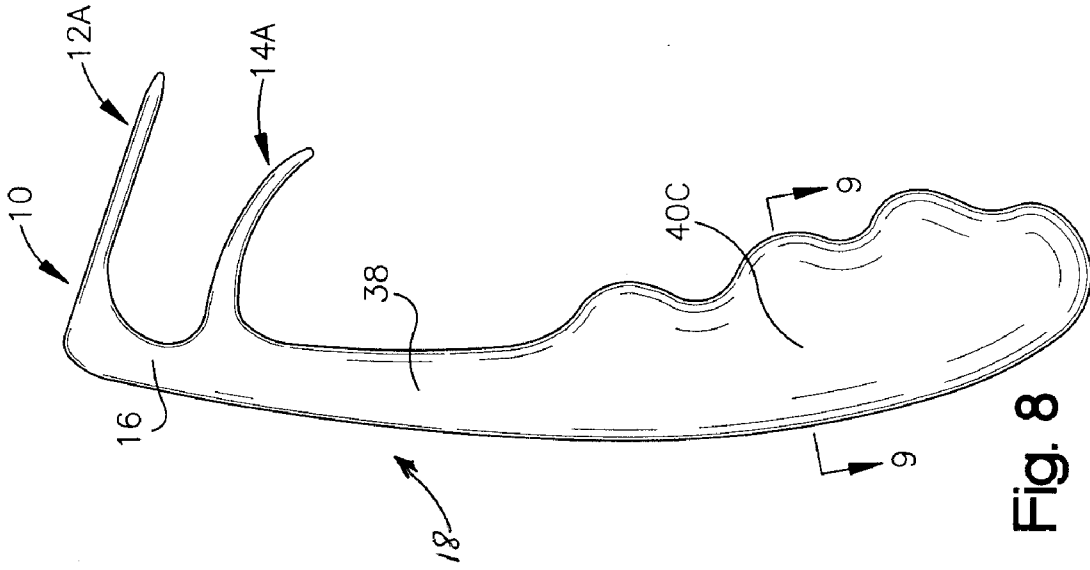


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

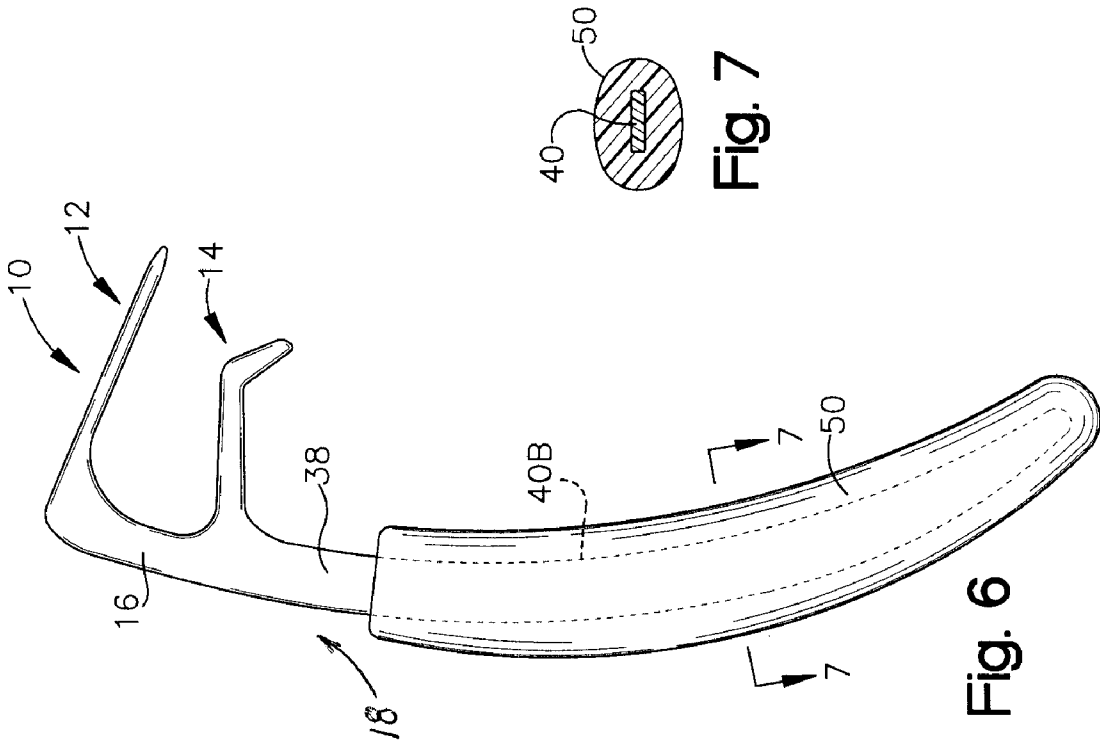


Fig. 6

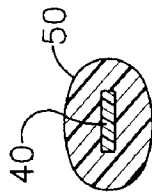


Fig. 7

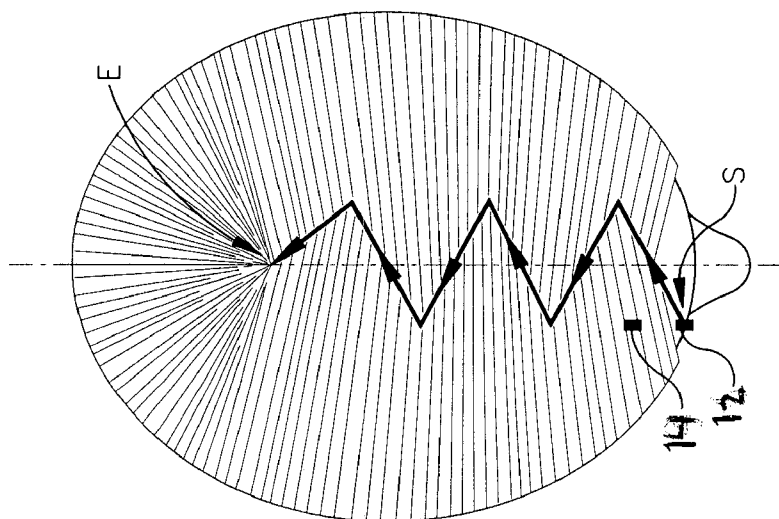


Fig. 10

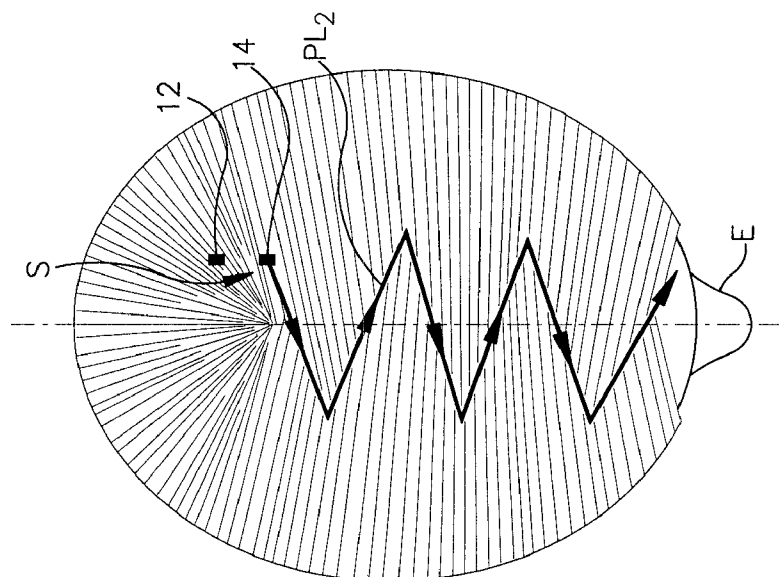


Fig. 11

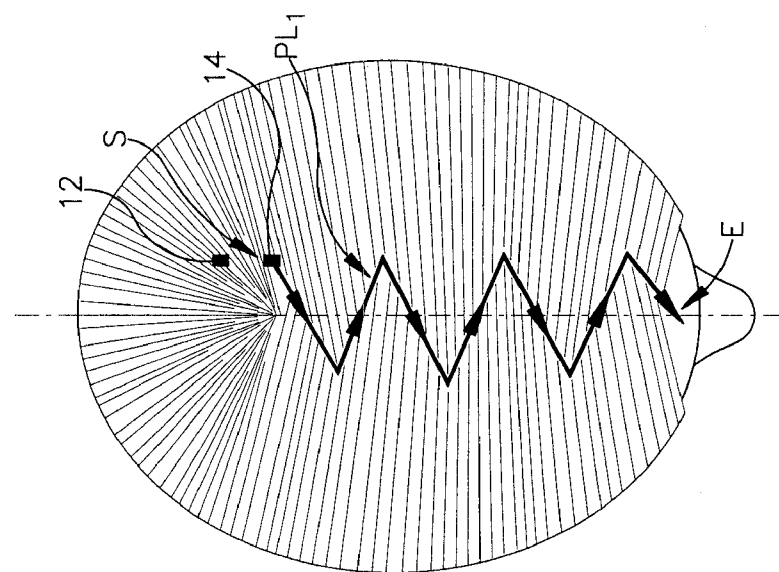
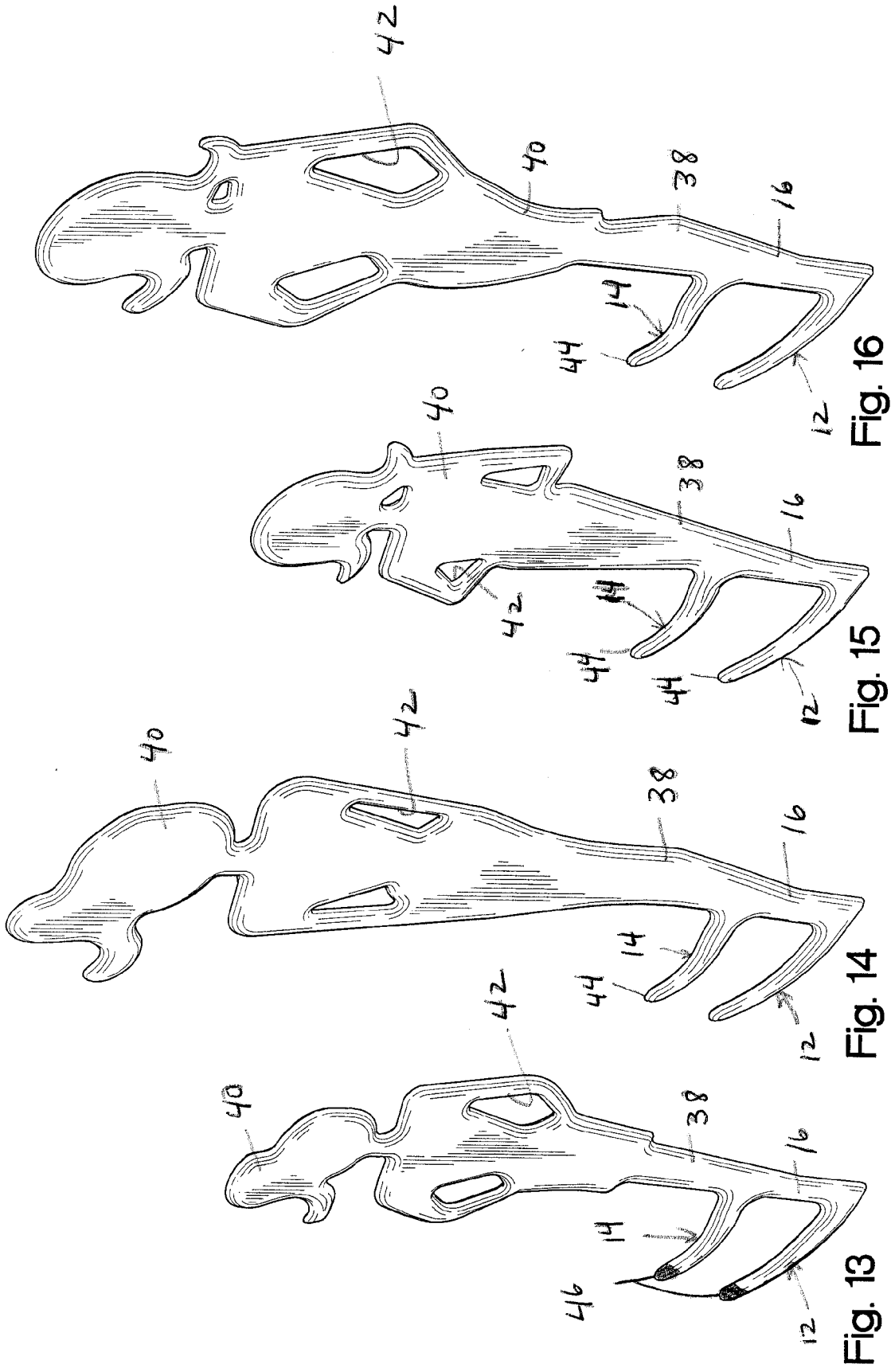


Fig. 12



HAIR STYLING TOOL AND METHOD OF USING SAME

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Ser. No. 60/550,086 filed Mar. 4, 2004, which is incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] This application relates to hair styling tools, and, more particularly, to a hair styling tool for parting hair and methods for using the tool.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0003] In the device of the present application, a hair styling tool is provided for parting hair which includes spaced tines or prongs that produce a part in a person's hair as the tool is moved through the hair. More particularly, the tool includes spaced tines which separate a person's hair as the tool is pulled through the hair.

[0004] The hair styling tool of the present application may include one tine having a slightly curved section or a curved tine tip for lifting and separating hair as the tool is pulled through the hair. A guiding tine or upper tine for guiding the tool along a person's scalp may also be provided. Various handle configurations are also provided with the present device. Handles with smaller heights may be used to provide a travel sized tool, while longer handles may be used for salon or home use. Additionally, handles having a variety of configurations are also disclosed, for example, a handle with gripping portions, a handle with an external coating, a substantially planar handle having the shape of an animate object or character. Alternatively, an inanimate object, shape or article, may also be provided, such as an opening or tear drop.

[0005] A method for use of the tool to part a person's hair is also disclosed. While the tool may be used to create a straight part having the shape of a line, the tool is most advantageously used to form an uneven part, such as a zigzag, or uneven separations in the layers of a person's hair. To form a part using the tool, at least one tine is first engaged with a person's scalp, and then dragged or moved gently but firmly across the scalp while moving the tool from side-to-side at the same time. The side-to-side movement of the tool produces an uneven part in the person's hair. Such an uneven part may be formed by starting the part from the front of the scalp near the person's hairline and moving toward the crown of the head. Starting the part from the hairline adds fullness and volume to the hair. Using shorter strokes, turns or sweeps with the tool also contributes added fullness to the person's hair. Additionally, the use of an uneven part with the tool of the present application serves to better camouflage changes in hair color due to growth of the hair following coloring or highlighting.

[0006] Alternatively, for a more standard zigzag part, the tool may be used by starting from the crown or top of the person's head and moving the tool toward the hairline at the front of the scalp near the person's face. To create more zigzags in the desired part, shorter strokes, turns or sweeps of the tool may be used. By lifting the tool when the desired location for the end of the part is reached, the hair may be readily separated.

[0007] Additional methods for use of the tool are also provided, including moving the tool in different directions across

the scalp to produce a different effect in the person's hair. The tool may also be moved in other desired patterns to create other styles in the person's hair.

[0008] Other features and advantages of the tool of the present application will become apparent from the following detailed description and from the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of the hair styling tool of the present application;

[0010] FIG. 2 is a front elevational view of the hair styling tool of FIG. 1;

[0011] FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of another embodiment of the hair styling tool of the present application having increased spacing between the tines;

[0012] FIG. 4 is a side elevational view of yet another embodiment of the hair styling tool having decreased spacing between the tines;

[0013] FIG. 5 is a side elevational view of a further embodiment of the hair styling tool which includes tines which include differently configured tines and a differently configured handle;

[0014] FIG. 6 is a side elevational view of another embodiment of the hair styling tool with another handle design;

[0015] FIG. 7 is a sectional view of the hair styling tool of FIG. 6 taken along the 7-7;

[0016] FIG. 8 is a side elevational view of yet another embodiment of the hair styling tool which includes a different handle design;

[0017] FIG. 9 is a sectional view of the hair styling tool of FIG. 8 taken along the line 9-9;

[0018] FIG. 10 is a top view of a person's head which includes an application path for the hair styling tool of the present application;

[0019] FIG. 11 is a top view of a person's head which includes another application path for the hair styling tool of the present application;

[0020] FIG. 12 is a top view of a person's head which includes yet another application path for the hair styling tool of the present application;

[0021] FIG. 13 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the hair styling tool of the present application having a smaller height dimension, different tine configuration and different handle configuration;

[0022] FIG. 14 is a perspective view of another alternate hair styling tool embodiment having a taller height dimension, but similar tine configuration and handle configuration to the embodiment of FIG. 13;

[0023] FIG. 15 is a perspective view of yet another alternate hair styling tool embodiment having a smaller height dimension, different tine configuration and different handle configuration; and

[0024] FIG. 16 is a perspective view of still another alternate hair styling tool embodiment having a taller height dimension, but a similar tine configuration and handle configuration to the embodiment of FIG. 15.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0025] Referring now to the details of the hair styling tool illustrated in the drawings of the preferred, but non-limiting, embodiments of the present application, FIG. 1 illustrates a hair styling tool 10. The tool 10 may be used to easily and

conveniently part a person's hair to create several different hair styles with a single tool. The tool includes a base **18** having a handle **40**, a stem **38** and a web portion or web **16**. A first tine **12** and a second tine **14** are also provided in the tool **10**, which tines act to lift and separate hair as tool **10** is dragged or moved through a person's hair engaged with or adjacent to the scalp. As shown, each of the tines **12**, **14** extend from the web **16** and are spaced apart a distance sufficient to lift and separate hair as the tool is moved. It should be appreciated, that the dimensions shown in the figures of this application illustrate particular embodiments of the tool of the present application, wherein dimensional changes can be made without limiting or detracting from the invention of this application.

[0026] FIG. **1** shows a particular tine arrangement and handle design. As will be discussed in greater detail below, modifications to the tine arrangement and handle design can be made to accommodate differences in hair quality and quantity, as well as styling needs. In the embodiment of FIG. **1**, tine **12** is essentially straight and tine **14** is somewhat L-shaped. Both tines **12**, **14** are joined to the base **18** at the web **16**, and are spaced from one another a distance designated at TS1. Tool **10** further includes an application side **30** and a back side **32**. Tines **12** and **14** both extend from an application side **30**. Tine **12**, which may also be referred to as a guiding or upper tine, while it is generally straight, extends from web **16** at an angle less than 90 degrees, such that it extends toward tine **14**. Tine **12** may further include a generally pointed end to help separate the hair. Tine **14** includes both a base portion **20** connected to web **16** and a tip portion **22** extending from base portion **20** at an angle to form a generally L shape as illustrated. However, it should be appreciated that the angle between sections **22** and **20** can vary, or tine **14** can be curved, without detracting from the invention of this application. As such, tines **12** and **14** extend substantially transversely from the same side of the web **16** and in the same general direction.

[0027] As stated above, tines **12** and **14** are spaced on either side of web **16** a distance TS1. However, as illustrated in FIGS. **1-8** and **13-16**, different tine spacings are shown. Specifically, FIG. **1** shows a first spacing TS1 between the tines. FIG. **3** shows a second spacing TS2 that is greater than spacing TS1. FIG. **4** shows yet another spacing TS3 which is less than spacing TS1. The tines of FIGS. **13-14**, like the smaller tine spacing of FIGS. **1** and **5**, are preferred for fine to medium hair types. The tines of FIGS. **15-16**, like the larger tine spacing of FIG. **3**, are preferred for thicker hair types. Essentially, different tine spacings can be utilized based on the desired results.

[0028] Tool **10** also has a thickness **18** which can be uniform or which can vary along the length of the tool. As can be appreciated, the thickness of the tool is dependent on the material utilized to make the tool. In this respect, hair styling tool **10** can be made from any material known in the art. This can include metal materials, such as stainless steel, or a wide variety of plastic materials. However, the thickness of the tool is dependent on the material chosen to produce the desired structural integrity. Tools made from plastic can be between 0.125 inches to 0.4 inches. Metal tools can be much thinner and can be approximately 0.125 inches. Furthermore, strengthening ridges and/or features can also be used to allow the use of lighter weight materials and thinner handles and/or webs. It should be noted that these dimensions relate primarily to the stem **38** of the tool, the web **16** of the tool and the

tine portions **12**, **14** of the tool. A grip portion or finger grip **40B** or **40C**, as in FIGS. **6-9**, may be much thicker than the tines to produce a good handle feel and/or ergonomic handle configurations. Further, the thickness of the tines and/or handle can also be tapered such that portions of the tool which experience higher stress loads during styling are thicker than other portions. For example, the tines can be tapered inwardly such that the end of the tine is thinner than the base of the tine.

[0029] It is also noted that the base **18**, including the web **16**, stem **38** and handle **40**, may also be configured to form a variety of shapes. Stem **38** joins handle **40** which can be any known handle in the art, and can be sized and shaped based on the desired length of the tool, the material used, and/or desired look. Tool **10** in FIG. **1** shows a flat handle design. FIGS. **3-8** illustrate a variety of handle designs which are all illustrative of several different types which could be used without detracting from the invention of this application. The longer handle designs are generally intended for home or hair salon use, and also have advantages during tool use, such as larger gripping areas and easier control of the tool, for example. Additionally, in the embodiment of FIG. **5**, a shorter handle design provides for portable use of the tool.

[0030] The handle **40A** of the base **18** includes an opening **42**, configured to simulate an inanimate object, such as a tear drop. Additionally, openings formed in the handles **40** are provided for conveniently hanging the tool on a display rack or support hook, or for attachment of the tool to other objects, such as backpacks, purses or hangers at salon stations. Openings **42** may be used in connection with any of the handle configurations known in the art. In addition, tool **10** could include a hanging hook (not shown) for hanging the tool.

[0031] In the embodiments of FIGS. **13-16**, a large portion of the base **18**, including the web **16**, stem **38** and handle **40**, are all used to configure the simulation of an animate object, such as a female profile with different hair styles, clothing and postures. It should be understood that any desired animate or inanimate object may be configured to form a portion of the base **18**. In these embodiments the base has differing heights, ranging from 6 inches to 8 inches, with a portable or travel size in FIGS. **13** and **15** being approximately 6 inches high, and a home or salon size in FIGS. **14** and **16** being approximately 8 inches high. Despite the differences in height between the travel and home sized tools in FIGS. **13** and **14**, respectively, they have the same tine spacing, which in this embodiment is approximately 0.75 inches, preferred for thin to medium hair types. Similarly, in FIGS. **15** and **16**, while the height of the tools differs, the tine spacing is the same, which is approximately 1 inch in this embodiment, which is preferred for thicker hair types.

[0032] Turning more specifically to FIGS. **6** and **7**, tool **10** can also utilize a molded handle design which can be applied to handle **40**. In this respect, shown is an ergonomic cushion grip **50** which has been placed over handle **40B**. By applying a cushion grip, a variety of different handle grip configurations, handle colors, and handle feels can be achieved without making changes to handle **40B**. More particularly, a molded handle **50** of a desired configuration, color and feel can be pushed onto handle **40**. Handle **40B** could also be dipped into liquid gripping plastic which forms a nonslip gripping surface after the plastic material has cured onto the handle.

[0033] Referring to FIGS. **8** and **9**, another molded handle configuration is shown. In this particular handle configuration, the handle portion **40C** has been molded to conform to the user's hand and includes finger ridges. As can be appre-

ciated, virtually any desired handle configuration can be molded and used in connection with tool 10.

[0034] As will be discussed in greater detail below with respect to the method of using tool 10, tines 12 and 14 are designed to separate a person's hair as the tool is moved through the hair in order to create a part. As stated above, the spacing between the tines 12, 14 can be modified to create differences in the part, and may range from 0.25 inches to 1.25 inches. In addition, the shapes of the tines can also be modified. In FIG. 4, a different tine configuration is shown from that of FIGS. 1-3. In this embodiment, tine 12A is generally straight, and tine 14A is arcuate or slightly curved. Another tine configuration is shown in FIGS. 13-16, where both tines 12, 14 are arcuate or slightly curved. Tine 12 curves in the direction of tine 14, such that both tines have a curvature which is substantially similar and in a direction toward the handle 40. Thus, both tines could include arcuate portions and/or straight portions without detracting from the invention of this application. Further the tines 12, 14 of any one embodiment may be interchanged with any of the other tines of another embodiment, and likewise interchanged with any handle design.

[0035] In addition, the tines of FIGS. 13-16 have a larger diameter, and a tip portion 44 which is more rounded for a comfortable, softer engagement with the person's scalp during use of the tool 10. Where added comfort is desired upon engagement of the tool 10 with the person's scalp, each tip portion 44 may be provided with a coating 46, which could be applied by dipping into liquid plastic material, to provide smooth or softer, more comfortable engagement with a person's head, as may be desired.

[0036] Referring to FIGS. 10, 11 and 12, methods for using the tool 10 for styling hair or forming a part are illustrated, either a conventional straight part or an uneven or zigzag part. Specifically, the location where tines 12, 14 of tool 10 engage a person's scalp are shown. In FIG. 10, a path line PL1 of tine 14 is then shown where the tool 10 is moved across a person's scalp to form a zigzag part. As can be appreciated, while only tines 12 and 14 are shown, this method relates to a combination of tines. Tool 10 is first positioned near the back or crown of a person's head at a predetermined desired starting point S for the part. The tool is then articulated such that both tines 12 and 14 are adjacent to the person's scalp. Once in position, tool 10 is pulled along the scalp such that tines 12, 14 generally remain adjacent to the scalp to form a desired pattern for the part. Alternatively, at least one tine may preferably remain engaged with the scalp while another is positioned adjacent thereto. In this particular embodiment, the tool is pulled in a medium uneven or zigzag pattern, and each length of the pattern is substantially the same. Once the tool has reached a desired end position E for the part, the tool handle 40 is lifted slightly so that the hair is captured between the tines, and the tool user then separates the hair between the tines and pulls or divides the hair on either side of the tool, separating the hair on either side of the end position E of the zigzag part and completing the part. As can be appreciated, this simple zigzag or alternating motion allows the user to quickly and easily create an uneven part in a person's hair with a single tool.

[0037] In the method of FIG. 11, tool 10 is first placed at the top or crown of the person's head. It should be placed at the point where the part is to begin. This can be in the middle or slightly off to the side of the scalp, based upon the predetermined desired pattern for the part or style to be created. With

both tines resting gently but firmly on the crown of the person's head, the tool 10 is then moved back and forth while bringing it forward in the direction of the person's face or hairline. While the tool is moved forward, both tines 12 and 14 remain in contact with the scalp. When the tines reach the person's forehead or when the tines are approximately at the hairline, the tool is pulled slightly downward toward the person's face, and the handle is slightly lifted to capture the hair being parted. Then with a finger from one hand, the hair on one side of the tool 10, by tine 12, is grasped and tool 10 is pulled with the other hand away from the one finger in an outward fashion going from the center of the person's part to the sides of the person's head.

[0038] Referring to FIG. 11, another method for use of the hair styling tool 10 of the present application is shown. In this embodiment, tool 10 is moved along path PL2 which is a wide zigzag configuration. As a result, the tool will produce a wider zigzag pattern. It should be appreciated that different uneven patterns, including but not limited to a regular zigzag pattern, can be performed to produce different looks, with parts which are offset or sectioned, and may start and end in any desired location on a person's head. Different zigzag patterns can be created to produce different looks or styles. Narrower zigzag patterns can be created and changes in the number of zigzags within the part. The tool 10 can be used to create virtually any other desired part, including curved parts, serpentine parts, crooked parts, illusion parts, broken parts, rounded zigzag parts, swooping or arcuate parts, and other parts known in the industry. Shorter and quicker motions creating uneven patterns having shorter lengths, help to camouflage or hide differences in hair color, as the hair grows between coloring and highlighting treatments.

[0039] With reference to FIG. 12, hair styling tool 10 can be used to increase hair volume and/or add lift and/or fullness to hair by utilizing the tool in a reverse direction or motion. This method works best on hair that is not very thick, hair that is thinner or styles that are shorter or have many layers. Further this method can utilize any of the techniques discussed above including any known patterns and/or styles. In this method, the tool 10 is first placed near the front of the hairline at starting point S and is moved rearwardly in a desired pattern to an end point E near the back or crown of the scalp. Once at the back or end point E, the tool user then separates the hair between the tines and moves the separated hair forward to produce the desired result. In other methods, not illustrated, the user can drag the tool from side to side in several places across the scalp to produce a desired result.

[0040] While considerable emphasis has been placed on the preferred embodiments of the invention illustrated and described herein, it will be appreciated that other embodiments can be made and that many changes can be made in the preferred embodiments without departing from the principals of the invention. It is intended to include all such modifications and alternations insofar as the are within the scope of the appended claims or equivalents thereof.

1. A hair styling tool comprising:

- a one-piece base having a handle, a stem and a web portion having no more than two tines;
- a first tine extending transversely from a terminal end of said web portion, and a second tine spaced from said first tine, and extending transversely from said web portion in the same direction as said first tine, said tines being spaced apart a distance of at least approximately 0.25

inches which is sufficient to lift and separate hair as the tool is moved through hair forming an uneven hair part.

2. The hair styling tool of claim 1, wherein the spaced distance between said first and second tines ranges from 0.25 inch to 1.25 inches.

3. The hair styling tool of claim 1, wherein the spaced distance between said first and second tines is at least approximately 0.75 inches.

4. The hair styling tool of claim 1, wherein said handle has a finger grip configuration for engagement with the hand of a tool user.

5. The hair styling tool of claim 1, wherein said handle supports a coating material for cushioning engagement with the hand of a tool user.

6. The hair styling tool of claim 1, wherein a portion of said base is configured to simulate an animate object.

7. The hair styling tool of claim 1, wherein a portion of said base is configured to simulate an inanimate object.

8. The hair styling tool as in one of claims 3-6, wherein said base portion includes openings therethrough for securing the tool to another object.

9. The hair styling tool of claim 2 wherein said first tine has a substantially straight configuration.

10. The hair styling tool of claim 9, wherein said second tine is in the same plane as the first tine, and has a somewhat L-shaped configuration for lifting hair during tool use.

11. The hair styling tool of claim 2, wherein either said first or said second tine has a slightly curved configuration for lifting hair during tool use forming an uneven part.

12. The hair styling tool of claim 2, wherein said first and second tines each have a slightly curved configuration, with the curvature being in a direction toward the handle.

13. The hair styling tool as in one of claims 9-12, wherein said first and second tines have tip portions, and of each of said tip portions is provided with a coating for comfortable engagement with a person's head.

14. The hair styling tool of claim 2, wherein the overall height of the tool is at least approximately 6 inches.

15. The hair styling tool of claim 2, wherein the overall height of the tool is at least approximately 8 inches.

16. A method for styling hair with an uneven part comprising the steps of:

placing first and/or second spaced tines of a two-tined hair styling tool adjacent to or engaged with a scalp at the top of the crown of a tool user's head, where the first and second tines are formed in one piece with a handle, spaced from one another within the same plane and aligned with the handle;

moving the hair styling tool toward the tool user's face in an alternating pattern to form a desired predetermined uneven hair part; and

slightly lifting the handle of the hair styling tool when the second tine has approximately reached the tool user's hair line to separate and capture hair between said first and second tines so that the captured hair may be divided by the tool user.

17. The method as in claim 16 further comprising the step of using a back and forth alternating pattern to form a zigzag part in a tool user's hair.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of using shorter back and forth alternating pattern movements to add fullness and volume to a person's hair by adding more zigzags in the tool user's hair part.

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